



The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE



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THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL & ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

Issue 08 - June 18 - July 1 - 2010

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Dedicated To Making The Best Of Reykjavík

Haukur's 26th Editorial



I am in sort of a hurry. See, I'm leaving for a short trip to Spain in about twenty minutes, and I've yet to pack and shower and do all sorts of things one should do before embarking upon short trips to Spain.

What I'll be doing there, I cannot tell you. I'm not sure.

I was hoping to catch some sun, hang out in their famous cafés, munch on a croissant or two, see the Louvre and maybe take a leisurely stroll down the famous 5th arrondissement. And visit some of their fabled gay underground nightclubs (as made famous by films such as *Irréversible*. But who knows what I'll get up to?) Spain is a large country with many people in it. And I plan to EMBRACE THE UNIVERSE AND WHATEVER IT THROWS MY WAY!

And so should you. Every day.

Anyway. Enough about me. Let's talk about you. Or your views and opinions in any case.

Listen. We'll be publishing our second annual BEST OF REYKJAVÍK issue in a couple of weeks. You know what that's all about, right? With the help of y'all readers (not to mention all our friends, enemies and associates), we try and point out some of THE BEST things Reykjavík's got going for it at the moment.

It's not about commerce, buying stuff, selling stuff or advertising stuff. It's about celebrating the city we inhabit (or are visiting), underlining and pointing out some of its more positive aspects – the ones that make living here bearable-to-awesome—and ceremoniously ignoring the rest.

Yes we need your help. We need you to contribute; we need your voice in there. For you are us and we are he as you are me and we are all

together now, and so on and so forth.

Let's build something good. OK? OK. So in that spirit, here are some sample questions for you to ponder.

- Where do you buy your **favourite soup** in Reykjavík, and why?
- What is your **favourite place to eat** in Reykjavík, and why?
- What is your **favourite daytrip** out of Reykjavík, and why?
- What is the **best music store** in Reykjavík, and why?
- Who is your **favourite person** in Reykjavík, and why?
- Who is the **best barista** in Reykjavík, and why?
- What is the **best place to pick up** men and/or women for filthy one night stands in Reykjavík, and why?
- Where can one find the **best pizza** in Reykjavík, and why?
- When you think of Reykjavík, what do you think of?
- What is the **best hardware store** in Reykjavík, and why?
- Where is the **best place to relax** in Reykjavík, and why?
- What is your **favourite walking route** in and around Reykjavík? And why?
- What is your **favourite rainy day** hangout in Reykjavík, and why?
- What is the **best second-hand shop** in Reykjavík, and why?
- Where is the **best waterslide** in Reykjavík, and why?
- Where is the **best place to go gay cruising** in



Cover illustration by:
Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir



TRACK OF THE ISSUE

Míri

Ég á heima á Íslandi

mirimusic

Download at www.grapevine.is

Míri, our saviours from the East! They are as honest, loving and pure as any band – good old country boys with no agenda but to entertain themselves and their audience, have a nice time, make friends and play some great tunes to whomever will listen. Which is of course rock music at its finest: friendly, curious, exciting and loving.

And guess what! Their long awaited début – which they've been threatening to release for over two years – is finally ready! You can buy it at record stores all over Iceland as of June 24. It is called 'Okkar' and from the samples we've heard, it kicks some serious ass. See Míri at the Lunga festival, and at the Kimi summer tour, listen to them at our website. Yeah!

- Reykjavík, and why?
- What is your **favourite sunny day** hangout in Reykjavík, and why?
- Where is the **best place to avoid prosecution** in Reykjavík, and why?
- What is your **favourite hidden secret** of Reykjavík, and why?

Etc. Etc. Etc.

Now hurry up and send in your answers, thoughts, rants and everything else to bestof@grapevine.is.



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and Michail Gorbachev almost ended the Cold War. But that's history. Try our unique Hamburgers and the

first Icelandic Lamburger. Great prices on food, beer and wine. Come and feel the Factory buzz. It's worth it.

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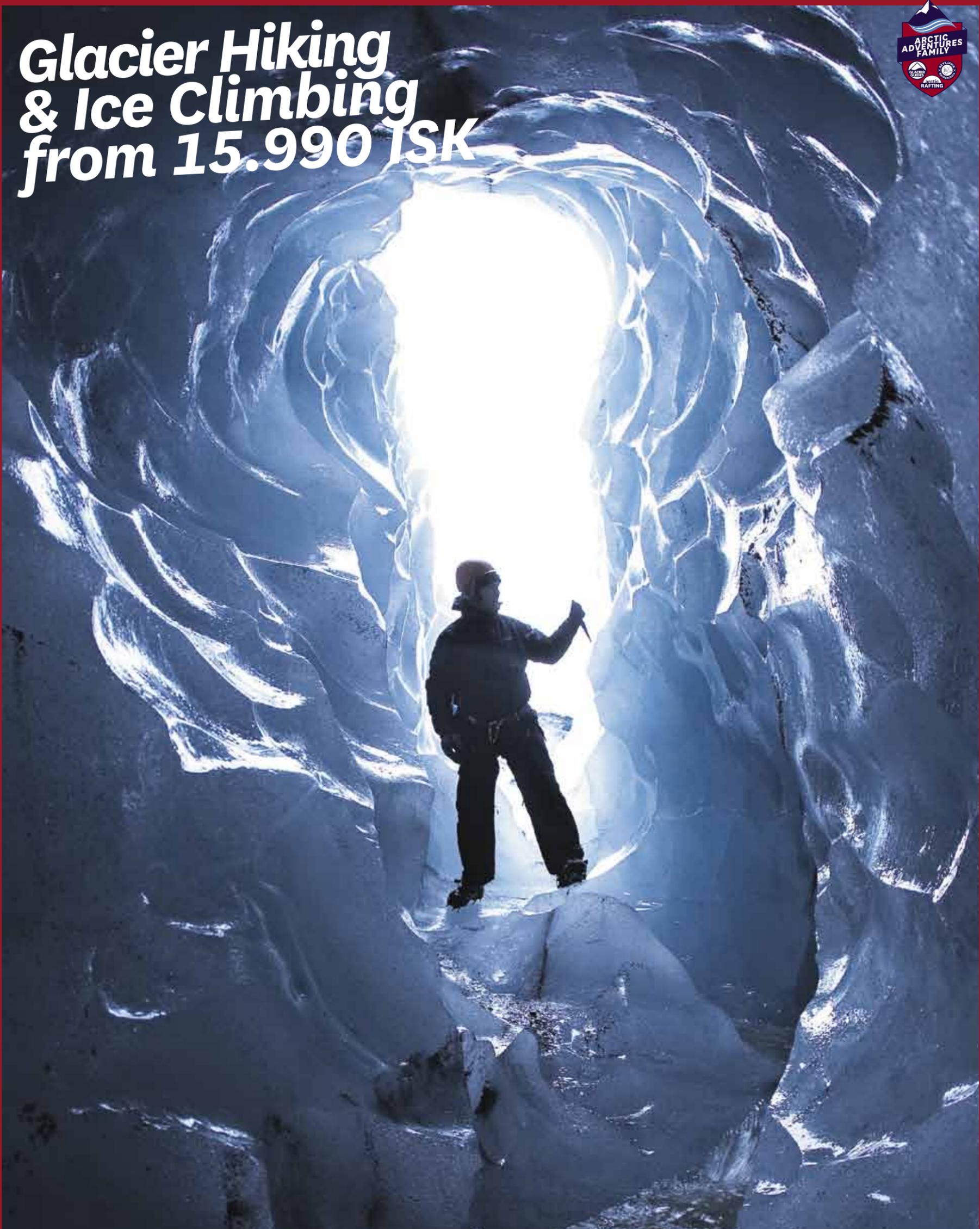
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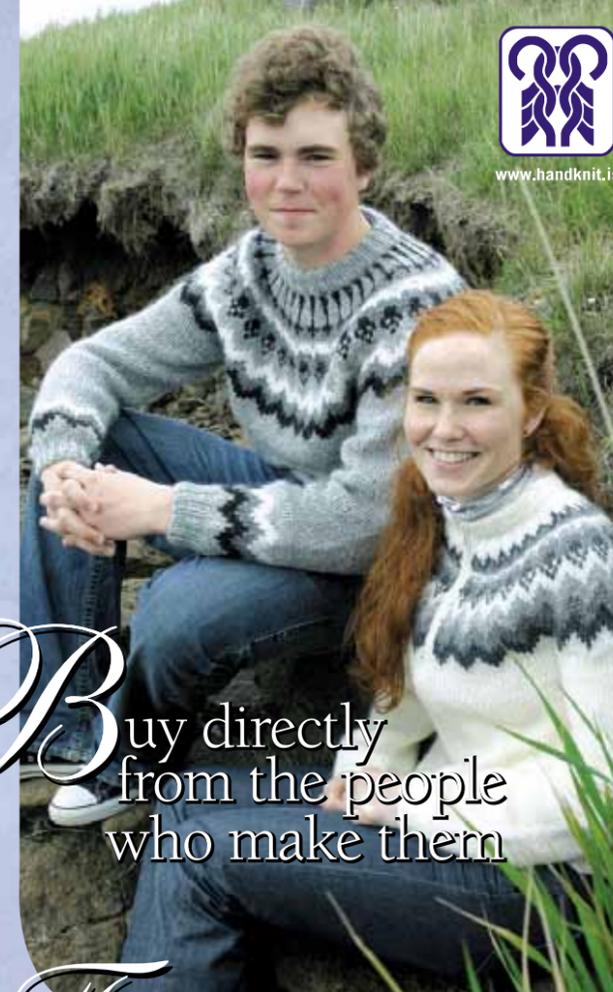


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4 Letters

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The words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it."

Farida Gillot

Dear Farida,

We followed your links. Yes. The Eyjafallajökull eruption was a huuuuge government conspiracy. Meant to. Uhm. Stir up fear of volcanoes.

Look. We don't want to call you a dumbass, dumbass. Whoops, we just did. Sorry. Anyway, yeah. Huge government conspiracy. We hear The Lizard People are involved, too. This is probably the reason Iceland plays host to a volcanic eruption every five years, give or take, and has done so for untold centuries.

For you see, governments aren't a 'new invention.' Neither are 'conspiracies.' Or Lizard People. Those have all been around for ages.

Anyway. What's up with the Lizard People? Were they pissed off by their portrayal in the 'V remake'? Because we sure were.

MOST AWESOME LETTER

A buncha POLAR BEER for your thoughts

We're not gonna lie to you: we really love us some beers. Some folks would call it a problem, but beer never gave us any problems. In fact, over the years, it's solved most of 'em. A frosty glass of cold, frothy, bubblicious, golden-tinted beer has consistently failed to let us down. In the immortal words of the once-reputable Homer J. Simpson: "Mmm... Beer..."

Now, since we're real pleasant and giving folks here at the Grapevine, we thought we'd share some wonderful POLAR BEER with you, our readers. Not only that, you're also getting the gift of social life with it. So here's the deal: our most awesome letter of each issue (henceforth, or until the good people of POLAR BEER decide they don't want to play along anymore), we will be providing our MOST AWESOME LETTER scribe with twelve frothy POLAR BEERS, to be imbibed at a Reykjavik bar of their choice (so long as that bar is either Bakkus or Venue). If y'all's letter is the one, drop us a line to collect. Give us your worst: letters@grapevine.is



The unknown have incredible importance.

The invisible columns of society, Bearing the crushing weight of televised reality's ignorant impact.

Struggling constantly to... Be on television?

See the glowing fake version of yourself, larger than life but dead.

Abstractly existing, in a mass hypnotized idea of what the goal should be, Without knowing what it is.

Just to... Be in front of everyone, noticed.

Daniel Schreiber

Dear Daniel,

Thank you for your letter, and your poem. Or your poem anyway, there wasn't really a letter. In any case. Have you heard of The Lizard People? We hear they're all the rage. Maybe you should write some poems about them. Here is an inspirational sample:

"Oh lizard man, lizzarding on,

Snaking your way into the public consciousness [via government conspiracies, TV shows

and vegetarianism]

With your green skin and your evil intentions (and all your Herbalife products. Sticky liquorice pops).

THE TWO OF US LAUGHING, LIZARD MAN! WE LAUGH! WE LAUGH AT THE SILLY FOOLS!

Hypnagogia is no solution. Nor is the internet. Lizard man, o, Lizard Man. On your quest for GLOBAL DOMINATION. Eating. Doritos. Snacks. Chewy toffees.

Salsa is less 'hot' and more expensive than it used to be.

Dear man. Lizard. What have you done to Paul Newman?"

Yo grapevine

Checked out your newsletter whilst in your excellent country, and thought it très cool. You lot were pretty evenhanded in printing that letter from someone about how Norway and Iceland should be a union. I mean, that dude really should be serious. Iceland is, hands-down, the coolest place I've ever had the good fortune to visit. Fact. Why have it taken over by a place so boring that, in order to get people to visit, it needs the help of a Swedish dynamite inventor's peace prize? Notwithstanding that, anyone who suggests that Iceland and Norway should work together in some sort of union should perhaps read up on the one that is already in place - a little thing called the European Economic Area.

Simon Deeble
London, UK

Dear Simon,

Thank you for your letter! We didn't get to meet you while you were here, but we are sure you are also très cool.

We're not sure we share your sentiment of Norway being boring, though. Sure, Norwegian music is pretty boring, and Norwegian film. And Norwegian literature. Not to mention Norwegian art. And who could forget the boring Eurovision entries they always send in?

Anyway. Djök. Actually, Norway isn't boring at all. It is a huuuuuuge country, with many, many people in it. We went to Norway once, and we only managed to see a teensy part of it. And what we saw was hella amusing. Some of the people are probably boring, but you know, some of the English people we've met have been pretty boring, too. Being boring is a universal quality, we figure. Almost everyone is capable of being boring!

But even if Norway were 'a boring country' - would that be so bad? Boring nations generally don't rape and pillage other ones. Boring people don't attack you on your way home from the pub, or make a move on your spouse, or pee on your rug when they get hammered. That's what 'exciting people' get up to.

Yeah, fuck exciting. We should all embrace the quality of being boring, so we can stop fucking things up for one another, and everyone else. Case in point: Lizard People are certainly not boring. Yet they are awful!

Here's to boredom! 🍷

MOST AWESOME LETTER:

Dear Grapevine,

I write this letter to tell you the story of a contemporary hero, a hero of our times: me. Me, the guy who day-to-day tries his luck and results undefeated in the everyday head to head with the public transport service of Reykjavik.

In my daily Saga, I see my all life flashing before my eyes at every sudden brake of some drivers, who probably mistake the public transport for the super jeep tours around glaciers and volcanoes. I love going to work... an adrenaline rush every morning!

However, in these months, I also had the opportunity to rediscover the pleasure of reading, thanks to all those evenings when I wanted to go out and get drunk as every youngster worthy of the name, but I stayed in my Garðabær, instead. Why? Because of the lack of a decent evening transport service and the impossibility to spend 3.000 kr for a cab every time.

What else can I say of the crazy nights during the weekends, when everyone, young and old, men and women bar none, pours out in downtown to drink hectoliters of alcohol?! By now I've become a vomit-puddle jumping professional! Every time I split my sides laughing when I think about those safe driving policies that spread all around Europe and lead every normal civilized municipality to endow itself with a night transport service for the weekend, thus allowing its youngsters to devastate their livers in holy peace without crashing the car against a streetlamp.

In the past few hours a new challenge has appeared on the horizon: the change of the schedule for the summer period! I love to whatch my iPod's battery exhaust while I wait at the bus stop for half an hour, thinking that in any London, Paris or Berlin whatsoever, with a ticket of the same price I could jump on buses, trams and metro every three minutes and cross a metropolis with a population twenty-three times higher than the whole of Iceland in half the time! And when the bus finally arrives, I adore to make my way through a fluctuating mass of individuals desperately trying to keep their balance

between an abrupt stop and the other. There must be an invisible and directly proportional connection between the quantity of people on the vehicle and the intensity with which the drivers hit the brakes: the more crowded the bus, the faster the drivers dart through the streets and come to a grinding halt at every traffic light and bus stop. It must be what they call "performance anxiety"...

However, what I love the most in this period are children. Really, I love them! I love to get on the bus facing these herds of untied small human beings out of control, and I adore to spend my thirty-minute journey with two or three of them perched on my shoulders and some other four clung to my back...

Anyhow, nothing scares me anymore. If I survived the winter Sunday mornings, sitting at the bus stop, with the temperature below zero and the first bus at 11.50, I can survive everything!

Indeed, I should pat my own shoulder!

Andrea Pregel

Dear Andrea,

Thank you for your letter. It was a most amusing read. And we agree, pretty much. Public transport in Reykjavik sucks balls and has done so for a long time. Maybe it's unfair to compare Reykjavik's public transport system to that of London or Paris, but it's still mind-boggling to ponder how it manages to be as awful as it is.

Maybe some car-dealership owner managed to snake his way onto the board of Strætó BS, to try and tear it down from the inside?

Maybe he was one of those 'Lizard People' we keep hearing so much about?

Who knows!

Anyway. We decided to make you our FREE BEER LETTER. This will encourage you to either 1) take up day drinking or 2) pour some money into our faltering Taxi economy. Either way, Lord Satan wins. He always does.

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Hressingarskálinn

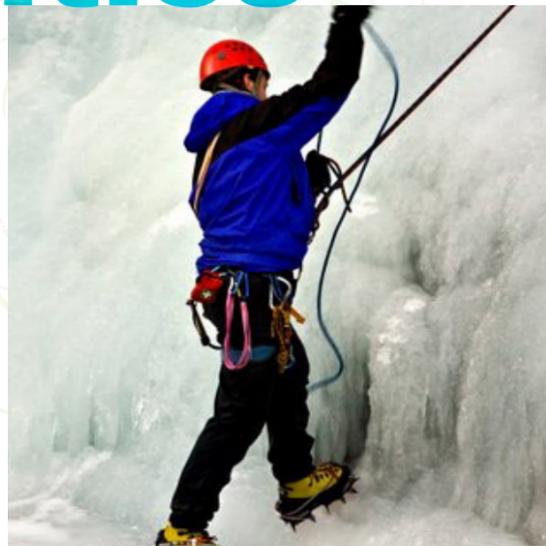
Hressingarskálinn (Hressö) is a Classical Bistro, located in the heart of the city at Austurstræti 20.

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






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Interview | Debts And When To Pay Them

Deal With It : Vooral Gerard van Vliet on why Iceland needs to pay the Icesave depositors

Words

Paul F. Nikolov

Photography

Julia Staples



Vooral Gerard van Vliet was running a children's project in Kenya, and in August 2008 decided to invest his money in Icesave. Like many others outside of Iceland who had an account there, he lost that money. He began to bring other Dutch Icesave depositors together, founding among other things the website Icesaving.nl—his organisation is now about 250 members strong. Grapevine got a chance to talk with Vooral shortly after he met with Icelandic government officials to try and get his take on the issue.

Tell us about your group. What inspired you to start this entire project?

No one knows exactly how many there are, but our members are all people who lost more than 100,000 Euros from their Icesave accounts. Personally, I had a good relationship with Iceland. I'd been here, had a good relationship with the people here, and wanted to put my money here.

So it had nothing to do with the interest rates Icesave was offering?

No, not at all, because you could get the same interest rates in a Dutch account at the time. Everybody's talking about the extra percentage, but it wasn't there. If you looked at the market you'd find competitors offering the same amount. Maybe you had to take it in a one month account or a three month account, instead of a floating account, but in general you could get comparable rates elsewhere.

And these other banks are still solvent?

All of them. Only one of them went down, and that was Icesave, because these other banks either stayed solvent, or the government rescued them. But in any event, with Icesave—my house was sold. I'd had the intention of moving back to Kenya because I had children's projects there. We were on the edge of starting a coconut factory project, where 15,000 farmers would have taken part. I had other banks joining me on this project, but it was my starting capital. I put my money [in Icesave] on the 27th of August 2008. And of course we lost that money, so my main motivation in getting involved in this was one; it's for charity and two; it's for children and for the farmers. Within seven days of starting this project, without knowing who was involved, we had sixty people and it's grown to about 250.

I understand you met with some government officials yesterday. How did that go?

You could say "astounding." You have to realise, time and time again, that Iceland is only 320,000 people. It's acting like a country, but it has the resources of a small city. Besides that, you also have to realise that the point of view within Iceland is totally different than the point of view of the rest of the world. If you look at the report of the [Special Investigative Commission], you can see in all transparency what happened. And I think that makes some people responsible for what happened. To put it bluntly, we were fucked up.

So I'm sitting at a table with one person from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, one from the Ministry of Finance and one from the Prime Minister's office. They're sitting opposite you, telling you that they're not aware of what's going on, and not aware of the fact that they're responsible, and not aware that something has to be done—well, I think that's a lousy game.

They told you specifically that they're not aware that anyone's responsible?

Well, they don't think they're responsible. It's only because EFTA told them that they are responsible for the 20,000 euro guarantee sum [per deposit]. Before that time, they didn't believe they were responsible for the deposit scheme itself. They said, "For one bank, maybe, but for all the banks, er, we're not responsible." But now

it's clear they're responsible for the first 20,000, but they deny they're responsible for the rest of the savings. It's hard to believe that people are thinking that way.

What are your thoughts on Bert Heemskerk's remarks that Holland can pretty much forget about seeing the entirety of the Icesave money?

Well, the thing you have to understand about Bert is that he used to run a large bank called Rabobank, and at a time when Icesave was being applauded as challenging the larger banks, he was saying that Landsbanki was going to collapse. At the time, the media said he was just jealous. But to be honest, I don't think he really knows what's going on.

Yesterday, I asked the government representatives, "Why didn't you ever think of a solution?" Because if we're all friends, you know, Dutch, British, Iceland—we're all friends—if they're really your friends, why didn't you ask them for a solution? Help on an economic level, help on an energy level, what have you. And I was told, "Well, then you show them your weakness." And I'm astonished about that.

What sort of solutions are we talking about here?

I talked to the Dutch distributor of energy. And they're mainly responsible for the distribution of energy throughout Europe. And I asked them if it would be feasible to have an electricity line between Iceland and Norway or Iceland and the UK, because we already have lines between the UK and Norway through the Netherlands. Nowadays, it's possible to have those lines without a significant loss of electricity. It's easily possible, and we're even prepared to pay for that.

So what's stopping it?

I don't know. Pride? Stupidity? Non-commitment? I have no idea. Because if Iceland put their energy into Europe, they could get four or five times as much money as they're getting from the smelters here. Why nobody is thinking about this? I have no idea.

Many Icelanders—and I think this was the main reason why the previous Icesave bill was defeated—ask themselves, "I'm not a bank manager. Why should I be paying for part of this debt?"

That's the bad part of democracy. If your administrators, your government guys, your statesmen are fucking up, then the whole of the nation carries the burden. That's everywhere. You know the situation where a minister is sacked because of something his predecessor did wrong.

Granted, but we're talking about payments that could span over decades, paid for by Icelanders not even born yet.

Yes, but somebody allowed it to get that far. The banks didn't grow by themselves; they were allowed to do it. The government closed its eyes, the Central Bank closed its eyes, the bank managers closed their eyes, the shareholders closed their eyes. So, of course you can't blame the guy on the street for things getting this far, but you can blame everyone else. And one of the bad things about democracy is you're responsible, all in all, for the things being done in parliament. It's lousy, but that's what happens.

Well, the counter to that is, "Sure, we're responsible for the government we elect, but they lied to us. We didn't know what was going on."

Even in those circumstances, you're liable.

Do you think that information was intentionally withheld from the public?

I think so, and if you look at the press, who really knew what was going on? At the time, information was manipulated. Right up until the collapse, you could look at the bank reports, saying everything was great. If you look at the reports of Fitch, of Moody's, or Standard & Poor's, they knew what was going on, but that information was kept in professional circles. The individual in the street didn't know anything about it. Because the press didn't report it. The press in the Netherlands lauded Icesave as a hero, because they were challenging the big banks.

Ideally, what would you like to see happen, and what do you think will actually end up happening?

Ideally, I'd hope someone, somewhere, somehow would say, "Well, guys, you're 250 people. The money we owe you is 25 million [Euros]." On the whole we're talking about billions and billions, so on a larger level, 25 million is lousy money. On a personal level, it's serious money. It's pension money, housing money, children's study money. If you're really serious about this, you should pay them.

Without interest?

Well, at the very least the money that people put in should be there. But what I would say is, "Because you've been so stubborn, you're going to pay double the interest, you lousy statesmen." If you don't understand that there are real people behind this money—not an institution, or a bank—then you have to be punished. It's real money from real people.

The EFTA said that number one, consumers should be able to rely on their banks to hold onto their money. And number two, that Iceland discriminated. Icelanders got their money back, people outside of Iceland didn't. And in our case, which is coming up next month, we're hoping that they say the same.

What would you like to tell the average Icelander on the street—what do you think is imperative they understand, that they're maybe not getting?

First all, I'm sorry to say, but some countrymen fucked you up, and you have to bear the responsibility for that. That's democracy. You have to understand that. It's not a question of personal responsibility but collective responsibility. And take that responsibility to the government. So if the prosecutor says, "We won't go after [former Central Bank chairman Davíð] Oddsson, and we won't go after [former Prime Minister Geir H.] Haarde," then that's your responsibility, and the Icelanders should start a new pots-and-pans revolution to get those responsible punished. Secondly, better clean up ship sooner than later. The earlier you do it—and they should have done it long ago—the better off you'll be. If you put your energy into positive things, positive things will grow. 🍷

Iceland | Statistics

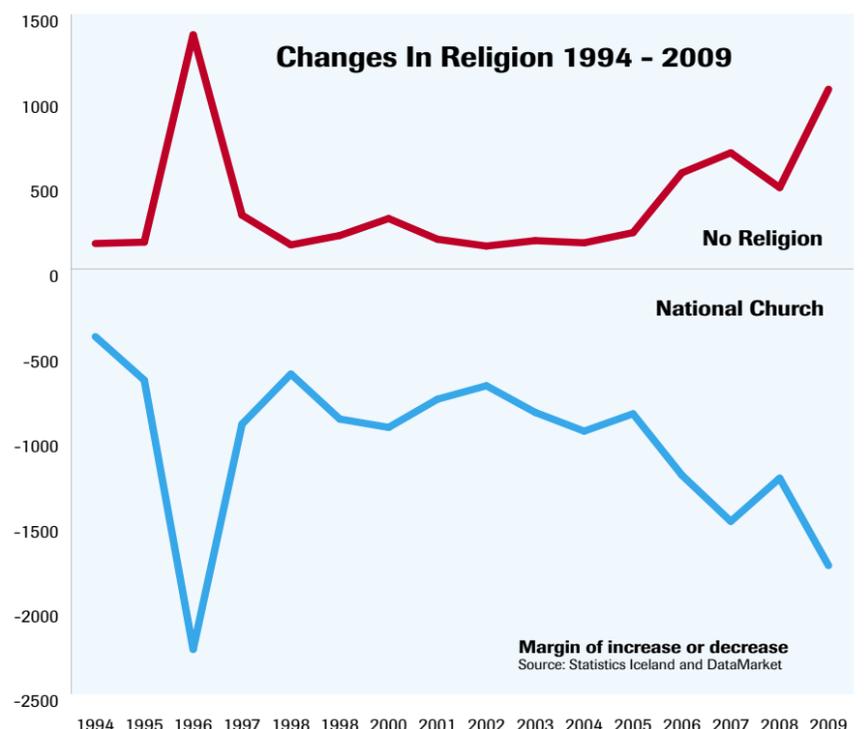
The National Church: Not So Popular

Heads up clergymen: it seems that Icelanders aren't too keen on being Christian these days. Registration in the National Church of Iceland is dropping, according to recent polls.

The latest numbers from DataMarket show that the number of people registering as having no religion is increasing in a similar proportion to the decrease in registration in the National Church. Of course, this graph is a bit misleading, because roughly 80% of Icelanders are already registered members of the church, but it does show a trend.

The drop in registration could be attributed to numerous factors, such as deaths and registration into other religions. It could also show that Icelanders are growing less fond of having a state run church or being dishonestly subscribed to a religious organisation that they do not actively believe or participate in. Maybe in post-collapse Iceland, where people are losing faith in everything around them, nihilism just seems like the better way to go. Or they just hate God. 🍷

Year	No Religion	National Church
1994	+151	-397
1995	+159	-653
1996	+1379	-2237
1997	+318	-912
1998	+143	-617
1999	+198	-882
2000	+298	-931
2001	+176	-765
2002	+136	-686
2003	+168	-843
2004	+155	-953
2005	+215	-851
2006	+567	-1212
2007	+685	-1484
2008	+480	-1230
2009	+1059	-1744



Iceland excursions

GRAY LINE ICELAND



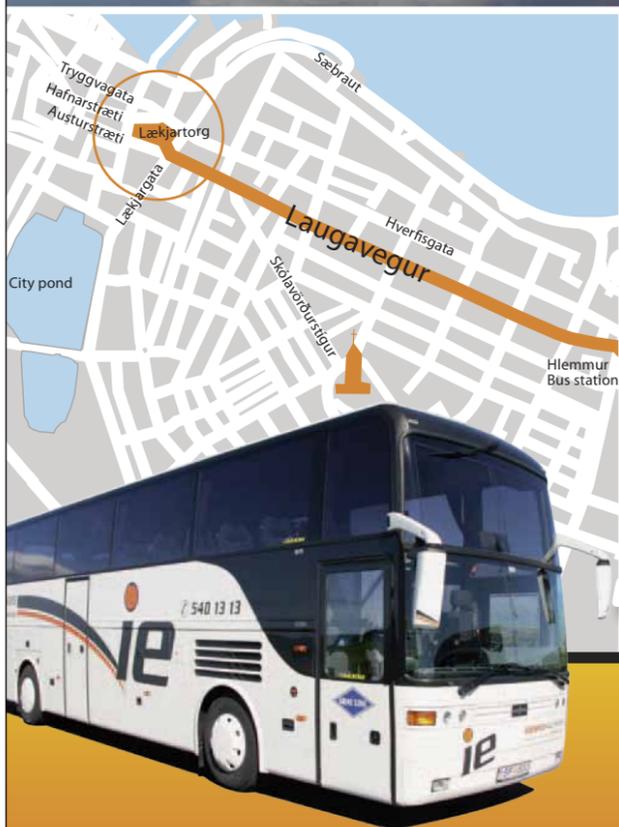
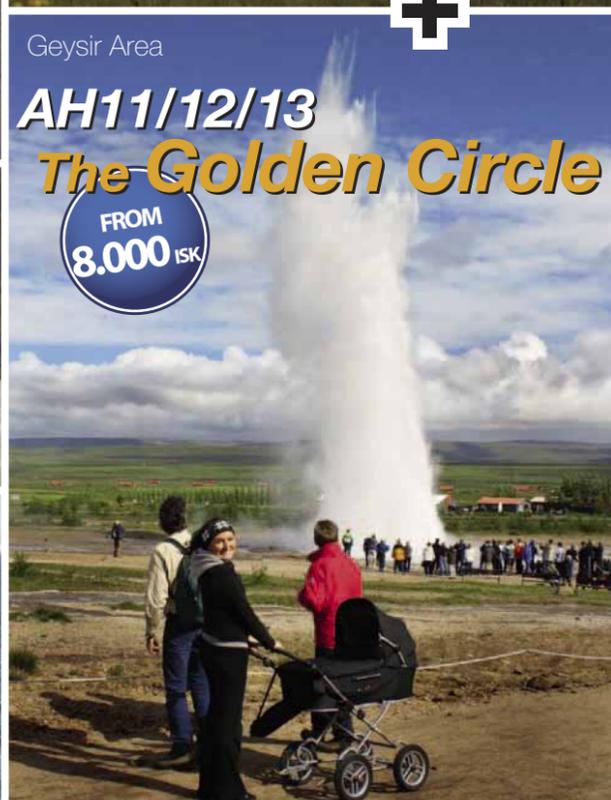
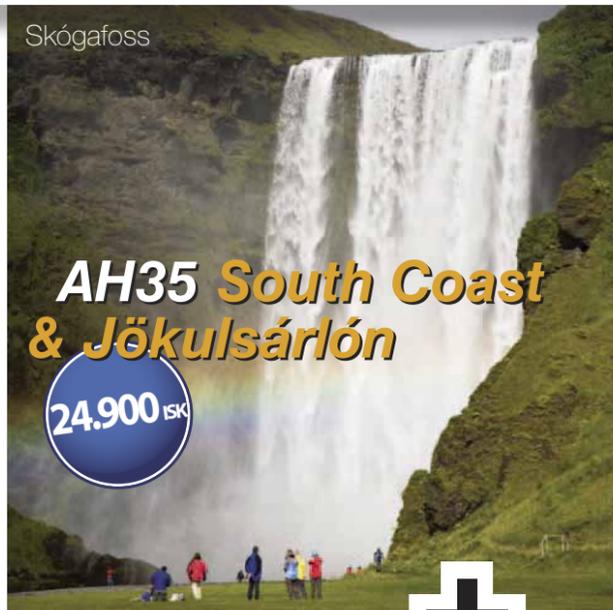
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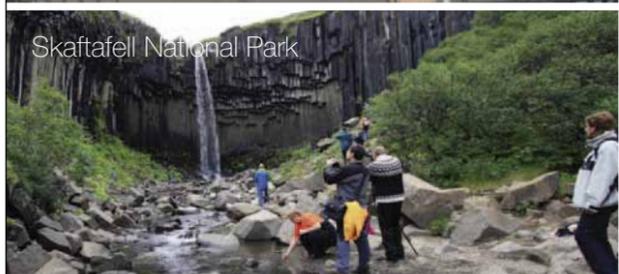
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Quentin Bates was a journalist for Fishing News International for many years. So he knows his stuff. He also lived and worked in Iceland for a decade, working in the fishing industry. So he knows his stuff. His first novel, 'Frozen Assets', is set in Iceland and will be released next year. Yay Quentin!

Article | Fishy Fish

Mackerel Madness!

It's been a few years now since mackerel showed up around Iceland in enough numbers to start appearing on barbecues. It's only been a very few years since there was enough to see a commercial fishery develop, but that's what has happened—and an unholy row with Iceland's neighbours has been brewing since the first big catches were landed by the Icelandic fleet.

Unlike the cod and haddock that are the firm favourites of Icelandic consumers, mackerel are a pelagic species that live high in the water and are caught with nets or hooks, but are landed in bulk by specialised vessels built to do just that.

Mackerel are also a predatory, highly migratory species that range over large areas of the North Atlantic, ignoring the arbitrary borders drawn by humans to migrate happily over long distances.

The amounts of money involved aren't small. The mackerel fishery is worth an estimated €600 million every year and has been the subject of an uneasy alliance between Norway, the Faeroe Islands and the European Union—representing mainly fishermen from Britain, Ireland, Holland and Denmark. Last year a 640,000 tonne quota was set, marginally in excess of the scientific advice, but which was not thought to jeopardise the stock.

ICELAND IS THE JOKER

But Iceland is the joker in the pack. Warmer sea temperatures and a healthy mackerel stock have prompted this unpredictable species to migrate into Icelandic waters. This was greeted initially by Iceland's pelagic fishermen as a minor irritation that got in the way of herring fishing—but as the volumes of mackerel grew, this has become a fishery all to itself, on top of the rigidly enforced quotas that the established players have.

Last year more than 100,000 tonnes of these little fast-swimming diamonds were landed in Iceland, much of which was processed into fishmeal. This year the Icelandic government set itself a 130,000 tonne mackerel limit, prompting outrage from the other coastal states.

THE 'MACKEREL CLUB' RESPONDS

This is where the politics take over. The established 'mackerel club' of Norway, the Faeroe Islands and the EU protest that Iceland is acting irresponsibly by fishing heavily on this stock and taking the total catch way beyond scientific advice. Iceland responds that it has a right to exploit a resource in national territory. Cue stalemate.

Iceland had for years been knocking at the mackerel club's door and asking to join. For all of those years the response had been that with no mackerel resources of its own, Iceland wasn't going to get a slice of the cake.

With mackerel now present inside Iceland's EEZ, things have changed dramatically. Negotiations have been taking place at intervals but progress has been zero. History shows that this stuff doesn't happen fast. When the Atlanto-Scandian herring reappeared in the 1990s, it took several years to engineer an uneasy truce that nobody has been entirely happy with. Negotiations over the blue whiting fishery that ranges from west of Ireland to north of the Faeroes lasted for more than a decade before another uneasy peace was reached.

There are rounds of recrimination and bitter accusations that swing back and forth. Iceland claims to have been excluded illegally from the mackerel club. Norway points to its own long track record of



fishing mackerel since this was a marginal species in the 1970s, and there are justifiable, understandable standpoints on all sides.

WILL THE FAEROESE FOLLOW ICELAND'S LEAD?

Don't imagine that all is peace and harmony inside the mackerel club. A squabble between the EU and Norway last year was resolved after several months, much to Norway's advantage, EU fishermen would claim. Faeroese fishermen have seen a massive mackerel fishery taking place next door, while they are limited by agreements to a modest fishery.

The Faeroese fisheries minister has come under increasing pressure to follow Iceland's lead and set a Faeroese quota of a similar size, thereby stepping out of the longstanding agreement with the other coastal states—a move that would be regarded as the clearest treachery by Norway and the EU.

Pressure on the Faeroese government is coming from those who don't have access to mackerel, but see it as a resource that could be exploited, as well as seeing strong and hungry mackerel as a threat to juvenile groundfish. The idea of a large, autonomous Faeroese quota also opens the possibility of quota swaps with other countries, notably with Russia for access to more Barents Sea cod.

On the other hand, the established Faeroese operators are strongly against leaving the agreement and this is where another factor comes into play. Mackerel are present in Icelandic and Faeroese waters during the summer. But summer mackerel are worth a lot less than during the winter when the meat is firmer and has a fat content that's just what the lucrative Japanese market wants.

Winter is where the serious money is, when these valuable fish turn into swimming gold nuggets—and that's when mackerel are firmly back in EU and Norwegian waters.

The established Faeroese operators foresee the loss of the markets they have worked for years to build up alongside their Norwegian, Scottish, Irish, Danish and Dutch counterparts, who have already been through the pain as quotas have been cut, dubious landings brought to an end and shares of the total quota endlessly argued over. The sight of the Iceland



fleet shovelling up mackerel for fishmeal or for Eastern European markets is painful to fishermen who see their own vessels tied up for more than half of the year.

THEN WHAT HAPPENS?

So what's the likely outcome? There won't be an agreement that includes Iceland this year, but negotiations are scheduled to discuss 2011. The Faeroese position is crucial. If they walk away from the existing agreements, then everything will blow wide open. Such a step could bring the wrath of the EU down on the islands, which could stand to lose much more in other ways than it could gain from 100,000 tonnes of mackerel.

Experience shows that negotiations take years, so a conclusion next year is far from likely. All of those involved have interests at stake and all of the governments concerned are lobbied hard by their fishing sectors. There's also the issue of national pride—nobody is prepared to back down. It would be politically unacceptable to give Iceland a larger share of the fishery than the 5% that the Faeroes have as a longstanding member of the mackerel club and even this would entail the EU and Norway making painful sacrifices. Yet Iceland's demands are so high as to be simply not taken seriously. The question needs to be asked: does Iceland genuinely want an agreement? The Norwegian response is that Iceland's strategy is to build up as large a track record as possible and is therefore in no hurry to reach a settlement.

There is also the possibility that with heavy fishing in the coming years, the stock could diminish and would no longer migrate as far as Iceland, leaving Iceland with no mackerel and with no agreements, no access to it in other waters.

If all the claims—all justifiable in one way or another—are added together, the total is close to 180% of the fishery, with nobody prepared to back down. There are no easy answers, and if/when an agreement is reached, the only thing that is certain is that nobody will come away satisfied from the negotiating table. ☹

✍ QUENTIN BATES

📧 QUENTIN BATES

Opinion | Íris Erlingsdóttir

It's the End of the World As We Know It (...and I feel fine)



The municipal elections throughout Iceland had a strong "throw out the rascals" feel to them. And it felt good.

Independence Party chair Bjarni Benediktsson, clueless as ever, expressed satisfaction with his party's performance, as if this were some sort of horse race, but Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir hit the nail on the head when she told us that the elections were an indictment against the four big parties, and represented a new political age for us.

It's about time. Public opinion polls indicate that we trust our politicians about as much as we trust organised crime bosses, possibly because it has become difficult to distinguish between the two. Whatever the motives may have been for forming the parties decades ago, they have been replaced by their members' self-aggrandisement, self-perpetuation, and self-enrichment.

The Left-Green Party appears to still want a clean environment (though its approval of renewed whaling permits leaves one wondering), but, beyond that, what do any of them stand for? Our so-called leaders approved the legislation that gave the country's fishing rights to a few select individuals. They approved the legislation that gave the nation's banks to a few select individuals. They approved legislation that has allowed the proliferation of limited liability entities behind which the scoundrels are now hiding.

What they haven't done speaks just as loudly. Why has there been so little relief for low-income wage earners? Why has there been no residential housing relief? Why have they permitted HS Orka to be sold to the highest bidder? Why have the individuals who led us over the cliff been allowed to remain at the top of their parties' lists?

There has been talk of a constitutional convention this fall. While it is undoubtedly true that we need to revisit the underpinnings of our system of government, there is an even more urgent need to revisit the underpinnings of the political parties that make up that government. The individuals who have thrived and advanced within the parties do not appear to be the type of individuals to whom one would entrust a nation's future. They seem to view the parties as employment agencies for themselves and their friends and families, rather than as organisations created to advance the well-being of our people as a whole.

We are presented with generic mission statements and bland party platforms drafted to please the greatest number of voters while offending the fewest, and then base our decisions on inertia, physical attractiveness, and personal charisma.

I hope Jóhanna was right, and that serious rethinking of the goals of our society and the means of reaching those goals is forthcoming. Jón Gnarr may simply be a comedian who's suddenly found himself in an awkward situation, but I believe that the discontent with the established parties that he embodies can lead to a more open and honest government, a truly new beginning.

Which—God knows—we could sure use.

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The Financial Revolution That Ate Its Children

How the vision of a shareholder democracy was perverted and turned into the dystopian dream of the island as a giant hedge fund.

Words

Magnús Sveinn Helgason

Illustration

Stock ownership by Icelandic investment funds 1997 - 2009

It is easy to forget how new modern finance – securities trading and investment banking – is to Iceland, especially when we consider the enormous size that the Icelandic financial bubble had grown to by the fall of 2008, and the even more grandiose dreams attached to the further growth of the banks and various investment companies. In fact, we cannot speak of a modern capital market, or even a financial market, in Iceland until the early 1990s.

CREATING A CAPITAL MARKET

The first steps, however, had been taken in the mid '80s by free market visionaries. Laying the foundation for the free market reforms of the '90s they set about creating a modern capital market: for a modern capital market does not emerge on its own out of thin air. Just like all other markets, it has to be created. And it cannot be created by decree alone, and it does not magically emerge via the cutting of red tape or taxes.

Still, the first step was relatively straightforward and simple: creating a central marketplace where buyers and sellers of securities could meet to trade stocks and bonds. In 1985, the Icelandic stock exchange was founded. However, the first stocks were not listed until 1991.

The main reason was that in 1985 Iceland had neither buyers nor sellers of stocks, and very few companies whose stock could be traded. Establishing a stock exchange was not enough: the state also had to create both the supply and the demand for stocks. In order to convince the public of investing in stocks, a law was passed in 1984 that offered a tax rebate to anyone who invested in common stock.

"SHAREHOLDER NATION"

Creating a modern stock market was not an end in itself. The ultimate goals were threefold. Firstly, the goal was to wean Icelandic companies off their reliance on cheap debt supplied by the state controlled investment funds, and get them to raise equity from investors. Secondly, a stock market was necessary if the ambitious plans of the free market visionaries for privatisation were to be achieved.

The third goal was a tad more idealistic, namely the creation of a "shareholder nation" or a "shareholder democracy." The concept had been around in conservative circles for decades,

first articulated by long serving conservative MP and ideologue, Eyjólfur Konráð Jónsson. As early as the sixties he had argued that the best way to eliminate the conflicts between capital and labour – and to ensure the public support of more business friendly government policies – was to make the general public into shareholders in the largest private companies.

THE IDEA TAKES FLIGHT

It was only in 1990, after the tax rebate had been increased that stock trading took off—and in order to meet this increased demand the securities firms—all of them partially or wholly owned by the banks – set up new mutual funds, marketed as "stock funds", that entitled their investors to the tax rebate.

There was a wrinkle, however: a legal loophole made it possible to organise closed end mutual funds as regular joint stock companies – thus exempting them from the very limited legislation that governed regular mutual funds. The funds were marketed as a way for small investors to diversify their portfolios, yet there were no legal requirements that funds actually diversify their holdings.

There was very little criticism of this arrangement, and the securities firms argued that it allowed them necessary "flexibility". And in any case, there were no apparent problems: no significant scandals that shook people's belief in the market or their chosen vehicle, the mutual funds. Why attack a non-existing problem with legislation?

The fact that no obvious problems cropped up, along with the fact that the market grew, appeared to confirm the idea that the market would "take care of itself" – that the main problem of the fledgling Icelandic financial market was its small size, especially lack of liquidity, and that the invisible hand would solve these problems as the stock market grew.

And indeed, by the end of the '90s it appeared that the free market ideologues had been proved correct and their dreams realised: Iceland now had a modern capital market and a vibrant stock exchange, listing most large and medium sized private companies as well as several newly privatised state owned enterprises. The most encouraging development was the mass participation of the public in the stock market – largely through the mutual funds. The vision of the Icelandic economy as a "shareholder democracy" appeared within reach.

THEN THE BUBBLE BURST

"The bursting of the millennium bubble exposed Icelandic investors to a completely novel experience: stocks could actually lose value! Ever since stocks were first traded in the late '80s the market had known only one direction: up. Between 1987 and 1992, the market rose by 700%. This amazing bull market was followed by a short "bear market", in which – instead of falling – prices simply stood still. In the spring of 1994, then, the great bull market of the '90s took off, growing some 480% before the bubble burst.

In 2000, then, when the broad market fell for the first time,

the public was spooked. People rushed to withdraw money from the market. Including the mutual funds."

And now the curious make-up of the mutual funds became a problem. Regular open-ended mutual funds were exempted from income taxes. The gains were taxed only in the form of capital gains taxes on the members when they cashed out of the funds. The "stock funds," because they were organised as regular joint stock companies, were not exempt from paying income taxes. By reinvesting their profits, however, they could defer these taxes. This strategy worked well enough while money flowed into the funds, but when investors cashed out, the funds were faced with a serious problem: they would have to start unloading assets on a falling market, thus depressing prices even further, while at the same time shouldering a sizable tax bill.

At the same time the banks and securities firms that sponsored mutual funds had acted as market makers for their shares. The result was that in the aftermath of the millennium bubble, the banks and securities firms came to own large blocks of shares in the mutual funds, thus tying up large amounts of their capital.

LEVERAGE TO THE RESCUE

The banks hit upon a simple solution: to turn the mutual funds into leveraged investment companies. This development began in the spring of 2001 with the transformation of the oldest "stock fund" Hlutabréfasjóðurinn hf – founded in 1986 – into a leveraged investment company Straumur.

By 2004, all the major mutual "stock funds" that had served as vehicles for the public participation in the stock market had disappeared, either merging with various leveraged investment companies or, as in the case of Kaupthing, being absorbed by the investment bank itself. Instead of holding shares in a mutual fund with a diversified portfolio the investors now held shares in leveraged investment firms. Rather than aiming at diversification the leveraged investment companies concentrated their holdings, buying controlling stakes in a small number of firms, often with the goal of taking them private and "reorganising" them (frequently by piling on debt and/or selling off assets).

The ownership also changed. Instead of being held by a large number of small investors (as the mutual funds had been), the investment companies were controlled by a few large investors. The result was that the influence of the small investors was virtually nil.

DIVERSIFICATION? WHO NEEDS IT!

Over the next years these investment companies became a dominant force on the Icelandic stock market, pushing up share prices as they participated in the leveraged buyout boom that propelled the

stock market bubble. In the process most medium sized companies disappeared from the stock exchange, and the ownership of those left became increasingly concentrated.

The result was that the stock market became less and less "democratic" – and the vision of a "shareholder democracy" became increasingly distant. Considering how momentous this transformation was it is amazing that it took place virtually unnoticed and without any protest or public discussion.

The reason, of course, was that the small shareholders were happy to enjoy the rising share prices of the investment companies: employing the magic of leverage they were able to post amazing returns. In 2004, Atorka, one of these firms, posted a 73,3% return on its capital. With returns like those, who needed diversification?

The implications, however, were serious. By using leverage to take public companies private, the investment companies were not only undermining the idea of a shareholder democracy, they were defeating a second achievement of the tax rebate. Rather than strengthening the capital base of Icelandic companies they became increasingly leveraged. This leverage was to achieve monstrous proportions, and played a key role in weakening the economy so that when the global financial crisis hit in the fall of 2008, it set in motion a chain reaction in Iceland.

THE LEVERAGED UNDERTAKERS OF THE REVOLUTION

There is an obvious irony in the fact that the mutual "stock funds", which had become the main vehicle of the government policy to increase stock ownership and achieve the dream of a shareholder democracy, had become the undertakers of this dream.

The reason was, of course, that while laying the foundations for the financial market the government and the legislature had not shown much foresight – it was simply assumed that the market would take care of itself. The government could offer incentives like the tax rebate, but market participants should be trusted to find the best way to make use of these incentives: the

The bursting of the millennium bubble exposed Icelandic investors to a completely novel experience: stocks could actually lose value! Ever since stocks were first traded in the late '80s the market had known only one direction: up.

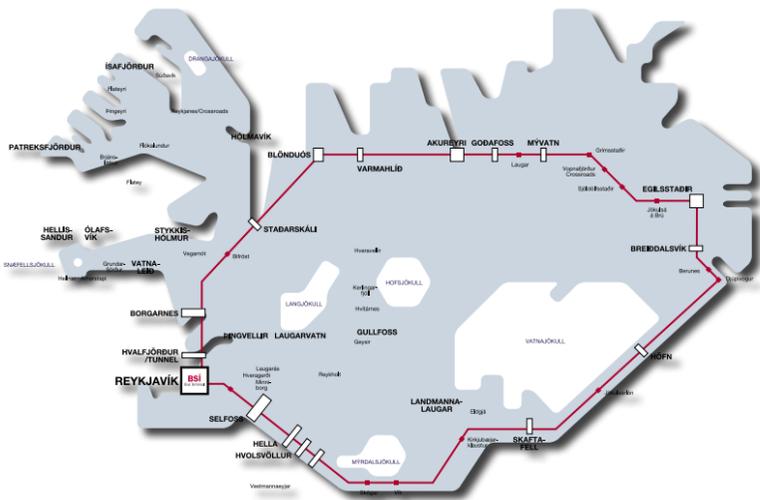
more flexibility fund managers and the securities firms had to respond to opportunities and changes in the market, the better.

But as history teaches us, revolutions tend to have unintended consequences, and sometime they even "eat their children."

The Icelandic financial revolution that took place in the 1990s is no exception. ❧



Full Circle Passport



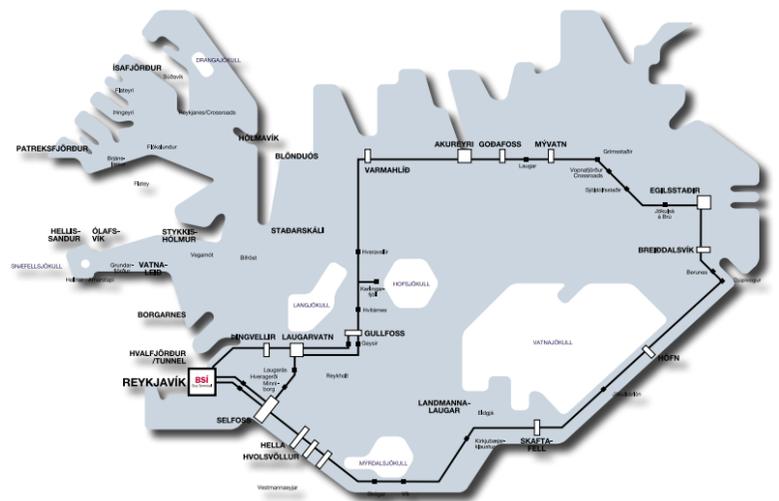
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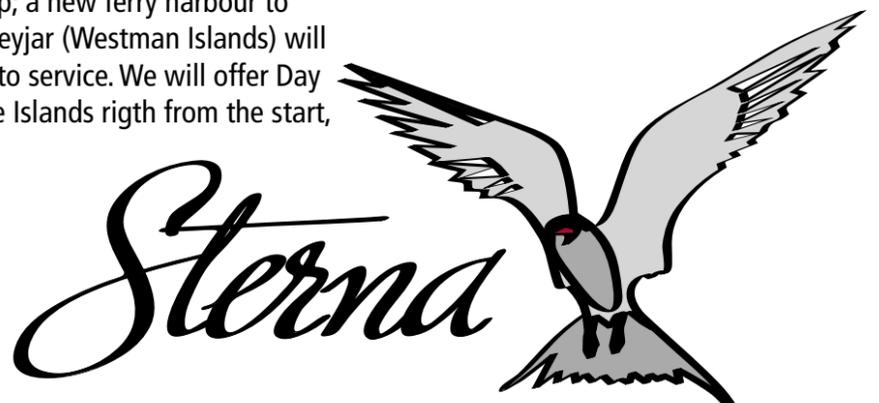


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God Returns To Iceland pt. 4:

The Year of the Ox

The Lord had his heart set on destroying first Iceland, then the world, in punishment for man's ignorance and greed. The four guardian spirits of Iceland had but a moment to convince the mad Creator that both were worth saving.

The four spirits looked at one another. The artists worked in advertising, the products that they spoke of did not exist. Now a vengeful God wanted to know if the Icelanders had ever created anything.

"They managed to co-co-convince each other, and the world, that they had boundless riches, when in fact they had none," stuttered the dragon. "Surely, this took some creativity?"

"True creativity calls forth something that can last," quoth the Lord. "All else are houses built on sand. What here still stands?"

When the Dragon realised the futility of his argument, he erupted into flames.

"They may be deceivers," the eagle screeched, "but look at the quality of the deception. Did this not have a certain, inherent beauty in itself? It may not have been truth, but was truth necessarily beauty? Was it not better to create a land free of class struggle, where every man was king, where everyone could have all they wanted merely by going to the bank teller and signing an X in the dotted line? It may have been an illusion, but what an illusion it was! Such was the art of the athafnaskáld."

Poets of Entrepreneurship! This self-assumed title had long angered the Lord. It was one thing when people mistook avarice for intelligence, but when those who hoarded gold referred to themselves as poets, he took this as a personal insult. He was the God of Creation, and this denigrated his profession.

He did not care to answer, but instead gave the bird of prey a look which could melt ice or turn fire to rock. The Eagle lost its feathers, without which it did not survive for longer than an instant in the harsh land.

"Now you," the Lord said as he looked menacingly to the giant.

The giant stood dumb. But somewhere deep inside, a rumble began and started to take the form of words. It was not often he spoke, but when he did, he liked to believe that it carried an impact.

"You say that the Icelanders creat-

ed nothing," he said, as if addressing an equal. "Look around you; have the people of this country not left their mark upon it? Did they not take a desolate place and here build their dams and their smelters. There is barely a spot untouched, in a country hardly suited to men. Surely, this must attest to their ingenuity?"

The Lord looked around at the scarred land. "You put a slab of rock on top of the Mona Lisa, and you dare call it art!" he bellowed.

The giant dared say no more, and no more he ever did say. For at that very moment he began turning to stone, until he could no longer be singled out from the scenery.

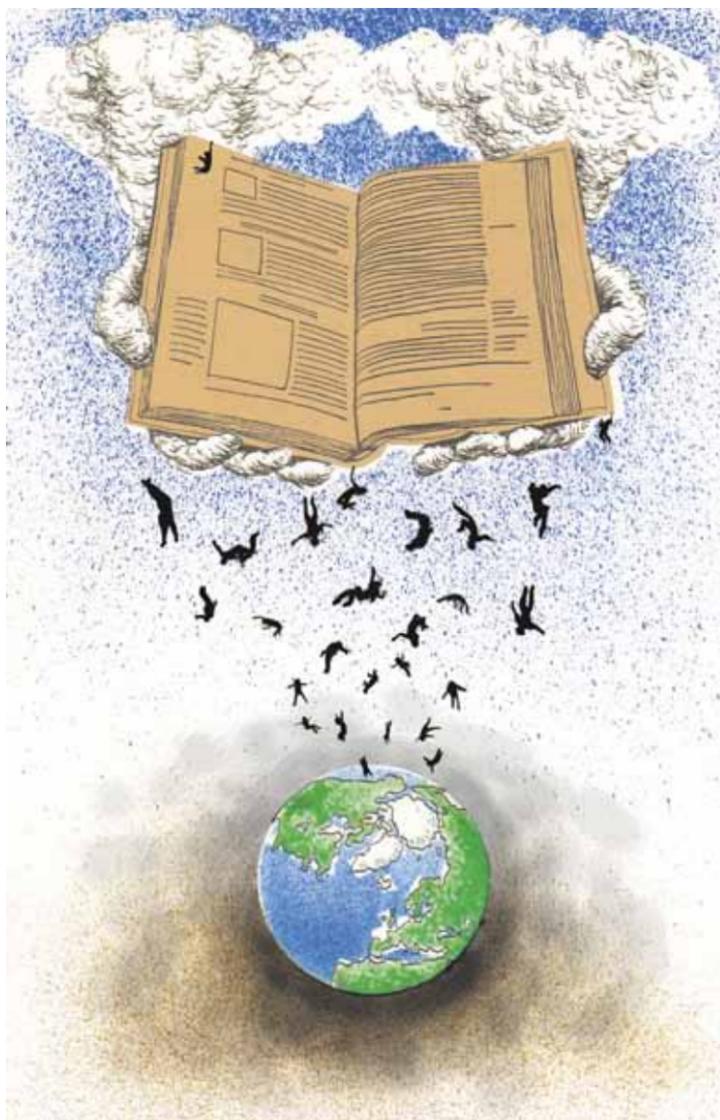
The Lord of Creation was never lacking for inspiration and so a new idea took form in the Godhead. As soon as daylight broke, he would turn the entire population to stone. It would be the world's first, and last, Sculpture Museum of Economic Collapse. There would be no one to admire it, but at least the point would be made.

It would not be long now. The sun was about to rise and the Lord lifted his hand in the direction of Reykjavik. This was, in fact, not really necessary. All it took was a mental command for an idea to take the shape of reality. But he felt that the destruction of mankind should be accompanied by an appropriate gesture.

So, all for effect, the following happened in succession: His eyes turned a blood red. His beard, which he had let grow for the occasion, received a darker hue. His toga, unchanged by the dictates of fashion, swayed in the wind. He felt there was something that needed to be said in this, mankind's last hour. Something that would echo around the world in its final moment. But before he could think of the exact thing, he was distracted by a sound right beside him.

There was nothing in the scriptures about God being interrupted as he was about to unleash the Apocalypse. Perhaps the prophets had that part edited out, as it would detract from the overall effect. In any case, it would soon be put to an end. The sound was not loud, merely the clearing of a throat. But there was something about it that indicated it needed to be heard.

The Lord's eyes momentarily lost



their fire as he looked around. Beside him were the ashes of the Dragon, the carcass of the Eagle and the rubble that had been the Giant. Next to these was yet another creature, the last of the guardian spirits.

The stout ox did not stand as tall as the giant, was not as colourful as the dragon or as brazen and loud as the eagle. Yet, there was something headstrong about him. He did not blow back and forth in the breeze like the others, but stood firmly where he had marked his ground. He had the patience of someone who understood that his time would eventually come, when everyone else had worn themselves out.

The Lord had set the rules himself and it was only very occasionally, at the speed of light or in a moment of sheer inspiration, that he broke his

own rules. He knew that the ox must be heard out.

"Be brief," said the Lord, impatient as he was. It was only when he saw his own ideas set in stone that he could really determine whether they had any significance.

But the ox said nothing.

"And so history ends, first with a whimper, then with a bang," said the Lord. "Not bad," he thought to himself, as his eyes again assumed the red glow of genocide.

The ox said nothing. Instead, a book appeared from his side. It was of Biblical proportions and written, it seemed, in his own hand. This aroused God's interest. Though more of a visual artist himself, he still enjoyed a good read, particularly since so many of the books were about him. Even if the unauthorised biogra-

phers, gossipers and sycophants never managed to get him quite right, he enjoyed seeing them stretching their imagination to the limit.

The Lord picked up the volume and leafed through it. The ox looked on with silent, deep eyes which seemed to say more than an eagle's shrieks or the puffing of a dragon ever could.

Most of the stories were set over a thousand years ago, before the dullness of Christianity had infected the land with mediocrity. The characters were in turns vicious and kind, spiteful or loving, but always so very human. They fought, they loved, they betrayed each other and they strove to find the best way to conduct their lives. In fact, human beings in all their exasperating complexity were better represented here than in all the myriad tomes that had been written in his honour.

Perhaps none of this was true. Perhaps it had all been made up. But what kind of people could create such wonderful stories?

He closed the book and looked into the eyes of the bull. God understood that the people the bovine creature represented were the same as those who had once told the greatest stories of their, or perhaps any, time. Such a people did not, for all their mistakes, deserve destruction. They could learn from their mistakes, and if not, then at least compose masterworks out of the follies of their compatriots. He looked forward to reading them.

And so it was that yet again history was saved by the Icelandic Sagas. The Lord left Iceland, and promised never again to intervene in the affairs of its inhabitants. It was so much more amusing to watch them try to find their way on their own. ☺

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Opinion | Magnús Sveinn Helgason

The Poop Throwing Left Wing Conspiracy



One of the oldest blogs in Iceland is Vefþjóðviljinn ("The People's Will, on the Web"—The WebWill for short). The blog, launched in the mid 90s, is run by a curious mix of neocons and libertarian fringe elements of the conservative Independence Party. Along with AMX—an internet news-outlet run by a similar group—the WebWill serves as the nerve centre of the right wing blogosphere in Iceland, and is a reliable source of Freeper style wingnuttiness in Icelandic, taking the most extreme viewpoint on the subject du-jour. For the connoisseur of right wing crazy, the WebWill is the go-to place in Iceland.

One could therefore count on the WebWill to address the trial of the Reykjavík nine. And boy did they deliver! Rather than focusing on the Reykjavík nine, they decided to serve one of its specialties: The vast poop throwing left wing conspiracy.

The trial of the Reykjavík nine has provided the right wing fringe with an opportunity not only to rehash this alternative history narrative, but to anoint the Reykjavík nine as the Bolshevik vanguard of this imaginary Left-green conspiracy and attack on parliament.

Ever since the government was forced out by the mass protests of the winter of 2008-9, the Independence Party's right wing has been trying to sell a narrative that frames the protests as 'remote-controlled' by Left-green MPs. See, the protesters were really socialist stooges who laid siege to Alþingi, pelting it with rocks and human faeces. Yes, human faeces. The parliament, however, was saved by the police, which was supposedly in constant and immediate danger from the bloodthirsty mob of poop throwers. This narrative always includes a story of how the protesters attempted to set the house of parliament on fire.

In this narrative the WebWill, AMX, and the various wingnut bloggers position themselves as defenders of Western traditions and decency, law and order, decrying the fact that the protesting mob was not subject to more police brutality. Throughout the protests, they repeatedly called for the formation of a militia that would be deputized to defend parliament, and to ensure the protesters got what they deserved.

Like all good conspiracy theories, this alternative history narrative contains elements of truth: Someone did indeed pour a small amount of flammable liquid on the wall of the Alþingi and set it on fire. However, there was never any danger of the building catching fire, and protesters actually rushed to

the scene to put the fire out. There is one confirmed instance of the police being attacked with rocks, but the police also confirmed that the attackers were well known criminals, and again, the protesters who were present defended the officers, facing down the attackers. All of this has been extensively covered by the Icelandic media. As to the excrement throwing, well, rumour has it that in January or February 2008 the police stopped a couple of teenagers bearing poop in a small plastic bag.

Whether the right wing actually believes its version of history is an open question. But their alternative history narrative serves a purpose: To delegitimize the protests.

But the alternative history also plays a second, perhaps more important purpose, as it plays a crucial part in the warped world view of the right wing. The obvious explanation for the right wing rage that has been on display since the protests is that these people have trouble coming to terms with having been ousted from power. The Independence Party had been in government since 1991; since 1944 they have been out of power for a grand total of a little over a decade.

Many conservatives have therefore come to believe that they are entitled to rule, and that any government without them is somehow illegitimate. An entire generation of young right wingers has never known an Iceland that is not governed by the Independence Party, and it is these people who have been the most vocal proponents of the vast left wing conspiracy theory.

This kind of development is not restricted to Iceland. In the United States the Republican party responded its loss of power by going full blown crazy, embracing the Tea Party movement and conspiracy theories of the likes of Glenn Beck and Orly Taitz, demanding Obama show his birth certificate and fuming over "Maoists" in the White house.

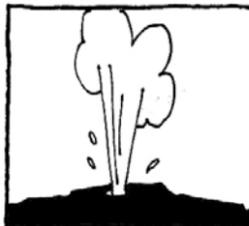
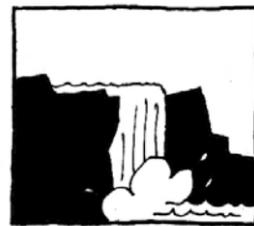
While the wild eyed ranting of the WebWill and Glenn Beck might be amusing, and on occasion LOLworthy, there is good reason to worry about this development. If the right begins to believe its own conspiracy theories and narratives of alternative history, there is a very real danger they will, once back in power, take concrete steps to address the imaginary threats, organising a right wing paramilitary to defend parliament from the poop throwing Bolsheviks. ☹

Comic | Hugleikur Dagsson

GREAT TOURIST ATTRACTIONS.

GULLFOSS.

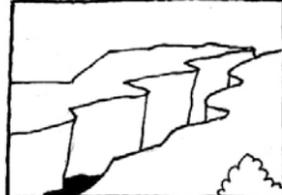
IT MEANS "THE GOLDEN WATER FALLS" BUT IT'S NOT REALLY GOLDEN. IT'S JUST REGULAR-ASS CLEAR WATER. BUT IF YOU PHOTOSHOP A PICTURE OF IT, YOU CAN PROBABLY MAKE IT LOOK GOLDEN.



GEYSIR.

ICELAND'S MOST CELEBRATED NATURAL LANDMARK. IT WAS ONCE BELIEVED THAT IT WAS THE DEVIL EJACULATING FROM HIS UNDERGROUND LAIR. LATER IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT IT'S NOT THE DEVIL! OBVIOUSLY. IT'S JUST SOME GUY NAMED PHIL.

THE BLUE LAGOON.
A BIG WARM POOL OF LIGHT-BLUIISH WATER AND WHITE MUD. SOME GEOLOGICAL THING. I DON'T KNOW. I WAS GOING TO DO A CUM JOKE HERE. BUT I ALREADY DID IT WITH GEYSIR.

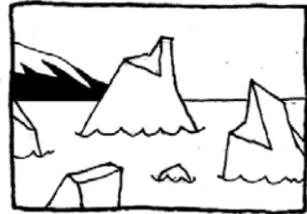


ALMANNAGJÁ.

A CANYON WHERE THE EURASIAN AND NORTH AMERICAN TECTONIC PLATES MEET. INTERESTINGLY ALMANNAGJÁ IS ALSO A WORD FOR "SLUT". THE DIRECT TRANSLATION IS "ALL-MENS-GAP".

JÖKULSÁRLÓN.

JUST A LAKE WITH SOME ICE IN IT. NOTHING SPECIAL. BUT HEY, UHM... REMEMBER THAT BOND MOVIE, "A VIEW TO A KILL"? THE OPENING SCENE WAS SHOT THERE.



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*From the Hávamál, 1300 AD

The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

GOOD NEWS

We are generally inspired by Iceland and the stuff going on here. We wanted to bring y'all the good news happening in our fair country and why we love living here.

GRAPEVINE SHOWS SOME LOVE

A buncha stuff we thought we'd love on



The Jónsvaka Arts Festival

Downtown Reykjavík

Bunch of young people making art and music? You gotta love that.



Kaffi Grand Frakkastígur

This place sells dirty beer done dirt-cheap. And mixed drinks. Really, really cheap. And still manages to be relatively nice. What a find, what a find.



Y'all tourists!

Boy, summer is so fun in Reykjavík! There is no shortage of fun and interesting new people to converse with, to drink with and to argue about whaling with. Come one, come all!



Our new Mayor!

Jón Gnarr is now mayor of Reykjavík. This is very cool, and offers a glimmer of hope. Here's wishing that he does an admirable job, so we can all admire him.



The new Iceland Airwaves team

Already they've announced a buncha sweet bands, like jj. And Hercules & Love Affair. And The Antlers. Good work, new team!



Boston Laugavegur

The beer is too expensive, but there's something just right about it when the mood strikes.

Hammertime!

The totally unofficial guide to getting hammered in Reykjavík



Clearly we at the Grapevine know how to get our drink on. We are after all young, abrasive, foul-mouthed party animals who spend most of our time in mosh pits or typing our way through hangovers (or so we would have you believe). Many of our staff moved to this city because of all the fun times to be had, and those often involve a great deal of booze (we are unimaginative like that). In fact, Iceland as a whole is a rather boozy nation—some would call it borderline-if-not-wholly-past-the-line-alcoholic—and good times can be had anywhere, but especially in this fine city. If you want to really partake in a local experience, here are a few great ways to get properly sloshed with us!

Bakkus Naustin

This relatively new establishment has weathered the storm of being a feel-good-hit-of-the-summer and has become a staple location on weeknights and -ends alike. Bakkus has a lot going on for it; it's super colourful and pretty, the bar has gigantic fingers painted on wood behind it (in fact, it is decorated by renowned artist Davíð Örn Halldórsson), there is free foosball, a photo booth and Terminator pinball. There are often things hanging from the ceiling, like open umbrellas, and lots of kids in face paint. Their new sister-bar and neighbour Venue also often has great shows to start the night off with.

Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1
The little black dress of Reykjavík's nightlife: this indispensable bar is the cornerstone of a good night out. It will never go out of style. It is so classic and reliable in its debauchery. It is two tiny floors of cramped, sweaty, smelly, shoving, pushing, spilling, yelling, dancing, kissing madness full of the coolest and cutest people in town. This is one place that international bar-hoppers must check off the list.

Boston

Laugavegur 28b
Boston is often a who's-who of the famous and fashionable people in town (indeed, it is somewhat of a stylized reincarnation of Sirkús). It is also probably the place to spot the better known musicians, if that's what you came here to do (they feel weird being looked at, though). The lush, classy decor is in

perfect complement to the folks that hang out there, set to cool, eclectic music. One of the nicest features of this bar is the spacious back deck, which is more packed than the dance floor on those light summer nights.

Barbara

Laugavegur 22, entrance on Klapparstígur

As a self-proclaimed straight-friendly queer bar, Barbara is a fantastic spot to cut loose and get footloose. The music here is the perfect balance of processed orange cheese and a glitter explosion, perfect for forgetting how cool you think you are and dancing like crazy on a table to that Katy Perry song you always say you hate. Unlike many bars, it's actually pretty spacious too. The first floor is generally an entire dance floor, while the upper level holds a nice seating area and a cool smokers' deck, so you have plenty of room to go off your tits while inducing cancer.

Prikið

Bankastræti 12

Prikið is kind of badass. They mainly host a fine array of rap, hip hop, dubstep and breakbeat DJs and events, but it's all around just a really laid back cool place to go. Its great location at the meeting point of Laugavegur and Bankastræti make you feel right in the heart of it all and it's cosy, but big enough to feel at ease. They are also well known for their summer jam block parties.

House Parties

Anywhere!

Granted this one might be a bit tougher if you don't know anyone in Iceland, but we strongly urge you to get to know the locals and crash their parties. Usually people don't go out to any of the aforementioned places until really, really late. Like nearly two AM. This is because they are at home greasing the wheels with much cheaper alcohol from the liquor store or moonshine. If you just got into town with duty free booze, you will be very warmly welcomed. You also won't feel like such a sober fool as you parade your way down to the first bar of the night, where everyone is already fucked up. Now go make some friends!

By Rebecca Louder

Tourists On The Street

We stopped to interview some lucky tourists on the street to see why they chose to visit Iceland. The following people graciously complied to dish out the details of their trip.



Names: Mario and Will
Country: Scotland

Why did you want to come to Iceland?

M: To play football. We are organising football games for an international camp for 2 weeks.

What is your favorite thing about Iceland so far?

W: Playing football at night while it is still light outside.

What is your least favorite thing about Iceland so far?

W: Can't think of anything!

What is the most exciting thing you have done/seen?

W: We were attacked by birds while looking for Björk Park ... which apparently doesn't exist.



Names: Odile, Yves, Aline and Ludovic
Country: France

Why did you come to Iceland?

L: We came to Iceland for our work. We're participating in a car-driving event. We really enjoy our work and it's exciting to travel to Iceland for it.

So, you like it here so far?

A: So far yes, although we only got in last night. It's very different from France. I wish we were staying longer. We don't have to much time for sight-seeing because we're working.

Has anything surprised you about Iceland?

O: I'm surprised at how expensive it is. I knew it was expensive before, but I would have thought things would be cheaper after the banks collapsed. It's not that bad though, it's a very interesting place.



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LÉTÖL

Feature | The European Union

HELLO, IS ANYBODY OUT THERE?

A small nation looking for friends in a big world

Later this June—this autumn at the latest—Iceland is set to become a full candidate for membership of the European Union. An application to join was sent to Brussels in July last year, and now formal negotiations on Iceland's membership are due to begin. However a majority of the nation is opposed to joining the EU; a membership treaty would probably be voted down in a referendum.

For the last two decades, Iceland has belonged to the little known European Economic Area. The EEA was originally a treaty between the EU and countries that had belonged to EFTA, the European Free Trade Association, originally founded in 1960. Soon, three of the main EEA countries, Austria, Sweden and Finland, left to join the EU. Iceland stayed behind with Norway and Liechtenstein.

PARTIAL MEMBERSHIP

According to the EEA Treaty, Iceland is part of the EU in many ways. It enjoys free trade with the EU and subscribes to the "four freedoms," the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital. As a counterpart, the EEA countries are obliged to adopt many of the laws of the European Union without having any part of the decision making process in Brussels. They also have to contribute financially to the single market—well, rich Norway pays a lot, Iceland not so much.

Since 2001, Iceland also belongs to the Schengen Agreement, which entails a borderless zone covering 25 European countries. In this sense Iceland is more ingrained within the EU than the UK and Ireland, who decided not to participate in Schengen.

A STRANGE BALANCING ACT

So in many ways Iceland has been integrated into Europe over the last decades. It is now much more a part of Europe than it was in the time when the Americans operated a large military base in Keflavík, while the country was at the same time doing lively trade with Russia—trading herring and wool for oil and Russian cars, a common sight on the streets of Reykjavík in the sixties and seventies. This was a strange balancing act, which can be explained by the relative strength of communists in Iceland after the Second World War.

One of the touchiest matters in post-collapse Iceland are the UK and Dutch branches of the Landsbanki bank's Icesave savings accounts, which will probably have to be reimbursed by Icelandic tax-payers. This matter will be settled according to European law and perhaps ultimately in a European court. The regulation of the now defunct Icelandic financial market mainly came from Europe—even if it was not always heeded.

QUESTIONS OF SOVEREIGNTY

Icelanders' view of the EU is quite paradoxical. The key word is sovereignty. As previously stated, Iceland adopts much of the EU legislation, but has absolutely no say in it. For an independent country this might seem intolerable. Iceland has to lobby in the corridors of Brussels against EU legislation that might prove harmful for the nation's interests, but then again Iceland doesn't really have the clout to influence decision making

in Brussels.

Many would claim that Iceland really gave up much of its sovereignty when it joined the EEA, and that it would have been normal to hold a referendum on the treaty and to alter the constitution correspondingly. In retrospect this seems to be right. However, even those who opposed the EEA in the beginning soon accepted it. Belonging to the EEA was obviously a factor in the good times enjoyed by Icelanders in the era leading up to the economic collapse of 2008.

ANATHEMA TO LEFTISTS

EU membership divides the nation—and the debate is set to become very tough. The politics of the matter are quite complicated. Only one party is absolutely in favour of joining the EU, The Social Democratic Alliance (Samfylkingin)—the party of PM Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir—presently parliament's majority party, and the most internationally minded of the Icelandic political parties. When the current left wing government was formed in the spring of 2009, the Social Democrats were adamant that a EU application would be high on the government's agenda.

This was very awkward for the junior party in the government, Vinstri-Grænir ('The Left Green Party'), most of whose members oppose the EU. But the Left Greens reluctantly went along, knowing that otherwise they might be left out of the coalition government.

So the social democrats triumphantly sent in an application last summer—and now the formal negotiations are set to begin.

In the present climate of total mistrust in politics—a joke party recently won 35 percent in the Reykjavík municipal elections—this is a very difficult matter to resolve. The leaders of the Left Greens are accused of having betrayed their electorate by agreeing to the EU application. This is one of the reasons why the party, which looked so coherent in opposition, is now in a state of total disarray. Another one is that its chair, Finance Minister Steingrímur J. Sigfússon, is perceived as kowtowing to the IMF, which is anathema to the leftists in his party.

EUROPHOBIA

The right wing Independence Party, historically the largest party in Iceland, is divided on the EU. It has a very loud, somewhat xenophobic, fraction that absolutely detests the EU and everything connected with it. The level of Europhobia is comparable to what you would find on the extreme fringes of the British Conservative party. This is led by Davíð Oddsson, former Prime Minister, then Central Bank Governor, who, surprisingly—given that he was one of the main actors of the collapse—is still around, now as editor of the daily newspaper Morgunblaðið.

The party also has a pro-Europe wing, but this is much more muted; the EU fraction is cowed by the shrillness of the Eurosceptics. The party's chair, Bjarni Benediktsson, is very indecisive, though he appears to be more against than for. For membership to be

The main obstacles in the negotiations with the EU are fisheries and farming, as well as currency matters. Through the EEA Treaty, Iceland is very integrated into Europe so other matters are quite easy to resolve; much of the legislation has already been adopted.

accepted by the parliament and the nation, it is thought imperative that at least a part of the Independence Party be in favour. In due time the party might even split on the issue, but at the moment the Eurosceptics have the upper hand.

The Independence Party is traditionally the party of power in Iceland, the party of business, and it still represents business interests, even if it made a terrible mess of things before the crisis. The attitude of the business community towards the EU is complicated. Basically industry, technology and commerce are for joining, whereas fisheries and the agriculture industry are strongly against it. The fisheries and farming lobbies are very strong within the political parties and in the media.

LACK OF LEADERSHIP

The Eurosceptics within the Independence Party are demanding that the membership application be withdrawn, and some of the Left Greens agree. However this will hardly happen if the present government holds out, and even if it falls it might be considered too late or undiplomatic to withdraw the application. So the process muddles through. Brussels knows that there are doubts and that a future treaty might be voted down—in a recent poll up to 70 percent said they would vote no in a referendum.

The main obstacles in the negotiations with the EU are fisheries and farming, as well as currency matters. Through the EEA Treaty, Iceland is very integrated into Europe so other matters are quite easy to resolve; much of the legislation has already been adopted. But this is also a question of leadership: the present leaders of The Social Democrat Alliance are not great thinkers or charismatic people, and they seem to be unable to counter the anti-EU forces with arguments that might sway the public opinion.

THE MYTH OF THE SIEGE

Throughout the Cold War, Iceland was in the US camp. The Americans even bought fish we could not otherwise sell. Then the Americans left, and the military base in Keflavík is now a ghost town. It didn't even help that then-PM Davíð Oddsson sang a birthday song for George W. Bush in the White House, a cringe worthy moment. At the time of the collapse, Iceland felt it had no friends. Nobody wanted to lend us money to save the economy—which would have been to late anyway, considering the magnitude of the cock up.

Scandinavia said no, and the US didn't seem to care. Mervyn King, governor of The Bank of England, offered the help of central banks to reduce the size of the banking system. This was not heard of until recently—an amazing blunder on the half of the Icelandic Central Bank and the government. One of the more rampant Europhobes even wrote a book called The Siege, claiming that Iceland had been betrayed by its former friends. The Special Investigative Committee's report does not bear this out; in 2,000 pages it maps the collapse and concludes that we Icelanders mostly have ourselves to blame through allowing our banking system to become twelve times the size of the GDP, by the

overvaluing of our currency and by immersing ourselves in debt.

THE RUSSIAN LOAN

We've had some very strange events occurring lately. In October 2008, during the last days of the collapse, Davíð Oddsson, then-governor of the Central Bank, appeared in the media claiming that the Russians had offered to lend Iceland a huge sum of money, maybe enough to see us through the crisis. Geopolitically, this would basically have amounted to the Russians buying up the country, but all the same, the news was surprisingly well received. However, some drew a link between this and alleged Russian involvement with the Icelandic financiers; a bit later former oligarch Boris Beresovsky said on Sky News that the Icelandic banks had been used to launder dirty money from Russia.

In the end the Russian loan turned out to be a fantasy, and the Russian economy soon found itself treading in deep water. This demonstrated how unsure the Icelanders were of their place in the world. Russians were perceived as an alternative to the EU and the IMF. There is a local saying originated by Nobel laureate Halldór Laxness, Iceland's greatest writer, who has one of his heroines exclaim: "If I can't have the best man, then let me have the worst one."

THE CHINESE SHOW UP

Strange things are still happening. A few days ago a delegation of Chinese leaders, fronted by a top politburo member, showed up in Reykjavík, drove around town in a big mobile convoy and doled out credit to the Icelanders. Their visit had not been announced in advance, so this was a bit of a surprise. The Chinese also have a very big embassy in Reykjavík. Many ask in light of Iceland's vulnerable position: What do the Chinese want from this small nation here in the high north?

VICIOUS DEBATE ON EUROPE

Back to Europe. It has been proposed, notably by former leader of the Social Democratic Alliance Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, that the EU application be put on hold for some years. This might be a clever compromise in light of the very volatile political situation and also because Europe at the moment, with its Euro crisis, seems to be in a mess. It is quite unclear where the EU will go from here, whether the Eurozone will break up, or if we will see a more centralised economic regime in Europe.

There are signs that the debate on Europe will become extremely vicious. Icelanders are not very good at discussing ideas; arguments in this country very quickly become very personal. Attempts at reform, badly needed in a country riddled with debt, are being blocked because they are perceived as being part of the EU programme. It must be said, one is apprehensive about having to listen to this debate for the next years—a referendum on the EU, which will be held after a treaty has been concluded, will surely divide the nation. ☹

Sophia And The Eu

Germany-to-Iceland transplant Sophia van Treeck investigates whether Iceland should join the EU, with the help of some knowledgeable folks

Words

By Sophia van Treeck

With foreword

By Haukur S Magnússon

Last winter we had a German intern here at the Grapevine. She is called Sophia van Treeck, she is awesome, and she turned in some great work over her three-month stint. Now, we like to talk about all sorts of stuff that interests us here at the office, and one of those things happens to be the European Union and Iceland's pending application to join in on all the purported EuroFun. As a born and bred citizen of the EU, Sophia had some trouble understanding why Iceland joining the EU should even be a topic of discussion.

"I don't know, it seems odd to me that people would even have this argument," she would often exclaim as we debated the matter. "I have a real hard time spotting any drawbacks to an EU membership. I don't think of Germany as any less German even though it belongs to the EU, and I certainly haven't noticed any real problems stemming from our membership. Also, you guys adopt EU legislation all the time. Wouldn't it be better for you to have a say in it?"

Now, we are curious, inquisitive folks at the Grapevine, and we thought it would be best if Sophia went into a full-on investigation of the matter, with the help of some local smart folks that have been outspoken on the subject. Then you readers might perhaps learn something along with Sophia.

With the help of her interlocutors, Sophia



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

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Issue 08 - 2010

www.grapevine.is

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How to use the listings
Venues are listed alphabetically by day.
For complete listings and detailed
information on venues visit
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18 FRI

Apótek
00:00 DJ Áki.
Bakkus
Gísli Galdur
Celtic Cross
01:00 Live music.
Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music.
Dubliner
22:30 Live music.
English Pub
22:00 Live music.
Hressó
22:00 Jogvan & Vignir, DJ Bjarni.
Kaffibarinn
Maggi Legó.
Karamba
23:45 DJ Retro Stefson.
P
Lounge music.
Prikió
22:00 Franz & Jenni.
Sódóma
22:00 - 3:00 Protest Concert with GusGus, Sykur, Quadruplos & DJ Vector. 1000 ISK at the door. Help save the Music Development Center.

19 SAT

Apótek
00:00 DJ Áki.
Bakkus
DJ Benson is Fantastic
Café Óliver
Tropical Girls Night. 3 for 1 on pina coladas & sex on the beach. DJ Maggi
Café Rósenberg
22:00 Robin Nolan Tio.
Celtic Cross
01:00 Live music.
De Danske Kro
12:00 Live music.
Dubliner
22:30 Live music.
English Pub
22:00 Live music.
Frikirkjan
19:00 Norwegian Choir presents Norwegian Summer.
***Havarí**
16:30-21:00 Sudden Weather Change release of The Whaler 7" single.
Hellirinn (the Cave)
15:00 - 22:00 Protest Concert with LayLow, Feldberg, Dark Harvest, Momentum & more. Help save the Music Development Center.
Hemmi & Valdi
Intro Beats.
Hressó
Napóleon & DJ Bjarni.
Jómfrúin
15:00-17:00 Summer Jazz: Heiðar Arni Karlsson Quartet.

Café Loki in front of Hallgrímskirkja



Enjoy some solid homemade Icelandic food

Kaffibarinn
23:00-05:00 Gísli Galdur & Benni B Ruff.
Karamba
23:45 DJ KGB, Girls Night Out with DJ KGB.

P
Lounge music.
Prikió
12:00 Clothes market, DJ Danni
Sódóma
22:00 DIKTA, Agent Fresco, Endless Dark. 1500 ISK at the door.
Thorvaldsen
22:00 DJ Áki.

20 SUN

Café Óliver
Summer Sunday banana split á la Óliver. 900 ISK & live music.
Café Rósenberg
20:30 Fete de la Musique with Pascal Pinon, Myrra Rós, Unnur Birna & more.
De Danske Kro
12:00 Live music. Beer for 600 ISK after 19:00.
English Pub
22:00 Live music.
Eymundsson, Austurstræti
15:00 - 17:00 Fete de la Musique: classical music.
Grensáskirkja
13:00 Norwegian Choir presents Norwegian Summer.
Prikió
22:00 Hangover movie night, Lethal Weapon 2.

21 MON

Bakkus
Movie night, showing Husbands.
Café Óliver
Margarita Monday, 2 for 1 on margaritas & live music.
Café Rósenberg
22:00 Myrra Rós & Of Monsters & Men
De Danske Kro
22:00 Live music.
Dubliner
22:30 Live music.
English Pub
22:00 Live music.
Prikió
21:00 Fortune teller. Red wine & cheese for 2, only 1000 ISK. DJ Blush.

22 TUE

Café Óliver
Live karaoke with Raggi Troubadour. Beer/wine 600 ISK.
Café Rósenberg
22:00 Daegurflygurnar.
De Danske Kro
22:00 Live music.
Dubliner
22:30 Live music.
English Pub
22:00 Live music.
Prikió
22:00 FIFA Worldcup & playstation on big screen. DJ Ituag. 350 ISK for beer.

23 WED

Bakkus
Dj Músikölski.
Bar 11
21:00 Efraim Trujillo Quartet in the Jazz Cellar.
Café Óliver
Kiwi Party & live music.
Café Rósenberg
22:00 Tom Hennay.
Children's Hospital
Fete de la Musique: Music by Sva- var Knútur.
De Danske Kro
22:00 Live music.
Dubliner
22:30 Live music.
English Pub
22:00 Live music.
Hressó
22:00 Offside.
Kaffibarinn
Alfons X.
Prikió
Addi Intro. Large beer followed by a small beer for free, just 700 ISK.
Sódóma
21:00 Moses Hightower.

24 THU

Bakkus
Einar Sonic.
Bar 11
21:00 Efraim Trujillo Quartet in the Jazz Cellar.
Café Óliver
Live music by Ingó Weathergod. Beer for 600 ISK.
Café Rósenberg
22:00 Gogoyoko.
De Danske Kro
22:00 Live music.
Dubliner
22:30 Live music.
English Pub
22:00 Live music.
Hressó
22:00 Böddi and David.
Kaffibarinn
Benni B Ruff.
P
2-for-1 white wine & Grolsch beer.
Prikió
Rottweiler Night #1. Music from Dóra DNA & Árni Koccoon.
Thorvaldsen
22:00 R&B night.

25 FRI

Apótek
00:00 DJ Fannar.
Bakkus
DJ ákni.
Café Óliver
Ladies Night, 3 for 1 mojitos & strawberry daquiris. DJ Brynjar Már playing all night.
Café Rósenberg
22:00 Varsjárbandalagid. Balkans music.
Celtic Cross
01:00 Live music.
De Danske Kro
22:00 Live music.
Dubliner
22:30 Live music.
English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Music & Entertainment | Venue finder

Amsterdam Hafnarstræti 5 D2	Celtic Cross Hverfisgata 26 E4	Porvaldsenstræti 2 E3
Apótek Austurstræti 16 E3	Dillon Laugavegur 30 F5	Nýlenduvörurverzlun Hemma & Valda Laugavegur 21 E4
Austur Austurstræti 7 E3	Dubliner Hafnarstræti 4 D3	Næsti Bar Ingólfstræti 1A E3
B5 Bankastræti 5 E3	English Pub Austurstræti 12 D2	Óliver Laugavegur 20A F5
Babalú Skólavörðustígur 22 G5	Glaumbar Tryggvagata 20 D2	Ölstofan Vegamótastígur E4
Bar 11 Laugavegur 11 E4	Highlander Lækjargata 10 E3	Prikió Bankastræti E3
Barbara Laugavegur 22 F6	Hressó Austurstræti 20 E3	Rósenberg Klappastígur 25 E4
Bjarni Fel Austurstræti 20 E3	Hverfisbarinn Hverfisgata 20 E4	Sódóma Reykjavík Tryggvagata 22 D3
Boston Laugavegur 28b F5	Jacobsen Austurstræti 9 E3	Sólón Bankastræti 7A E3
Café Cultura Hverfisgata 18 E4	Kaffi Zimsen Hafnarstræti 18 D3	Thorvaldsen Austurstræti 8 D2
Café Paris Austurstræti 14 E3	Kaffibarinn Bergstradastræti 1 E4	Vegamót Vegamótastígur 4 E4
Balthazar Hafnarstræti 1-3 D2	Karamba Laugavegur 22 F4	Venue Tryggvagata 22 D3
	NASA	

Hemmi & Valdi

Live band & DJ.

Hressó

22:00 Silfur & DJ Elli.

Kaffibarinn

Sexy Lazer.

Karamba

23:45 DAAS-HANS.

P

Lounge music.

Prikið18:00 VIP Football/Soccer. Music from **Arni Kocoon**.22:00 Rottweiler Night #2. Music from **Franz & Jenni**, then **Danni Deluxe**.**Thorvaldsen**

00:00 DJ Kristjan.

26 SAT**Apótek**

00:00 DJ Fannar.

Bakkus

Hunk Of A Man.

Café ÓliverTropical Girls Night, 3 for 1 on pina coladas & sex on the beach. DJ **Brynjar Már** playing all night.**Café Rósenberg**

22:00 Varsjárbandalagid. Balkans music.

Celtic Cross

01:00 Live music.

De Danske Kro

12:00 Live music.

Dubliner

22:30 Live music.

English Pub

22:00 Live music.

Hemmi & Valdi

DJ Svenni.

Hressó

Dalton & DJ Elli.

Jómfrúin15:00-17:00 Summer Jazz: **Cathrine Legardh & partners**.**Kaffibarinn**

Alfons X.

Karamba

23:45 TERRODISCO.

P

Lounge music.

PrikiðRottweiler Night #3. Music from DJ **Benni**.**Sódóma**

22:00 Dimma, Sólstafir, Swords of Chaos.

Thorvaldsen

00:00 DJ Kristjan.

27 SUN**Café Óliver**

Summer Sunday banana split á la Óliver 900 ISK & live music.

De Danske Kro

12:00 Live music. Beer for 600 ISK after 19:00.

Dubliner

22:30 Live music.

English Pub

22:00 Live music.

Prikið22:00 Hangover movie night, **A Night at the Roxbury**. Free popcorn.**28 MON****Bakkus**

Hunk Of A Man.

De Danske Kro

22:00 Live music.

Café Óliver

Margarita Monday 2 for 1 on margaritas & live music.

Dubliner

22:30 Live music.

English Pub

22:00 Live music.

PrikiðRed wine & cheese for 2, only 1000 ISK. DJ **Blush**.

21:00 Fortune teller.

29 TUE**Café Óliver**Live karaoke with **Raggi Troubadour**. Beer/wine 600 ISK.**Café Rósenberg**

22:00 Kristinn & Band.

De Danske Kro

22:00 Live music.

Dubliner

22:30 Live music.

English Pub

22:00 Live music.

Prikið22:00 FIFA Worldcup & playstation on big screen. DJ **Gauti**. 350 ISK for beer.**30 WED****Café Óliver**

Kiwi Party & live music.

Café Rósenberg

22:00 Baldur & Dætra Systir.

De Danske Kro

22:00 Live music.

Dubliner

22:30 Live music.

English Pub

22:00 Live music.

Hressó

22:00 Offside.

Prikið

Addi Intro. Large beer followed by a small beer for free, just 700 ISK.

1 THU**Bakkus**

Live DJ.

Café ÓliverLive music by **Ingó Weathergod**. Beer for 600 ISK.**Café Rosenberg**

22:00 Eliza Newman.

De Danske Kro

22:00 Live music.

Dubliner

22:30 Live music.

English Pub

22:00 Live music.

Nasa20:00 Funk Festival: 20:00 DJ **Lucky**.21:00 **Samúel Jón Samúelsson Big Band**, 22:30 **Jimi Tenor**.**P**

2-for-1 white wine and Grolsch beer.

Prikið

22:00

Sódóma

22:00 Rage Against The Machine Tribute.

Thorvaldsen

16:30 Salsa Night. 16:30 beginners, 9:30 everyone.

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*** Saturdays ***
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June 18th **GUS GUS**, Sykur, Quadruplos, DJ Vector
10pm

June 19th **DIKTA**, Agent Fresco, Endless Dark
10pm

June 23rd **Moses Hightower**
9pm

June 26th **Dimma**, Sólstafir, Swords of Chaos
10pm

July 1st **Rage Against The Machine Tribute**
9pm

July 2nd **Pearl Jam Tribute**
10pm

July 3rd **MÍNUS**
10pm

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18 - 19
June June
VARAUMÓUNARATVINGAR

Stærsta sýningin í Gáttum síð 22.06.2010
Höfundarhorfi á 2. hæð 21.06.2010 - 22.06.2010
DJ Vector Sykur Quadruplos Gus Gus

Stærsta sýningin í Gáttum síð 22.06.2010
Höfundarhorfi á 2. hæð 21.06.2010 - 22.06.2010
Höfundarhorfi á 2. hæð 21.06.2010 - 22.06.2010

Spá Músík: 1. höfundur: sýningin höfundarhorfi: 21.06.2010
Feldberg Lay Low Sudden Weather Change Dark Harvest and more. Help keep an amazing Reykjavík institution alive and rock out at the same time! **AS**

You Should Be Angry! (and here's why)
Protest Concert for the Music Development Centre (TPM)
Sódóma & Hellirinn
18. June/22:00/1000 ISK & 19. June/17:00/Free

The Music Development Centre is a seriously awesome Reykjavík institution. It not only offers space and support for the musically inclined young folk of Reykjavík, but filmmakers, graphic designers, fashion and web designers as well. Bands are provided with recording space, practice facilities, and plenty of support to get their act off the ground.

This wonderful centre is facing some tough times in light of the current financial crisis, and is severely lacking proper funding from the city. If the centre fails to raise enough cash money it faces closing its doors. To demonstrate its importance they'll be throwing two protest concerts this weekend. The first, a fund-raising concert at Sódóma, features acts GusGus, Sykur, Quadruplos and DJ Vector. The second, held in the parking lot of TPM, has performances by Feldberg, Sudden Weather Change, Lay Low, Nolo, Dark Harvest and more. Help keep an amazing Reykjavík institution alive and rock out at the same time! **AS**

Of Horses And People
Hótel Varmahlíð, Skagafjörður
Runs until January 1st 2011
The relationship between horse and man has been one heart-wrenching and emotional rollercoaster. For thousands of years we've forced them into bloody wars and made them transport our asses across mountains and deserts. And did you see how many were wiped out in The Last Samurai? Now it's man's turn to pay his respects to horse. The Horse Centre and the Skagafjörður Archives have teamed up to present the exhibition Of Horses and People at Hótel Varmahlíð. The photographs document over 100 years of our relationship with this trusty beast. **AY**



The City Is Your Gallery
Síggi Ámundason Exhibit
Havari/Útúrdúr

Perhaps as you've explored and wandered around downtown Reykjavík, you've taken note of some of the many colourful and imaginative creations that decorate the city's walls. The lively underground scene of street artists never fails to share brilliant bursts of colour and lively patterns in this, at times grey and dreary, city.

Síggi Ámundason is one of these many urban illustrators. His large wall mural right outside Kling & Bang gallery is impossible to miss as you walk up Hverfisgata. It features an array of stark buildings and a dark expanse of night sky. This impressive artist will be showing four new paintings and releasing a small book of poetry titled Snake Cool And The Cobra Crazies this Friday. It's going down at Havari/Útúrdúr on Austurstræti. Check it. **AS**

It's Only Rock'n'Roll, But They Like It
Rolling Stones Tribute Concert

June 25

Hlégarður in Mossfellsbær at 22:00

Admission 2.000 ISK

Can you not get any satisfaction? Is playing with you like playing with fire? Are you a beast of burden!? Well, you should load up on whisky and head to Mossfellsbær next week to see Iceland's greatest tribute band to The Rolling Stones - Stóns. The supergroup is made up of members of some of the rockiest rock bands in Iceland, bands such as Minus, EGO and Esja. They will cover songs from the Stones' forty-year history and feature a slew of guest performers. DJ Sir Honky Tonkin' will blast tunes between sets. An event guaranteed to cure your cocksucker blues. **RL**

Outside Reykjavík | Venue finder

Keflavík
Suðsúðvestur
www.sudsudvestur.is
Hafnargata 22
230 Reykjanesbær
421-2225

Hafnarfjörður
Hafnarborg
www.hafnarborg.is
Strandgata 34
220 Hafnarfjörður
585-5790

Borgarnes
The Icelandic Settlement Centre
www.landnam.is
Brákarbraut 13-15
310 Borgarnes
437-1600

Stykkishólmur
Vatnasafnið / Library of Water
www.libraryofwater.is

Akureyri
Akureyri Art Museum
www listasafn.akureyri.is
Kaupvangsstræti 12
600 Akureyri
461 2610

Populus Tremula
poptrem.blogspot.com/
Kaupvangsstræti 12
600 Akureyri

Kunstraum Wohnraum
Ásabyggð 2
600 Akureyri

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Sat. 19. June Hjalmar kl. 22.00
Tue. 22. June Andrea Gylfa og Eddi Lár. kl. 21.00
Wed. 23. June Halla og Höfðingjarnir kl. 21.00
Thu. 24. June Dúndurfréttir kl. 22.00
Fri. 25. June Dúndurfréttir kl. 22.00
Thu. 1. July Ljótu Hálfvitarnir kl. 21.00
Fri. 2. July Ljótu Hálfvitarnir kl. 22.00
Sat. 3. July Ljótu Hálfvitarnir kl. 22.00

For further informations on upcoming events and concerts go to:
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CONCERTS & EVENTS IN JUNE AND JULY

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How to use the listings
Venues are listed alphabetically by day.
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MUSIC

18 FRI

Hjálmar
22:00 Græni Hatturinn, Akureyri

19 SAT

Hjálmar
22:00 Græni Hatturinn, Akureyri

22 TUE

Andrea Gyfa & Eddi Lár
21:00 Græni Hatturinn, Akureyri

Við Djúpið
20:00 Hamrar Music Hall, Ísafjörður
Opening recital of this annual music festival held near the solstice. Sif Tulinius on the violin with piano accompaniment by Árni Heimir Ingólfsson.

23 WED

Við Djúpið
12:15 Grunnskólinn Aðalstræti, Ísafjörður
Lunch concert with Héctor Eliel Márquez on piano
20:00 Ísafjörður Church
Concert with Carmina and a vocal ensemble.

24 THU

Dúndurfréttir
Græni Hatturinn, Akureyri
21:00 Led Zeppelin tribute concert.

Við Djúpið
12:15 Grunnskólinn Aðalstræti, Ísafjörður
Lunch concert with Sólveig Samúelsdóttir

20:00 Hamrar Music Hall, Ísafjörður
Concert with a woodwind quintet.

25 FRI

Dúndurfréttir
Græni Hatturinn, Akureyri
22:00 "Best of" Deep Purple, Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, Uriah Heep, Kansas, and more.

Við Djúpið
12:15 Grunnskólinn Aðalstræti, Ísafjörður
Lunch concert with Audun Halvorsen on the bassoon.

20:00 Hamrar Music Hall, Ísafjörður
Concert with Andrew Quartermain on the piano.

22:00 Tjörúhúsið (Tar House), Ísafjörður
Concert with Skúli Mennski

26 SAT

Melonheads
Edinborg, Ísafjörður

23:00 **Pollapönk**
Sjórnæingjahúsið (The Pirate House), Patreksfjörður
Music festival Þönk á Patró is fun for the whole family.

Regína Ósk
Græni Hatturinn, Akureyri
21:00 Regína Ósk sings The Carpenters.

Við Djúpið
11:00 Edinborg, Ísafjörður
Concert matinée with Ólöf Arnalds
17:00 Hamrar Music Hall, Ísafjörður
Concert with soprano Janet Williams and piano and clarinet accompaniment.

27 SUN

Við Djúpið
11:00 Edinborg, Ísafjörður
Concert matinée with Sif Tulinius on the violin accompanied by Andrew Quartermain on piano.

17:00 Hamrar Music Hall, Ísafjörður
Grand finale concert with woodwind quintet.

1 THU

Hera Hjartardóttir
The Ghost Centre, Stokkseyri

20:30 Concert. tickets: 1500 ISK

Ljótu Hálfvitarnir
Græni Hatturinn, Akureyri
21:00

ART OPENINGS

June

Viking Village Festival
The Icelandic Settlement Centre, Borgarnes
10:00 - 23:00

ART ONGOING

Akureyri Art Museum
Straumur / Burðarás
Ongoing till 26 June.
Icelandic minimalism and museum mysteries. Free admissions.

Akureyri Museum
Treasure
Runs until September 15
Twenty Photographers in Akureyri and Surroundings 1858-1965 Eyjafjörður in the early period.

Akranes Museum Centre
June 3 - 5
Blacksmiths will gather and make various items for the museum.

Árnesinga Folk Museum, Eyrarbakki
11:00 - 18:00 May 15 - September 15

Café Karólína, Akureyri
Stúlka / Tussa
Runs until July 2
15:00 Hanna Hlíf Bjarnadóttir introduces her new exhibition where she has stitched words which identify with women, in both positive and negative ways.

The Folk Music Centre, Siglufjörður
13:00 - 17:00 all June

The Ghost Centre, Stokkseyri
Night at the Ghost Museum
An offer for two to spend a scary night at the Ghost Centre. 3500 ISK.
Hafnarborg, Hafnarfjörður

Sites - Friederike von Rauch
Ongoing until June 20
The German photographer exhibits her work.

Erling T.V. Klingenberg
Ongoing until June 20.
A collection of Klingenberg's work, including self-portraits.

Hótel Varmahlíð
Horses & Men
Runs until January 1, 2011
Photographic exhibition which looks into the history of the horse, spanning 100 years.

The Husavik Whale Museum
Whale & Marine Exhibit
9:00 - 19:00 all June, July & August
Includes detailed info about whale habitat, biology, ecology, strandings & history in Iceland

The Icelandic Settlement Centre, Borgarnes
The Egil Saga/ Settlement Exhibition
In these exhibitions The Settlement Centre tells the sagas of Iceland's settlement and Egill Skallagrímsson, Iceland's most famous viking and first poet.

Jónas Viðar Gallery, Akureyri
Paintings by Guðný Kristmannsdóttir
Runs every Saturday until June 19

The Kópavogur Art Museum
Paintings by Baltasar
Runs until June 21
Comparative mythology - The seven last words of Christ on the cross.
Hafsteinn Austmann
Runs until June 20
A retrospective of Austmann's in celebration of his 75th birthday, and a career spanning over 50 years.

Mosfellsbær Gallery
Moso Mongo Memory Mix
June 5 - July 3

Snorri Ásmundsson introduces his surprise exhibition.

Pompei of the North, Westman Islands
Excavation project at the site of the 1973 volcanic eruption on the island of Heimaey.

Reykjanes Art Museum, Reykjanesbær
11:00 - 17:00 every weekday, 13:00 - 17:00 every weekend.

Safnahús Museum
Aquarium & Museum of Natural History in Vestmannaeyjar
Mounted birds & fish, aquarium, and rocks & mineral display.

Skaftfell Centre for Visual Art
Ásgeirs Emilsson's Art and Life
Ongoing till June 30.
Shedding light on the extraordinary artist and opening a window into his unique mind. Part of the Reykjavík Arts Festival 2010.

Skógar Museum, Hvolsvöllur
9:00 - 18:00 all June, July & August
University Center of the Westfjords, Ísafjörður
World Light - World Song
June 20 - June 22
Three day event focusing on the works of Halldór Laxness and Halla Eyjólfsdóttir.
June 20 A hike in Álftafjörður - Öndurfjörður.
June 21 Symposium on poets, societies, and mother nature.
June 22 Sailing in Ísafjarðardjúp.

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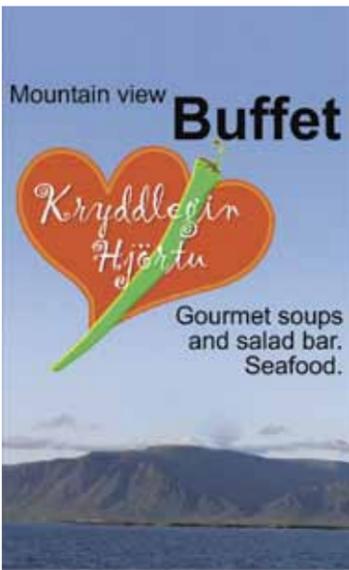
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MAP

Places We Like

1 Prikíð

Bankastræti 12

Prikíð is one of those places that shape-shifts. It's a warm café lined with photographs of its senior frequenters on weekdays, a hung-over hangout on weekend afternoons, and during nights it's filled to the brim with what remains of Iceland's hip hop scene. Go there in daytime for the cheap burgers; enter at night for some OTT hip-hop debauchery, old skool and the latest bangers alike. SKK

2 Kaffitár

Bankastræti 8

Kaffitár on Bankastræti is a comfortable little café with a great selection of coffee, tea and baked goods on offer. Since Kaffitár is also a big-name Icelandic roasterie the caffeinated beverages on the menu are quality. The wi-fi makes this a nice place to sit and chill with your laptop as well. CF

3 Santa Maria

Laugavegur 22

On Laugavegur, Santa Maria offers a fairly extensive menu of Mexican dishes and drinks at a really reasonable price – possibly some of the best in the city. The décor is colourful and welcoming, the portions are generous and the service is fast and friendly. Recommended. CF

4 Hemmi og Valdi

Laugavegi 21

The "colonial store" Hemmi and Valdi is a cosy hangout that has advanced from being a toasty retreat, where one can score cheap beer and have a quiet chat, into being a chock-full concert venue and an all-night party place. And believe us, the atmosphere is brilliant. SKK

5 Tíu Dropar

Laugavegur 27

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

6 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 allegedly open until 6 a.m. Friday and Saturday (although their advertised opening hours are sometimes not adhered to). CF



7 Babalú

Skólavörðstíg 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. CF

8 Boston

Laugavegur 28b

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 the mood of the place can go from great to legendary within a heartbeat. CF

9 Grái Kötturinn

Hverfisgata 16a

Super relaxed and cozy diner/café below street level. This place makes the best hangover breakfast ever (the truck!) and any-other-day breakfast as well. It's a nice and relaxing place to eat and increase your caffeine intake and chill with friends or with some reading material. CF

WORLD CUP 2010 AT THE ENGLISH PUB

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LIVE MUSIC EVERY NIGHT

THE ENGLISH PUB
Austurvöllur



For a map of outside downtown Reykjavik check out links on www.grapevine.is or the Icelandic phonebook website www.ja.is

10 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. RL

11 Bakkus

Tryggvagata 22 - Naustarmegin

A new and welcome addition to Reykjavik's bar scene, 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. CF

12 Á Næstu Grösum

Laugavegur 20b

Á Næstu Grösum is an all vegetarian restaurant right in the city centre that features a friendly atmosphere and fair prices. There is always at least one vegan soup on offer and the daily special portions are big and always satisfying. They even serve organic wine, if that's your bag.

13 Icelandic Bar

Pósthússtræti 9

The aptly named Icelandic Bar at Austurvöllur serves up mainstays from the "Icelandic household kitchen" and aims for a uniquely Icelandic atmosphere in their presentation and style. The place is the first of its kind, the Icelandicisms alone make it well worth a visit.

14 Kolaportið

Tryggvagata 19

Reykjavik's massive indoor 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. CF

15 Hressó

Austurstræti 20

You know, Hressó is basically the only place I go for coffee. Why? Their coffee is decent to excellent, but their forte is surely their wonderful patio, where you can enjoy the spring breeze in the sun, wrap yourself in a blanket beneath an electric heater in January and at all times: smoke. They boast of quite the prolific menu, and they've finally removed Nickelback from their playlist. Thank you, Hressó! SKK

16 Grænn Kostur

Skólavörðustíg 8b

Serving healthy organic vegan and vegetarian food for well over a decade, Grænn Kostur is the perfect downtown choice for enjoying light, wholesome and inexpensive meals. Try any of their courses of the day, or go for the ever-pleasing spinach lasagne.

17 Reykjavík Art Museum

Hafnarhús

The Reykjavík Art Museum's venue at Hafnarhús always features some experimental and intriguing exhibitions by both local and international contemporary artists. For example, it houses a collection of works by Erró. The museum is open daily from 10:00-17:00 and entrance on Thursdays is free.

18 Havarí

Austurstræti 8

Even before it opened, Havarí was everybody's favourite new music and design store. Headed by Svavar Pétur and Berglind of Skakkamanage, the shop shills the musical goods of Kimi Records, Borgin Hljómplötur, gogoyoko and Skakkapopp as well as posters, art, design products and clothing. CF

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ART

GALLERIES & MUSEUMS IN JUNE AND JULY

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

OPENING

June

18

Havari

Siggi Ámundason

The young Reykjavík artist, well known for his murals, is showing four of his newest paintings and distributing a small book of poetry.

ONGOING

Arbæjarsafn / Reykjavík City Museum Summer Program

June 1 to August 31

Outdoor heritage museum.

Art Gallery Fold

Photography exhibition of the volcanic eruptions in Iceland this year, which brought photographers from all over the world. Ongoing all summer.

ASÍ Art Museum

On With The Margarine!

June 12 - ongoing

Exhibit featuring slogans and installations by Hlynur Hallsson and Jóna Hlíf Halldórsdóttir.

The Culture House

Permanent Exhibition:

Medieval Manuscripts

February 3 - ongoing

Icelanders

Ongoing until September.

Exhibit featuring a selection of photographs from the book "Icelanders" by Unnur Jökulsdóttir and Sigurgeir Sigurjónsson.

ICELAND :: FILM

Ongoing exhibition. Traces the evolution of Icelandic filmmaking, exploring myths versus modernity.

The Nation and Nature

Thirty-minute film about the relationship between humans and nature. Film plays continuously during open hours.

Downtown Reykjavík

Reality Check, an outdoor exhibition curated by Ása Sigurjónsdóttir.

The Library Room

Ongoing exhibition. National Archives of Iceland - 90 years in the museum building. Commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Culture House.

The Dwarf Gallery

Ongoing exhibition.

An independent art gallery with ongoing exhibitions. It's located in an old basement. Do you really need to know any more than that?

The Einar Jónsson Museum

Permanent exhibition:

The work of sculptor Einar Jónsson.

Gallery Ágúst

Equivocal the Sequel

Runs until June 26.

Contemporary photography by Katrín Elvassdóttir.

Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

Breiðholt - At The Moment

May 16 - June 30

An exhibition of photographs by Friðgeir Helgason. In collaboration with the Reykjavík Arts Festival

Breiðholt - In The Beginning

May 16 - June 30

An exhibition of photographs by Friðgeir Helgason. In collaboration with the Reykjavík Arts Festival.

"Everyone has talent."

Runs until June 30

A display of various art and craft works by lójuberg Art Group, a centre for disabled people who put their energy into doing creative work.

GiljufraSTEINN Laxness Museum

Ongoing exhibition.

GiljufraSTEINN was the home and workplace of Halldór Laxness (winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1955).

Havari

Runs until August 31.

Exhibiting work from The Icelandic Love Corporation, Sigga Björg, Hugleik Dagsson, Lindu Loeskow and Sara Riel.

i8

Sigurður Guðmundsson

Runs till June 26.

Situations and other photo works from 1970-1982.

The Living Art Museumw

Jónsvaka

June 26 & June 27

18:00 - 19:30 June 26 Presentations from Ragnheiður S. Bjarnarson & Katrín Inga Katrínar Hirt.

14:00 - 17:00 Presentations from Ragnheiður B. Bjarnarson, Helgi Rafn Ingvarsson, & Kitty von Sometime.

CharlieHotelEchoEchoSierraEcho

Runs until June 26

German artist duo Rosen & Wojnar exhibit their work.

National Gallery of Iceland

Cindy Sherman - Untitled Film Stills

Runs until September 5.

American photographer Sherman plays with female film fantasies in self-portraits.

Edvard Munch

Runs until September 5.

Prints in the collection of the National Gallery.

Strides

Runs until December 31, 2012.

A selection of the Gallery's collection from the 20th and 21st century.

The National Museum

Permanent exhibitions:

The Making of a Nation

Heritage and History in Iceland is intended to provide insight into the history of the Icelandic nation from the Settlement to the present day.

Ása Wright - From Iceland to Trinidad

Collection of objects that belonged to the adventuress Ása Guðmundsdóttir.

Embroidery of Life

Embroidery by Guðrún Guðmundsdóttir, inspired by old manuscripts

The Nordic House

Ongoing until September 30

Land Of Experiments

Interactive exhibit based on scientific contraptions from Tom Tits Experimentarium in Sweden. Play!

Ráðhús Reykjavíkur

Dulin Himintungl

Kim Linnet exhibits her 360° panorama photos of Iceland.

Reykjavík 871 +/- 2

The Settlement Exhibition

Permanent exhibition:

Reykjavík Art Museum

Hafnarhús

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Listasafn Reykjavíkur
Reykjavík Art Museum



Alternative Eye



Key works



Nudes



Portraits



I choose women
who thrive . . .



In the Collection
of Imperfection

Reykjavík Art Museum

Hafnarhús

28 May 2009 - 12 Sep 2010

Erró - Portraits

20 May - 29 Aug

Vanitas - Still-life in Contemporary Icelandic Art

28 May - 12 Sep

Erró - Portraits

Dolls

15 May - 29 Aug

Nudes - Gary Schneider

20 May - 29 Aug

In the Collection of Imperfection - Unnar Örn J. Auðarson

Kjarvalsstaðir

14 May - 31 Dec

Kjarval - Key works

14 May - 22 Aug

Alternative Eye - Selected photographic works from the collection of Pétur Arason and Ragna Róbertsdóttir

14 May - 22 Aug

Photo&graph - An educational workshop for the family

Ásmundarsafn

1 May 2010 - 17 Apr 2011

"I choose blossoming women . . ." - Woman as Symbol in the Art of Ásmundur Sveinsson

20 May 2010 - 17 Apr 2011

Sleep Light - An installation by Ráðhildur Ingadóttir

Hafnarhús
Tryggvagata 17
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Numismatic Museum



The Central Bank and National Museum of Iceland jointly operate a numismatic collection that consists of Icelandic notes and coins, foreign money from earlier times, especially if mentioned in Icelandic sources, and more recent currency from Iceland's main trading partner countries. A selection from the numismatic collection is on display in showcases on the ground floor of the Central Bank's main building.

Situated in the Central Bank's main building in Kalkofnsvegur 1, Reykjavík.
Open Mon.-Fri. 13:30-15:30. Free admittance.

ART

GALLERIES & MUSEUMS IN JUNE AND JULY

Runs until June 20

Maja Siska's exhibition, showing work on 100-year-old corrugated metals.

Erró - Portrett - Dolls

Runs until August 29.

Collection of Erró's paintings and collages of pre-war era dolls.

Vanitas

Runs until August 29.

Still-life in contemporary Icelandic art. Curator's talk with Hafþór Yngvason on June 6 at 15:00.

In the Collection of Imperfection

Runs til August 29.

Pieces from city archives and other collections, gathered by Unnar Örn J. Auðarson. Explores the nature of museums and archiving.

Nudes - Gary Schneider

Runs until August 29.

South African born photographer presents 30 life-size portraits of nude men and women.

Reykjavík Art Museum

Kjarvalsstaðir

Photo & Graph family workshop

Runs until August 22.

An ongoing workshop on what's behind a photo.

Alternative Eye

14 May to 22 August.

Selected photographic works from the collection of Pétur Arason and Ragna Róbertsdóttir.

Kjarval - Key Works

Runs until August 29.

Retrospective on Iceland's most beloved painter.

Reykjavík Art Museum

Ásmundarsafn

Sleep Light

Runs until April 17, 2011.

Multimedia installation by Ráðhildur Ingadóttir.

Thoughts In Forms

Runs until April 17, 2011.

The workshop of sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson, recreated.

"I choose blossoming women ..."

Runs until April 17, 2011

Woman as Symbol in the Art of Ásmundur Sveinsson.

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

The Coast Guard vessel Óðinn

Permanent exhibition

The Óðinn took part in all three Cod Wars and is open for exhibition.

Reykjavík Restaurant

Let's Talk Local

18:00 Comedy show about Reykjavík, 2200 ISK/1100 ISK for kids.

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

Who is who?

Ongoing

A Moment with Sigurjón Ólafsson

Ongoing

Reykjavík Museum of Photography

Interlude No. 6

June 4 - July 27

An exhibition featuring traditional Korean group dancing by Yunjoo Kwak.

Thomsen & Thomsen

Runs until August 29

An exhibition of portrait photographs and views from Reykjavík, from two different times and two photographers.

Art | Venue finder

101 Gallery

Hverfisgata 18A | **E3**
Thu-Sat 14-17 and by appointment
www.101hotel.is/101hotel/101gallery/

Artótek

Tryggvagata 15 | **D2**
Mon 10-21, Tue-Thu 10-19, Fri 11-19, Sat and Sun 13-17
www.sim.is/Index/islenska/Artotek

ASÍ Art Museum

Freygata 41 | **G4**
Tue-Sun 13-17

Árbæjarsafn

Kistuhylur 4

The Culture House

Hverfisgata 15 | **E4**
Open daily 11-17
www.thjodmenning.is

Dwarf Gallery

Grundarstígur 21 | **H6**
Opening Hours: Fri and Sat 18-20
www.this.is/birta/dwarfgallery/dwarfgallery1.html

The Einar Jónsson

Eiriksgata | **G4**
Tue-Sun 14-17
www.skulptur.is

Fótógrafi

Skólavörðustígur 4a | **F4**
www.fotografis.is

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Gallery Auga fyrir Auga

Hverfisgata 35 | **E4**

Gallery StartArt

Laugavegur 12B | **E4**
Tue-Sat 1-17
www.startart.is

Gallery Ágúst

Baldursgata 12 | **F4**
Wed-Sat 12-17
www.galleriagust.is

Gallery Fold

Rauðarástígur 14-16 | **G7**
Mon-Fri 10-18 / Sat 11-16 / Sun 14-16
www.myndlist.is

Gallery Kling & Bang

Hverfisgata 42 | **E5**
Thurs-Sun from 14-18
this.is/klingogbang/

Gallery Turpentine

Ingólfstræti 5 | **E3**
Tue-Fri 12-18 / Sat 11-16
www.turpentine.is

Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

Gerðuberg 3-5
Mon-Thu 11-17 / Wed 11-21 / Thu-Fri 11-17 / Sat-Sun 13-16
www.gerduberg.is

Havarí

Austurstræti 6 | **E3**

Hitt Húsið

- Gallery Tukt
Pósthússtræti 3-5 | **E3**
www.hitthusid.is

i8 Gallery

Tryggvagata 16 | **D2**
Tue-Fri 11-17 / Sat 13-17 and by appointment. www.i8.is

Living Art Museum

Skúlagata 28 | **F6**
Wed, Fri-Sun 13-17 / Thu 13-22. www.nylo.is

Lost Horse Gallery

Vitastígur 9a | **E3**
Weekends from 13-19 and by appointment on weekdays.

Hafnarborg

Strandgötu 34,
Hafnarfjörður

The National Gallery of Iceland

Frikkirkjuvegur 7 | **F3**
Tue-Sun 11-17
www.listasafn.is

The National Museum

Suðurgata 41 | **G1**
Open daily 10-17
natmus.is

The Nordic House

Sturlugata 5 | **H1**
Tue-Sun 12-17
www.nordice.is/

The Numismatic Museum

Einholt 4 | **G7**
Open Mon-Fri 13:30-15:30.

Reykjavík 871+/-2

Aðalstræti 17 | **D2**
Open daily 10-17

Reykjavík Art Gallery

Skúlagata 28 | **F6**
Tuesday through Sunday 14-18

Reykjavík Art Museum

Open daily 10-16
www listasafnreykjavikur.is

Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum

Sigtún
Hafnarhús
Tryggvagata 17 | **D2**
Kjarvalsstaðir
Flókagata | **I7**

Reykjavík City Theatre

Listabraut 3

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

Grandagarður 8 | **C3**

Reykjavík Museum of Photography

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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 July 1st to August 10th

November 1st - March 31st

Friday	Saturday	Sunday
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Jamie Oliver’s Diary



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REVIEWS

What’s In A Name?

Names are important. Icelanders take months beyond the nine allotted for incubation to think up the perfect names for their new bundles of joy. Parents of other nationalities name their babies Mercedes, King, Precious, Jesus and the like in hopes of their progeny living up to the perceived greatness of the moniker. Of course, babies are one thing and restaurants are something else entirely. One wouldn’t name their baby “ohhhh” or “awww” in anticipation of the adoration it will garner from onlookers, but naming your restaurant “Yummi Yummi” or “Mmmmm”, while potentially risky, is just fine.

Ermeee, Ummmm, Mmmmm?



I’ve been meaning to stop by Mmmmm (Laugavegur 42) for some time now. Its name intrigued me, as did its bright and light signage—I’m a sucker for a catchy sign. However I never had the chance as every time I happened to be walking by with a grumble in my stomach it was closed. The joint was open and bustling during the lunch hour on Wednesday; French tourists in hiking boots sat alongside men in business suits and all appeared to be enjoying their grub.

The first thing that struck me was the amount of selection. Mmmmm stocks yogurt parfaits, pre-made sandwiches and wraps, cakes, salads, soups and a menu of daily hot specials. This was going to be tough. With a massive hunger to respond to, my date zoomed in on the daily specials and settled on chicken breast with potato wedges and mushroom sauce (1.590 ISK). I, on the other hand, chose the Mexico Wrap (650 ISK) and “Guffi’s Seafood Soup” (1.090 ISK alone, or 1.280 ISK with bread), which came highly recommended by the sign near the cashier.

My date’s chicken and potatoes arrived with a generous helping of salad on the side; a nice addition that wasn’t mentioned on the chalk menu. The chicken was succulent and moist and was cut into strips and fanned across the plate alongside the slightly dry potato wedges. Both meat and starch were drizzled in a

mushroom sauce that was thinner than expected and could have benefited from an infusion of creaminess. Aside from the somewhat parched potatoes, everything was sufficiently tasty.

My seafood soup, the usual orange shade of creamy broth, was conservatively peppered with scallops and shrimp—the convincing sign also promised salmon, though there was none to be found in my bowl. Despite the lack of salmon, I found the soup quite nice. The flavour was somewhat akin to a corn chowder under the stronger seafood notes, which I enjoyed. But, like my date’s mushroom sauce, the soup would have done well with a livelier texture.

The Mexican Wrap was piping hot out of the oven when I received it and was stuffed with chicken, cheese, guacamole, lettuce and tomato. Expecting something fajita-like, I was surprised when I bit into the wrap and was greeted by a smoky, mesquite flavour. Like smoked bacon. It was really rather tasty, but Mexican it was not. The pockets of guacamole upped the Mexican-quotient of certain bites, but I would consider renaming the wrap none-the-less.

Though the meal had certain drawbacks, I still plan on going back to Mmmmm to check out some more of their ample selection in the future, now that I’m more aware of their opening hours. 🍷

Mmmmm

Laugavegur 42

What we think: Mmmmm is ummmm, okay

Flavour: Fine, but could use some oomph

Ambiance: Bright, white and airy

Service: Pleasant, though on the slow side



GRAPEVINE FOOD REVIEW KEY

- 0- Should not be considered food.
- 1- Edible, but not more than once.
- 2- OK; not good, but not horrible either.
- 3- Good, but not great.
- 4- Pretty damn good.
- 5- Extraordinary.

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CATHARINE FULTON
JULIA STAPLES

Food & Drink | Venue finder

3 Frakkar Baldursgata 14 G4	Balthazar Hafnarstræti 1-3 D2	Geysir Bar/Bistro Aðalstræti 2 D2	Icelandic Fish & Chips Tryggvgata 8 B2	Mokka Skólavörðustígur 3A E4	Sjávarkjallarinn Aðalstræti 2 D2
Aktu Taktu Skúlagata 15 E6	Bæjarins Beztu Tryggvagata D3	Garðurinn Klappastígur 37 F4	Indian Mango Frakkastígur 12 F5	Nonnabiti Hafnarstræti 9 D3	Sólón Bankastræti 7a E3
Alibaba Veltusund 3b D2	Brons Pósthússtræti 9 E3	Glætan book café Laugavegur 19 F5	Jómfrúin Lækjargata 4 E3	O Sushi Lækjargata 2A E3	Sushibarinn Laugavegur 2 E4
American Style Tryggvagata 26 D2	Café Cultura Hverfisgata 18 E4	Grái Kötturinn Hverfisgata 16A E4	Kaffi Hljómáland Laugavegur 21 E4	Pisa Lækjargötu 6b E3	Sushismiðjan Geirsgötu 3 B2
Argentína Steakhouse Barónstígur F6	Café d’Haiti Tryggvagata 12 D2	Grillhúsið Tryggvagata 20 D2	Kaffifélagið Skólavörðustígur 10 F5	Pizza King Hafnarstræti 18 D3	Swarta Kaffi Laugavegur 54 F5
Austurlandshraðlestin Hverfisgata 64A F5	Café Loki Lokastígur 28 G4	Habibi Hafnarstræti 20 E3	Kaffitár Bankastræti 8 E4	Pizza Pronto Vallarstræti 4 E2	Sægreifinn Verbúð 8, Geirsgata B2
Á Næstu Grösum Laugavegur 20B E4	Café Paris Austurstræti 14 E3	Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar (“Bullán”) Geirsgata 1 B2	Kaffivagninn Grandagarður 10 A1	Pizzaverksmiðjan Lækjargötu 8 E3	Tapas Vesturgata 3B D2
B5 Bankastræti 5 E3	Café Roma Rauðarárstígur 8 G7	Hilolla Bátar Ingólfstorg D2	Kofi Tómasar Frænda Laugavegur 2 F4	Prikið Bankastræti 12 E3	Thorvaldsen Austurstræti 8 D2
Bakkus Tryggvagata 22 D2	Deli Bankastræti 14 E5	Hornið Hafnarstræti 15 D3	Kornið Lækjargata 4 E3	Ráðhúskaffi Tjarnargata 11 E2	Tíu Dropar Laugavegur 27 E5
Ban Thai Laugavegur 130 G7	Domo Þingholtsstræti 5 E3	Hótel Holt Bergstaðarstræti 37 G3	Krua Thai Tryggvagata 14 D2	Santa Maria Laugavegur 22A F5	Tívoli Laugavegur 3 E4
Basil & Lime Klappastígur 38 E4	Einar Ben Veltusundi E2	Humarhúsið Amtmannstígur 1 E3	La Primavera Austurstræti 9 D2	Serrano Hringbraut 12 H3	Vegamót Vegamótastígur 4 E4
Babalú Skólavörðustígur 22A G5	Eldsmiðjan Bragagata 38A G4	Hressó Austurstræti 20 E4	Lystin Laugavegur 73 F6	Shalimar Austurstræti 4 D2	Við Tjómína Templararund 3 E2
	Fiskmarkaðurinn Aðalstræti 12 D2			Sifur Pósthússtræti 11 E3	Vítabar Bergþórugata 21 G5



Yummi Yummi Is, Indeed, Yummy

First things first. The name Yummi Yummi makes me smile. It's so jovial and sunny and happy, so it pleased me to no end that, upon entering the small eatery on Hverfisgata (Hverfisgata 123, to be exact though it's at the odd junction where the street meets Laugavegur so it actually seems like Laugavegur), I was greeted by an equally jovial and sunny young man behind the counter. He took down the orders of my date and I—barbecue chicken with rice and spicy pad Thai (both 999 ISK), respectively—and fielded our questions about all the other grocery items available. Looking for an exotic shot of pure energy or perhaps some rice flour? Look no further than Yummi Yummi.

Our orders were prepared in a snap and my date and I sat on the barstools facing out to the street to dig in. My date's chicken was glazed in a dark, semi-sweet sauce and was fanned out atop sticky rice. She and I both commented on how awesome it was to find a place serving up real sticky rice and spoke fondly of previous encounters with it. My spicy pad Thai came served in an adorable cardboard container emblazoned with a red dragon and the words "Asia Box." Its compact size was deceiving, and I found myself hard pressed to finish my noodles—luckily the box makes it easy to take-away.

The Pad Thai itself was really delicious. The flat rice noodles were steaming hot, spicy (though between my sniffles I was told that the chef tuned down the spiciness, and then I felt like a wimp) and the hint of peanut carried throughout subtly. The chicken mixed in with the dish was light and tender and was well flavoured by the fish sauce and chilli that saturated the noodles. It was flavourful and hearty lunch.

The only downside of the whole meal was the cutlery. Eating anything with a spork is annoying and, I've discovered, eating noodles with a spork is a downright pain in the ass. 🍴



Yummi Yummi

Hverfisgata 123

What we think: Yummi Yummi is yummy

Flavour: Casual take-away Thai

Ambiance: No-frills casual

Service: Wonderfully upbeat and welcoming



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an event, a happening and an occasion. Food often plays central roles in celebration and grieving and, removed from such occurrences, can maintain its ability to evoke certain feelings or emotions within us.

Through our reviews the Grapevine will share with you what we feel are the positive points and drawbacks of the establishments we visit and the food we taste therein. The primary focus will be on the food, with ambiance and service playing more minor roles in the opinions formulated. In conducting restaurant reviews the Grapevine remains anonymous so as not to influence the service or food preparation, revealing itself only when paying with a voucher previously approved by the restaurateur to cover the cost of the meal being opined.

The opinions expressed are those of the reviewer. **CF**

EAT AND DRINK:

3 X BEEF

1 VITABAR

It's no secret that Vitabar serves up some pretty awesome beef on a bun—with sliced cheese, blue cheese or bacon—but this unassuming joint also dishes out a proper no-frills steak with potatoes and a large beer for a steal.

Bergþórugata 21

2 73

The newest eatery on Laugavegur, 73's menu boast a burger rightly named 'Epic'—300 grams of beef topped with bacon, cheese and the standard burger veggies. That's a whole lotta beef!

Laugavegur 73

3 NOODLE STATION

Fancy a serving of beef with your noodles? The Noodle Station has got you covered. Soft, melt in your mouth strips of beef in the go-to Noodle Station broth.

Skólavörðustígur 21A

3 X LAMB

1 BÆJARINS BESTU

Iceland is full of sheep and lambs so, of course, their unofficial national dish, the hotdog, also includes juicy lamb meat (along with a medley of other meats, as most hotdogs will).

Hafnarstræti 17

2 GULLFOSS KAFFI

Many tourists' first exposure to Icelandic lamb is during a stop at this foss-side restaurant while taking in the sites of the Golden Circle. They serve up the best Icelandic meat soup ever. Seriously.

Gullfoss, Selfoss

3 HAMBORGARAFABRIKKAN

This is the only place in Iceland (and possibly the world!) where you can scarf down a Lamburger while overlooking the historic Höfði house where Reagan and Gorbachev tossed around the idea of ending the Cold War. Those guys probably would have liked a Lamburger, too.

Höfðatún 2

3 X VEGGIES

1 SAFFRAN

Have you been to Saffran? Have you tried their veggie burger? It's not so much a burger as it is a delicious medley of hummus, tomato, leek, avocado, and mozzarella sandwiched between two rounds of pumpkin naan. Oh yeah.

Álfheimur 74

2 GRÆNN KOSTUR

This little vegetarian restaurant is kinda tucked away, but look for it and be thankful that you did. They offer a range of daily specials and old stand-bys, from spinach pie, pizza, veggie burgers to good'ole healthy salads. I'm a fan of the Indian Pie.

Skólavörðustígur 8

3 GARDURINN

Gardurinn is a cosy, little (seriously—it seats 10 people) vegetarian eatery that presents its customers with a new and exciting menu every day. Go there and be healthier.

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ISENSKASIALE III 2014 06.2010



Feature | The European Union



lined up some key talking points of the EU debate, and then she tried her hand at responding to them, using her helpers' handy quotes and thoughts to build on. What follows is a sort of opinion piece backed by quotes from interviews, which details Sophia's findings on the subject. It is in favour of the EU, and should be read keeping that in mind. It's also real fun. Take it away, Sophia!

According to a recent opinion poll by MMR, 57% of Icelanders are in favour of their nation withdrawing its application to join the EU. Coming from a EU-country. I wonder why that is. What follows are some of the most frequently pronounced fears Icelanders seem to have towards joining the EU, and a EU-citizens attempt at responding to them, with the help of some local opinion-makers.

ICELAND IS TOO SMALL A COUNTRY TO HAVE A SAY IN EUROPEAN POLITICS!

It is true, Iceland is a small country and there are big countries in Europe that pay lots of money to the EU and have a big influence on its politics. Germany and France, for instance. But as Baldur Þórhallsson, professor of Political Science at the University of Iceland—who has done some excellent research in the field of small countries within the EU—told me: "Small states are doing quite well within the EU. Of course they don't get everything they want from the membership, but most politicians in these small states have been of the opinion that the EU-membership has served the states' interests."

Baldur emphasises that most decisions made within the European Council and the EU are taken unanimously, which according to him indicates that "EU decision-making is about solidarity," and not about ousting small nations or working against their interests.

ICELAND DOESN'T NEED THE EU!

This argument is as wrong as can be, as far as I can tell. Iceland needs a powerful ally, because otherwise no one will come to the rescue when the Taliban blow up Vatnajökull or when wicked citizens of evil countries like Britain or the Netherlands come to claim their money?

As Baldur Þórhallsson puts it: "All small states need an ally."

Now, you might try to argue that this ally needn't necessarily be the European Union. But then, who else? The United States, who ditched Iceland as soon as ceased to be strategically important? Or, as some have proposed, the kingdom of Norway, with its population of 4,8 million and an army of 16.000? If this is the ally Icelanders want, they might as well go back to their dark past as part of Denmark.

Iceland needs economic partners, and since 83% of its exports go to EEA (European Economic Area) countries and 65% of its imports come from EEA countries, wouldn't it make sense to join them in a union?

In our conversation, Baldur also told me of another problem Iceland has, namely the "widespread corruption within ministries and governmental institutions, where relatives and friends or party members are hired over of qualified people." He argues that there are powerful interest groups (for example in the financial and fishing sectors) that make their

own laws. There is a chance that joining the European Union and collaborating with other EU nations could influence the Icelandic society and effectively decrease corruption.

THE EU DIDN'T STAND BY ICELAND IN THE ICESAVE NEGOTIATIONS!

Many Icelanders blame the EU for not supporting Iceland in its fight against the Netherlands and the UK and their "unreasonable demands for reimbursements for their losses in the financial crisis," Political Science Professor Hannes Hólmsteinn Gissurarson phrases it.

But how could it? There seem to be people out there who still haven't understood the idea behind the EU. It stands by its members, even if they are not always right about everything. And not even Iceland's "friends," the Nordic states, supported Iceland in this fight. "These countries stand together when it comes to such matters. We are left on our own, stranded in the North Atlantic," Baldur Þórhallsson tells us. His conclusion may sound quite horrible, but there is some truth in it as long as Iceland doesn't become a member of the club.

ICELAND WOULD SACRIFICE ITS AGRICULTURE!

Not necessarily. It seems to be a common fear that by joining the EU, prices of farm products on the Icelandic market will drop and everyone will run out to buy Dutch tomatoes instead of the good old Icelandic ones. There is certainly some truth in that, people like cheap goods. On the other hand, however, the EU offers great opportunities for farmers, like special subsidies for Northern European countries, which might in the end improve conditions for Icelandic farmers.

JOINING THE EU WON'T MAKE ICELAND'S ECONOMIC SITUATION ANY BETTER!

True, but it might help avoiding the next crash, or as Benedikt Jóhannesson, CEO of publishing company Heimur, puts it: "You will not grow thin by eating one apple, but eating apples is still better for you than devouring hamburgers."

Adopting Euro would stabilise Iceland's economy, and thus help Iceland get the foreign investors back that would otherwise probably not take the risk of investing in this country again. Or, as Baldur Þórhallsson puts it, "we will simply be stuck in the mess and forever remain second-class citizens in Europe."

This statement shouldn't surprise you if you compare the Icelandic living standard to other European countries: The interest rates are extremely high, properties have been devalued by half, wages have been halved and at the same time, food prices are very high in comparison with other European nations. And they are constantly rising. How is an Icelandic family ever going to have the same standard of living as, say, a Swedish one?

They can't buy a house because the interest rates on their mortgages are too high, their wages too low and because they have to spend the little money they have on the

far too expensive food in order to somehow keep their kids alive? Alright, I admit that goes a little bit too far but the point is clear: I believe that without adopting the Euro, Icelandic households are never going to reach the same living standard as their European neighbours.

ICELANDIC WATERS WILL BE OVERFISHED!

This concern is actually the most understandable one. If Iceland joins the EU, it might lose the control over its waters. According to the rule of "relative stability," access rights and catches are currently allocated on the basis of historical catch records, which means Icelandic waters wouldn't be in danger of being overfished by European trawlers, as many Icelanders are afraid of.

The EU has discussed amending this rule, however, allowing for fishing rights to be traded between nations. The rule of "relative stability" does therefore not stand on safe grounds.

However, according to Baldur Þórhallsson, it is likely that Iceland can make a deal with Brussels concerning fisheries. For example, Finland remains in control over the nation's timber industry.

Thus, the question is: why are some Icelanders still terrified of losing the control over their waters if they haven't even tried negotiating?

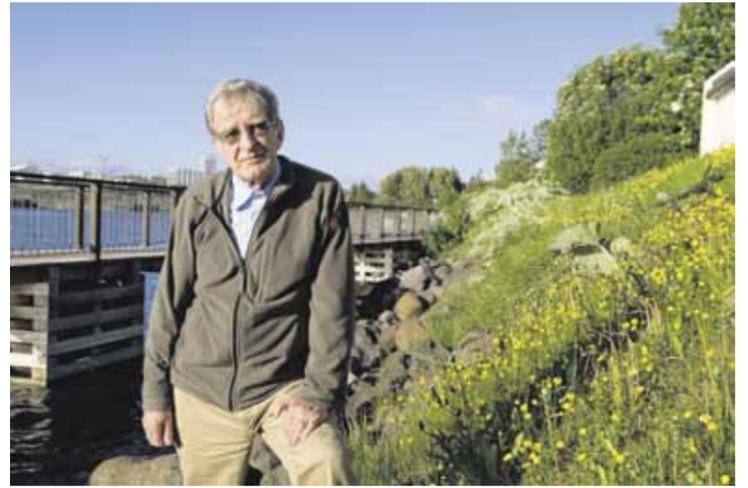
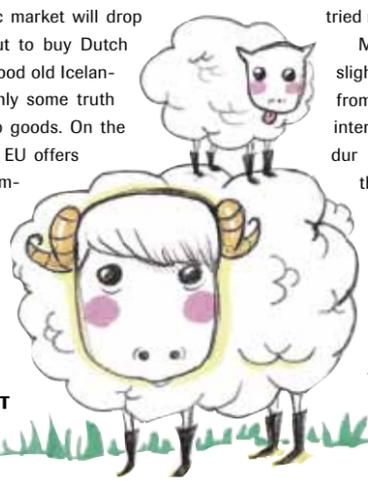
Might there be a slight influence coming from the local fishery interest group, LÍÚ. Baldur Þórhallsson states that "powerful interest groups like the agricultural and fishing ones, have been able and are still able to lay out the regulation framework for their own industries." Why would they want to give their power to

some institution in Belgium?

There is certainly a danger of Icelandic waters getting overfished but as long as no Icelandic politician has tried to negotiate a special agreement with the EU, worrying about it is useless.

ICELAND WILL LOSE ITS AUTONOMY!

Actually, Iceland would gain autonomy. As member of the EEA, Iceland implements all the laws of the common market, except for the agreements on fisheries, agriculture and regional policy. That is, the majority of Icelandic laws are already decided upon in Brussels, but Iceland has no influence on making them. According to Baldur, this is "extremely undemocratic." By joining the EU, Iceland could gain this influence and thus more autonomy.



Former Morgunblaðið Editor Stymir Gunnarsson on why Iceland should not join the EU

A Noble Idea, That's Not Quite Suitable For Iceland

Stymir Gunnarsson has been at the forefront of the Icelandic political landscape for nearly half a century, including 36 years as editor of the daily newspaper Morgunblaðið, which has strong ties to the political right in Iceland. As editor of this formerly most influential medium in Iceland, Stymir has been in a unique position to observe and even shape the political discourse in this country.

Since retiring his editorial chops in 2008, Stymir has been taken a very active part in the local discourse. Among other things, he has published two books, one documenting the collapse of the Icelandic banks ('The Siege'), and another detailing his take on the findings of the Special Investigation Committee's report. He is also an active member of the organisation Heimssýn, "Iceland's 'No to EU' movement, [whose] members agree that Iceland's interests are best served as an independent country outside the European Union.

Founded in 2002 as a cross-political organisation, Heimssýn's goal has remained the same: to keep Iceland outside the EU" (we stole this description off their website).

By your definition what is the EU and what does it do?

The European Union, in my point of view, was formed to prevent further wars on the European continent, after two world wars in the Twentieth century, and many wars in former centuries. That's why it came into being. It is a peace-keeping organisation.

Why do you oppose Iceland joining the EU?

I am not against the EU itself. I think it is an important organisation. However, I don't think it is in the interest of the Icelandic nation to become a member of the European Union. I think it is in the interest of the Icelandic nation to keep its independence, which it fought for many centuries, and to keep control of its natural resources, which we would lose if we became members of the EU.

In what way would Iceland lose control of its independence and natural resources?

For instance, our fishing grounds would become common grounds of the EU. The EU states that we would not be in any danger and foreign trawlers would not come back into Icelandic waters because of the rule of relative stability, but the EU itself published a Greenbook in early 2009 in which they themselves state that the rule of relative stability can longer protect fishing grounds from the intrusion of other nations.

Why do you think EU proponents want Iceland to join?

Because they don't believe that we, as a very small nation, can go it alone. They think, and

have thought for a long time, that we should be part of the European community, especially so after the fall of the Icelandic banks. They think that we cannot go it alone. They think we have to be part of a bigger community than the Icelandic nation itself. That is the main reason they want to become a member of the Union.

What do you think appeals to them about the EU?

I think what appeals to them is the same thing that appeals to a lot of people. From my point of view, the EU is a wonderful and noble idea. It's nice to see the countries on the continent of Europe that fought between themselves for so many centuries living in peace and quiet amongst themselves. But that is different from our national interests in Iceland. Iceland has never participated in any war on the European continent. It has nothing to do with us.

Do you think there is no threat of conflict posed to Iceland, based on precedent?

Of course, there could be a threat, but I do not think this is a primary concern to the nation.

Many EU proponents we have spoken to say that opposition to joining is based on misunderstanding of the Union, or protection of old power interests. How do you respond to this?

It's an absurd argument to say it's protection of old power interests. I must say, I have never heard that argument before you mentioned it now. It's not an argument that has been used in discussions here in Iceland, so that's an absurd argument. The old power interests simply disappeared with the fall of the banks. The question of misunderstanding the European Union is simply wrong. I think I completely understand what the EU is about and as I've said before it's a positive thing, but it is not something in our interest here in Iceland, as a small nation on this island in the North Atlantic.

REBECCA LOUDER
JULIA STAPLES

Into The Light

Ólafur Arnalds faces the music



He is tow-headed and unassuming, sitting on a patio, fidgeting as he lights a cigarette. He is driving to the airport in four hours to go on a two-week tour in support of his latest album, ... and they have escaped the weight of darkness, which was released at the end of April. The critics seem to love him. He is often called a 'genius' and a 'wunderkind.' He is barely twenty-three, yet he seems to fit the bill of a very hard-working musician. In fact, he seems to be two steps ahead of himself at all times. For now, he has taken a quick moment before jumping on a plane to vent to Grapevine to his heart's content.

You've had a lot of success at a young age, especially given your chosen genre. It's all come on pretty fast. How have you coped with that? Has it affected you?

Well, I like to believe that I worked for it. I like to believe that I did everything myself and I feel fully responsible for the fact that I am not sitting in my living room writing music on my piano. I'm actually down here because I went out and did stuff. In the beginning, I went on tours that I booked myself; I spoke to friends who were starting up a record label and they released my stuff. Through that work, the bigger entities discovered me so I don't have to do everything myself anymore.

But coping methods? It can still be a bit weird, especially when you lose control of it. I have to admit I've had quite a hard time coping with it. There is also this attention, everything is always about me. This I've never really liked. I'm a closed off person, I'm a loner. People always come to me and I need to give so much of myself. That's just expected of me. I had a period last year when I was just really tense. I didn't like it, I hated it actually. At one point, something just turned in my head and I just approached it full on.

Do you enjoy touring?

Yeah. I get sick of the songs sometimes when I'm doing sound-check, but when I go onstage and play them for an audience the experience is always



different. It's almost like playing a new song every night. The reception is different, the atmosphere in the room is different and it changes our perception of the music, so it almost changes the music itself. I never get bored of playing my own songs. There's some songs that I've played at every single one of my shows, not to mention sound-check, rehearsals, recording, but I always give myself into it every time. I really enjoy touring.

It's a labour of love, where you have to give yourself entirely over...

Of course, because if I don't I won't enjoy it. On one tour we made the mistake of playing the same set-list every night. That order of songs made the most sense, but by the twenty-fourth show without a day off, it was becoming such a routine that I automatically didn't put myself into it. I really hated that show and after it we had a band meeting where we said "never again!" It's just as important that we like the show. Why do this if you're not enjoying it? If I was just doing it for the money then I could just be a lawyer.

UNSPOILED CITIES

Where have your most memorable gigs been?

I always like the places that aren't really spoiled. In a city like London, hypothetically, they have bands coming all the time and nothing's new to them. They're very jaded. I feel it in the audience. They clap less, they buy less CDs after the show, and they're not as enthusiastic about the whole experience.

One of my favourite places is Eastern Europe, Poland for example, where they don't have a lot of bands come through. They are all waiting outside for the doors to open and they are so excited and they go completely silent during the show. The atmosphere becomes completely different. After the show they're all waiting to meet you and they all want autographs. I don't really handle it very well because I'm an awkward person, but I appreciate it. In the bigger cities, I'm just one of a hundred other artists playing in that city that night.

Words

Rebecca Louder

Photography

Julia Staples

"Sending an artist over here doesn't make sense. It's not worth the money for a management company. It's not worth the investment. I don't want to stop bands from coming, but I don't encourage it. The market here is not very open for foreign artists."

Then you toured China. How was that?

That's another country that I really liked playing in. It was weird, but the whole culture is just so different. But there is so much respect and gratitude. They are quiet at the shows but not intensely. Not because they don't appreciate it, but in their culture you can go enjoy good music, even in a classic theatre setting, and still chat. I felt like they could still take it all in without being as quiet as the Polish people are.

That can be a bit intimidating too.

It can. It can make you nervous, especially when I'm not feeling that way and I don't make that connection. But sometimes you make that connection with the people and the atmosphere is so fragile. I also felt like they really appreciated me coming all that way. They don't get a lot of international artists into the country.

Here as well, there aren't many international artists that come frequently now.

Yeah, but here people don't actually appreciate it very much. It's a one of a kind market actually. In all my deals, record deals, management deals, agency deals, whatever, I always exclude Iceland. First, because I know this market better than any foreign people, but also because they just wouldn't understand it. It's so small, it's just so tiny. Sending an artist over here doesn't make sense. It's not worth the money for a management company. It's not worth the investment. I don't want to stop bands from coming, but I don't encourage it. The market here is not very open for foreign artists.

Say what now?

If you look at the music sale charts in Iceland, for Icelandic bands it's still going up, selling more and more CDs. For foreign bands, sales have dropped down to almost nothing. Stores sell almost no foreign CDs. The division of fees when you're played on the radio is almost all given to Icelandic artists.

Are there Icelandic content laws for radio?

No, but there is discussion of it because we want more Icelandic music on the radio. I mean, we as musicians want the exposure and also for the copyright society which I am part of, that is our

income. That's where we make the money that we can divide to all the artists so they can try to make a living off their work. We try to lobby the radio stations and try to get them to play more local music and there are ideas about forcing them to. But I'm not really into forcing anything.

It's interesting that you work with the Icelandic copyright association which deals with the issue of illegal downloading, since your sort of bridged that gap last year with your Found Songs project, where you gave away your songs for free.

Fun fact about Found Songs: that was actually illegal to do that.

No way. So you were like "Fuck you! I'm doing it anyway" ?

Basically, according to the law you can't give away a song for free. There has to be a copyright fee for the composer of the song. The same rule has to apply for everyone in order for it to work, so there's a reason for this, but one of the things I want to do as part of the association is to find a way around this. So what I did was actually illegal. I take full responsibility for that! The thing is no one will do anything about it because they know I'm the composer of the song.

HITTING THE FAST-FORWARD BUTTON

I hear elements of your previous work on this album, but it also seems like you're going in a new direction as well.

I want to call it more 'pop'. What I want to do is reach the most people. Not to make money, I wouldn't call myself a sell-out. I want to open peoples' eyes to this kind of music. Most of the people who buy my albums don't listen to classical music at all, so it was both conscious and subconscious to go in this direction. It was very natural for me to go this way, but I was also thinking "yeah, this is a good way to go," because I want to be accessible.

You just put out this album, but what do you see on your horizons now? Do you know what you want to do next?

I'm already doing it. I finished this album a couple of months ago and then went straight on. At the moment I am orchestrating a new album for a full orchestra. We're premiering that on July 1st in Manchester with a British orchestra, but I will perform it with different orchestras in different cities in the autumn and in Shanghai as part of the Expo in September. Hopefully we'll be doing it in London, Berlin, Cologne and other cities later.

Do you foresee yourself making other kinds of music at any point in your life?

When I get the time. I'd like to produce bands that make different stuff from my own. I'd like to add my personality into that. I added the strings to the Bloodgroup album, I produced one track by Árstíðir and I'm doing their next album. I do the techno thing with Janus [from Bloodgroup] as Kiasmos. I need to branch out. It's like staying in the house too long and you need to get out. I get that when I am touring a lot, playing my own songs over and over again and going in the studio. I need to get out and do something else. ☺

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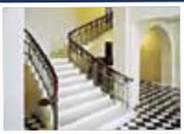
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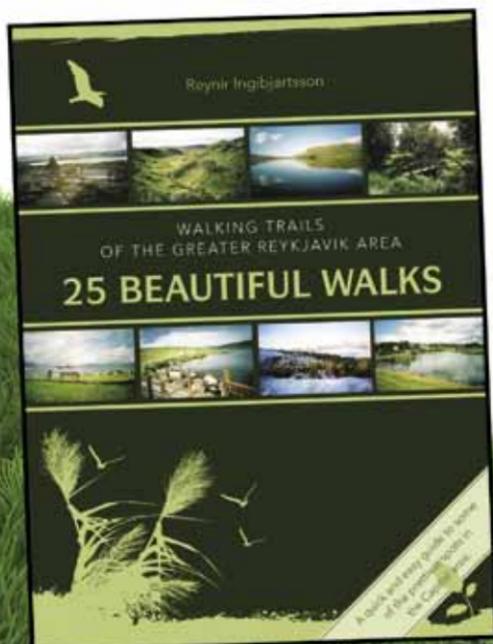
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Dr. Gunni's History Of Icelandic Rock | Part 19

Peyr Has Spiritual Intercourse With The Nation

In 1981, a flock of serious men came out of the woodworks—often wearing long grey or black overcoats. They probably clutched a Joy Division or a Peyr record under their arms. Peyr hadn't started out as the deep thinking young dudes' premium choice though. No sir, in 1979 they had approached Svavar Gest, a record mogul from another dimension, bearing two corny pop songs that were representative of the music they were making at that time. Svavar liked the songs well enough to agree to finance a Peyr album to be released on the SG label that he'd run since the early sixties.

Peyr (usually called Theyr by people deprived of the letter Þ) were a group of friends who had been dabbling in music since the mid-seventies. They started to record their pop songs during the winter of 1980, and had about half of a LP ready when they decided to take the summer off. During the summer of 1980, the band got hip to all kinds of new sounds through friends and relatives—both progressive new wave and modern art music such as Schönberg's. When the recordings commenced in the fall, Peyr's sound had totally changed. Also there had been a line up change: those who didn't surrender to the new sound had to go.

CUT THE MULLET!

The band had kept Svavar from the studio, but when he finally heard the album and saw the artwork for the cover he simply snapped. His wife, legendary Icelandic singer Elly Vilhjálms, loved the album though, and with her blessing the first Peyr LP came out late in 1980. It was entitled 'Þagað í hel' ("Silenced to death")—which was a fitting name as the album was released in a very small quantity and has since become a much sought after vanity item.

The new Peyr were on a roll. The band added two guitarists to their ranks, Guðlaugur—"Godkrist"—Óttarsson and Þorsteinn Magnússon, who had played in Eik, a progressive band that the Peyr boys had loved during their formative years. His transformation to the new style was celebrated with a ceremony during a Peyr concert in February of 1981. He spoke of being "freed" as his hippie long hair was cut off on stage.

ICELAND'S FIRST NEW WAVE BAND

Peyr were called the first "new wave" band in Iceland and had a very "new wave"-ish stage presence. The members behaved like spastic robots and sometimes the gigs would start with the members carrying in a coffin with the tall singer Magnús Guðmundsson inside. During the first song he'd rise from the coffin, and then stand like a cross between Frankenstein and Dracula in a long black leather coat, gravely singing and frozenly staring at a far away point.

Peyr and their close circle of friends got involved with all kinds of mysterious ideologies. Occultism and mysticism coloured the music and the band's outlook. The regular Peyr fan tried his best to understand what Alistair Crowley, Tesla, Reich, the Illuminati and all the other stuff Peyr harped on was all about.

The first 7" was called 'Útfrymi' ("Ectoplasm")—and included 'Life Transmission,' an ode to Joy Division's Ian Curtis, who had taken his life the year before. The record came with a propaganda sheet where Peyr declared that the band

1. A Peyr collage, based on pictures taken at their concert at Hótel Saga in February 1981.

2. Mjötviður Mær, Peyr's masterpiece.



wanted to have spiritual intercourse with the Icelandic nation. The record came out on the band's own label, Eskvímó, like most of the band's other records.

INDUCING TROPICAL CLIMATES

Peyr were pranksters. When 'Íður til fóta' ("Innards at feet")—a 10" with four accessible new wave songs came out in September of 1981—the band sent out a press release that claimed the album was equipped with a weather control devise. At that time there was only one radio station in Iceland. "It is remarkable that during the days that the radio plays the record, it is almost a tropical climate in Iceland," stated band's the press release.

The band's second LP came out in December of 1981. It is called 'Mjötviður Mær' ("Mjötviður Maiden") "Mjötviður" being something from the Old Norse mythologies. The band's ideologist, Hilmar Örn Hilmarsson, would much later become the high priest of Ásatrúarfélagið, the religious organisation for those who practice belief in the Old Norse gods.

It is a diverse album, its songs ranging from the soft instrumental song 'Mjötviður' to the driving 'Rúðolf'—soon to be every drummer's favourite, due to drummer Sigtryggur Baldursson's signature beat. Also to be found on the album are experimental tracks such as 'Iss' and '2999', which features the sounds of a bulldozer that happened to pass the studio. The album got rave reviews in the Icelandic media, the consensus being that Peyr were now in the top league of



Icelandic rock bands, along with Þur-saflokkurinn.

By now, as is want of Icelandic bands, Peyr had their eyes on greener pastures: "We've been playing for the same group of 1.000 people in Iceland and we want to expand our horizons. Besides, there are sheep in other nations and it is our holy duty to visit them. In the name of justice!" the band said in an interview. More of Peyr's export experiments next time.

✂ - DR. GUNNI

By Dr. Gunni, based on his 2000 book Eru ekki allir í stuði? (Rock in Iceland).

Music | Album Reviews



Me, the Slumbering Napoleon

The Bloody Core Of It

slumberingnapoleon

Like a dry-hacking weasel. Put it out of its misery with a shovel.

A while ago I reviewed MTSN's debut EP and gave it a cautious thumbs up for its scuzzy rock sound. Now I'm taking it all back. I had really high hopes with this album, but after listening to it, it becomes obvious that they put only their good songs on the EP.

God this was like being sprayed with hot faeces while listening to those awful school bands that would jam in the music department during lunchtime. The guitar sound may be heavy, but I wasn't getting any passion, spark, nothing that made me go "YEAH! Brilliant! Destroy!".

The nadir is "I hate to fuck", where they play some notes on a scale VERY SLOWLY with interminable gaps in between. Then it's followed by a "hangers on applause," like they're the fucking Red Hot Chili Peppers or something. And that sort of thing makes a little bit of me die inside every time ...

✂ - BOB CLUNESS

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Gabríela Friðriksdóttir

“Life is life. Molecules of bodies.”

This is how Gabríela Friðriksdóttir responds when we ask her what she’s thinking about and investigating in her art these days.

You really shouldn’t wonder why Gabríela is Grapevine’s favourite local artist, period. With all due respect to the others (and a lot is due), she is very evidently leagues beyond her contemporaries in so many respects. Her work is pointed; it has substance, depth, it is the result of research and contemplation. It asks ancient questions, some of which we continually try and bury in our day to day. It is challenging. And it looks fucking awesome, too.

These days, Gabríela is working towards “what the heart knows is best,” she tells us. “The shows in Germany and America, in Borgarleikhúsið and in other places. But life is of course large and great, like Allah, and Hafiz, the old one of the Sand.”

Her work is not currently on display in any Reykjavík galleries, but it will be. You may however view her art in various books and publications to be found in Borgarbókasafn and local bookstores, and in the in-development neighbourhood of Urriðaholt, where her collaboration with French design team M/M, Táknafréð (“The Symbol Tree”) may be viewed.

She tells us the head she is posing with belongs to contemporary dance master Erna Ómarsdóttir, and that her immediate plans involve “working with the ones I love.”



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Get Ready For Horrible Cuteness!

Patricia Waller is showing at Loops 2010

Are you excited about Loops 2010 yet? You should be! It's only the most exciting thing to happen to Reykjavík all summer long. Let's break it down:

Loops 2010 takes place between June 17 and July 4, and is the first of what will hopefully be many annual Nordic yarncraft festivals in the Nordic House. The programme offers art exhibitions, workshops, symposiums and talks, not to mention all manner of off-venue events as well. The focus is firmly on the Nordic knitting traditions, of which there are many because, well, it's cold up north.

However, this is no fusty festival of conservative orthodoxy. While most of the designers and artists participating are inspired by and work within the traditions, they all present their own spin on things, resulting in various kinds of craziness and/or styles. The festival's programme is too detailed and marvellous to properly examine here, so head on over to www.nordichouse.is instead to check it out.

Cute and macabre

One of the most anticipated events in this line-up of greatness is surely a show by German artist Patricia Waller. Her work combines the cute and macabre in an elegant and humorous way, so that one cannot help but laugh, want to give the work a hug and feel repulsed—all at the same time. Why is she showing at a yarncraft festival, you ask? Because she crochets all her work!

"I used to knit pullovers as a teenager, but it had nothing to do with art at that point," says Patricia when asked of her love of crochet as artistic medium. "I began crocheting when I was in the final year of art school. All the materials we worked with in sculpture class were so heavy and difficult, usually metal or stone, so I started to work with crocheting, just to see if it could be done. All of my colleagues laughed at me for working with such an old-fashioned craft."

Wait, are you saying that these people thought crochet was in some way dorky? Surely not!

"In Germany at the time, crochet was mostly associated with toilet-paper cosies, so people found my experiments with it ridiculous," Patricia explains. Still, it must be said that as far as methods of toilet-paper heat preservation go, a crocheted cosy is one of the most awesome ones, and not ridiculous at all. But let's not digress.

Knit graffiti? Yarn bombing?

It wasn't just Patricia's school chums who were less-than-open towards her unusual choice of medium. Back in the heady days of the early 1990s, the art world in general was rather sceptical towards craft-based modern art. Patricia says that things have fortunately changed for the better in that respect, partially owing to a global backlash against consumerism and mass production:

"People today are more interested than they

were back then in expressing their individuality and are increasingly turning their backs on mass-market conformity. Making stuff with our own hands and having that feeling of accomplishment, of having created something, is part of that development and so people all over the world have become interested in handicrafts. This means that craft art is no longer associated only with housewives. Furthermore, things like knit graffiti and yarn-bombing have really worked wonders to change people's perceptions of what you can do with crafts."

Afraid of moths

Looking at pictures of Patricia's work is quite awe-inspiring for anyone who has ever held a crochet needle between their fingers and waved it around in an attempt to make something. Crocheting is hard, and Patricia has some serious skills. Why not go with something a bit easier, like knitting for example?

"I chose crochet rather than other forms of yarncraft for practical reasons mostly," she cheerfully admits. "Crochet is easier to unravel than knitting, because you don't have 500 live stitches off your needles that you need to worry about dropping. Fabric worked with crochet is also stronger and firmer than knit fabric, and that suits me well, because it prevents people from being able to see the stuffing inside my work."

Despite having chosen to work in a medium usually thought of as a craft, Patricia clearly approaches her work from an art perspective. For

example, while knitters and crocheters like to try out various types of fibre and can be quite snobbish about the organic and natural pedigree of their yarn, Patricia's thoughts on the subject of materials is refreshingly down to earth: "I prefer to work with acrylic yarn rather than wool or other natural fibres because I'm afraid that moths could eat my work. Furthermore, acrylic yarn doesn't get discoloured from light exposure, and is easy to clean; I've even made works that can be put in the washing machine!" How very convenient!

There will be blood. And gore

The themes in Waller's work are generally not for the faint of heart. There is a lot of blood (crocheted with bright red yarn) and gore, but the horror is camouflaged by the overpowering cuteness of the soft, handmade creatures that horrible things keep happening to. What's going on in the artist's mind when she dreams up these repulsive yet beguiling scenarios?

"I think violence is a really big issue for societies today. When you look the uninhibited slaughter that is served up for entertainment purposes in Hollywood films or video games, you realise that most of us encounter violence every day through those media. Where do you draw the line between socially accepted violence and extreme and unacceptable violence? My work contains many different levels that contrast with each other: the softness, the cuteness, the blood. The contrast and the lack of realism renders it so that, when faced with these works, people may begin to contemplate issues that they prefer not to consider in their day-to-day lives."

Waller's exhibition at the Nordic House in some ways presents a change from her usual modus operandi. There will still be blood, but this time, for the first time, her exhibition is the result of collaboration. Her show will resemble a natural history museum of sorts, with mysterious creatures nailed to the walls. To best describe these creatures and their lives, various people were brought in to contribute. The artist explains:

"Usually when I go somewhere to show my work, I just hang it on the wall, say hello to a few people and then go away. This time I decided that I wanted to involve the local people, the local landscape or to create some kind of link to local culture. To do this, I got some Icelanders to help me describe the lives and habits of the creatures, to give them names and to photograph them in their natural habitats. So far, this collaboration has been a really interesting experience for me."

Waller's work powerfully demonstrates how crafts can contribute to our lives in ways more profound than just keeping our toilet-paper rolls warm. They can be thought-provoking, can horrify and delight us in equal measure and bring us together through collaboration. All worthwhile things.

Waller's show opens in the Nordic House on June 17 and closes on July 4. Go experience it and the other wonders on offer at Loops 2010, and become consumed by a strange and sudden urge to take up knitting or crochet. ☘

✍ VIGDÍS ÞORMÓSDÓTTIR
📷 JULIA STAPLES

Licensing and registration of travel-related services

The Icelandic Tourist Board issues licences to tour operators and travel agents, as well as issuing registration to booking services and information centres.

Tour operators and travel agents are required to use a special logo approved by the Icelandic Tourist Board on all their advertisements and on their Internet website.

Booking services and information centres are entitled to use a Tourist Board logo on all their material. The logos below are recognised by the Icelandic Tourist Board.



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Can You Read This?

Great, then ESU Iceland wants to hear from you

English is the world's lingua franca (although isn't it ironic we use a foreign term to describe it?). Here in Iceland, home to one of the world's purest languages, English remains the necessary choice for communication with the Outside World, for relating to new arrivals to the country, for multi-national businesses, and in the lucrative tourist industry.

Almost 100 years ago, in 1918, an international charity called the English-Speaking Union was founded to promote international understanding and friendship through the use of the English language. The charity is non-political and now has branches in over 50 countries.

Here on our North Atlantic home, a steering committee to establish a branch of the English-Speaking Union was set up at the end of 2008. Since then, with the goodwill of the English-speaking embassies in Reykjavík (those of Canada, India, the United Kingdom and the United States), the seven-member committee, comprised of mostly Icelanders from various professional sectors, has been organising events, lectures, and tournaments in English. We expect to launch as an official ESU branch in spring 2011.

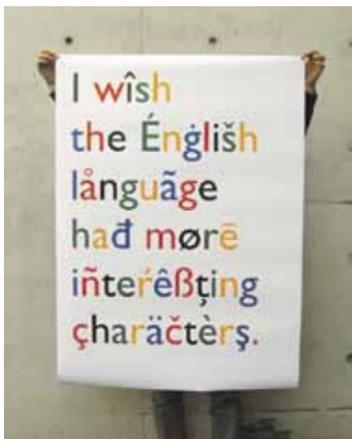
From film nights to public speaking

ESU Iceland promotes and hosts events that are generally free of charge and open to all. Previous events include lectures by BBC correspondent Brian Hanrahan, UK House of Lords member Lord William Wallace, and folklorist Terry Gunnell. We have hosted a film night featuring an award-winning American documentary and members of the ESU mailing list were invited to a free screening of a Bollywood film hosted by the Indian Embassy.

In addition to lectures and social events, ESU Iceland sent two Icelandic secondary school students to London this May to compete in the ESU International Public Speaking competition. The competition attracts participants from dozens of countries around the world and Iceland's two students, both from Verzlunarskóli Íslands, performed amazingly well. There will be another such competition next year.

Find out more

ESU Iceland will be promoting and organising several more events this year. If you're interested in keeping



up to date on upcoming activities, you can join our mailing list by visiting either www.esu.is or our Facebook page, the English-Speaking Union of Iceland. If you're really impressed, you may wish to become a full member of ESU Iceland, which comes with discounts at participating businesses, invitations to dinners with speakers, and benefits around the world at other ESU branches. All the information is on our website.

Coming up next

The next event we are promoting is a performance of the wildly-popular, sold-out show London Assurance, a Victorian comedy performed at Britain's National Theatre, which will be broadcast live on 28 June at Kringlan cinema and at hundreds of other venues globally.

London Assurance stars Simon Russell Beale and Fiona Shaw, two of Britain's best-known theatre actors. The Sunday Express calls it "the funniest and most assured comedy in all of London."

This performance, part of an initiative by the National Theatre, will be broadcast in high definition and include behind the scenes footage and interviews with artists.

ESU Iceland is working with Sambíóin and the British Embassy in Reykjavík to promote this event. Anyone who purchases tickets in advance at the Kringlan box office and mentions the ESU will get a 20% discount on the ticket, which is normally ISK 2200.

We look forward to seeing you at Kringlan or another of our events in the near future.

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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.

Reykjavík City Museum

Art | Festival

24-Hour Arty People

Jónsvaka brings young art to EVERYONE

Words

Alexandra Young

Photography

Julia Staples

“Our original idea was that we needed one platform for different kinds of art. In Iceland we have a lot of festivals for film, art and music but nothing that has everything under one roof,” explains Hildur Maral Hamíósdóttir, one of the organisers of the brand new Jónsvaka festival.

So they built a roof, they called it Jónsvaka and they claim it embraces all the corners and crevices of the local artistic world.

The bash makes its début on June 24th, over the Jónsmessa weekend (which is a sort of local version of Midsummer’s Day/Night). Indeed, that is when the sun reaches its highest waking peak and we all get a lil’ disorientated. Hildur and her co-organiser, Harpa Fönn Sigurjónsdóttir, plan to get Reykjavík buzzing with tangible creativity and imagination over the period, particularly amongst the young folk.

They tell us the festivities will be scattered all over Reykjavík in the form of art exhibits, street performances and evening concerts. If they are right, you are likely bound to stumble into something nifty downtown at that time. Designers will also take the stage in a fashion show on the opening night at the Reykjavík Art Museum, along with a PopUp store over the weekend selling all sorts of fashionable goods. Sounds fun!

The bash also plays host to a three-day concert programme at NASA, offering all sorts of hot young bands and their older scene brethren. They also plan to integrate music and artsy aspects into single performances with collaborations between artists.

It sounds good, right? At least it did to us, so we met up with Harpa Hildur to seek a lowdown:

Why now?

Harpa: We felt the timing was a little unique as it is a midsummer festival, and usually there’s nothing going on these days in Iceland compared to most Nordic countries. They have lots of festivals, always some art exhibitions or music festivals. But here? Basically nothing.

But aren’t people getting sick of all these festivals? It’s getting hard to

keep up.

Hildur: We realised that it was possible to have a festival every month in Iceland, so we thought we could bring a fresh one this month. What this one does is bring together different types of art. So maybe someone who would normally go to a photography exhibition will also stumble upon a rock band they might like. We’re trying to create the feeling that people can always find something new and discover something exciting they didn’t know Iceland had

How did you pick the participating artists?

Harpa: Actually the theme was that anyone who wanted to participate could participate. There are some standards you needed to fulfil. You needed to fill out an application, but that was all. If they did that right they were basically in. There are so many participating artists. There are over fifty works on display, including performances, design and music. But all in all, it’s well over 200 artists.

Wow. That’s a lot. Is this an attempt to encourage younger people to be more involved with the arts?

Harpa: Yes exactly, we think this festival should be encouraging. Even people that haven’t finished their education are able and willing to participate. We even have a group of photographers between the ages of 15 and 17 years that are having their first exhibition at Hitt Húsið.

What kind of audience do you want to reach?

Hildur: Everyone. We are focusing on young artists, but there are also some older ones too, more experienced ones. But we’re mainly just trying to get everyone down town to pick up a brochure and just walk around to the different venues and see everything.

Is this the first time you’ve collaborated?

Harpa: Yes. We found out that you [Hildur] were going to open up a festival for young people. Our company FRAFL actually focuses on young visual artists and we’re constantly trying to create opportunities for them within the Icelandic market. So we thought “hmm... this could be an opportunity for visual



artists!” ‘Cause there are very few festivals for the visual arts scene. Jónsvaka is so accessible for everyone, everyone can apply and join. So we approached her and just after one meeting, there it is!

Tell us about your concert programme.

Hildur: There are 17 acts that make up 3 days. A mixture of new bands and some bigger ones. But we have one standard that anyone playing at the festival has released something. We have smaller bands like Rökkurró and Útidúr and big names like Hjálmar, Hjaltalín and Seabear. It’s a very nice line-up, I like it.

Are you hoping that this will make an annual event?

Hildur: If everything goes well, yes. We actually got some inquiries right away asking if it’s going to be held next summer. We’re like “okay, let’s finish this one first!”

Have you gained a lot of support since promoting the event?

Hildur: People are very positive towards this festival. We have got all kinds of emails, people willing to help out and lots of people applying.

Harpa: It’s amazing! I think the best

thing with this festival is that it’s SO accessible. I mean this is something the average art lover should actually love. It’s not narrow or specific like some other festivals. Jónsvaka is really open and there’s something in it for everybody.

If you feel like getting off yo’ ass, rolling down town and lending them a hand, just send an email to volunteers@jonsvaka.is.

All art exhibitions are free, and a weekend concert pass will set you back a modest 2900 ISK.

June 24

Hitt Húsið
15:00 Festival opening. Music by Snorri Helgason, Mukkaló & Júníus Meyvant band.
15:00 – 17:00 It’s Like Living, photo exhibit by Hugi Hlynsson and Júlía Runólfsdóttir. Like on Earth as in Heaven, installation by Gísli Hrafn Magnússon. Exhibit by Júníus Meyvant.

Austurvöllur
17:00 – 18:00 Street Art

Reykjavík Art Museum
20:00 – 21:00 PopUp Fashion Show
21:00 – 22:00 Parabolur Performance Project

Hjartagarðurinn
Study nr.1 and a graffiti mural by Maggi Noem

NASA
21:30 Útidúr
22:00 Árstöðir
22:30 Rökkurró
23:00 For a Minor Reflection
23:40 Ólafur Arnalds
00:20 Sin Fang

Around Reykjavík
Midsummer Night Spirits and You afraid of Big Brother?? Remember his little sister!

June 25

Hitt Húsið
13:00 – 17:00 It’s Like Living, photo exhibit by Hugi Hlynsson and Júlía Runólfsdóttir. Like on Earth as in Heaven, installation by Gísli Hrafn Magnússon. Exhibit by Júníus Meyvant.

Hjartagarðurinn
Study nr.1 and a graffiti mural by Maggi Noem

Around Reykjavík
Midsummer Night Spirits and You afraid of Big Brother?? Remember his little sister!

NASA
22:30 Foreign Monkeys
23:00 Mammút
23:40 Agent Fresco
0:20 Ensími
1:10 Seabear
2:00 Hjálmar

June 26

Hitt Húsið
12:00 – 18:00 It’s Like Living, photo exhibit by Hugi Hlynsson and Júlía Runólfsdóttir. Like on Earth as in Heaven, installation by Gísli Hrafn Magnússon. Exhibit by Júníus Meyvant.

Reykjavík Art Museum
13:00 – 17:00 PopUp Fashion Show.
14:00, 15:00, 16:00 Guided Tours.

Austurvöllur
14:00 – 20:00 Drowning Room/B-Tower.
16:45 – 17:05 The Need for Dancing is the Intoxication of Life.
17:30 – 19:00 Street Art.

Havari
13:00 – 13:20 The Need for Dancing is the Intoxication of Life.
17:00 – 18:00 Modern Tunes performed by RVK Underground.

Crymo
14:00 – 14:30 NEI
15:00 – 15:20 The Need for Dancing is the Intoxication of Life.
15:30 – 16:00 NEI.

The Living Art Museum
18:00 – 18:30 Þráðarhaft.
19:00 – 19:30 ArtMass.

Hjartagarðurinn
Study nr.1 and a graffiti mural by Maggi Noem.
13:00 – 15:30 Street Reading.

NASA
23:00 Hudson Wayne.
23:40 Sudden Weather Change.
0:20 Kimono.
1:10 Hjaltalín.
2:00 Bloodgroup.

Around Reykjavík
Midsummer Night Spirits and You afraid of Big Brother?? Remember his little sister!

June 27

Reykjavík Art Museum
13:00 – 16:00 Pop Up Store.

The Living Art Museum
14:00 – 14:30 Kyrja.
15:00 – 15:45 Souls have no names.
16:00 – 17:00 The Weird Girls Project

Hjartagarðurinn
Study nr.1 and a graffiti mural by Maggi Noem.

Around Reykjavík
Midsummer Night Spirits and You afraid of Big Brother?? Remember his little sister!



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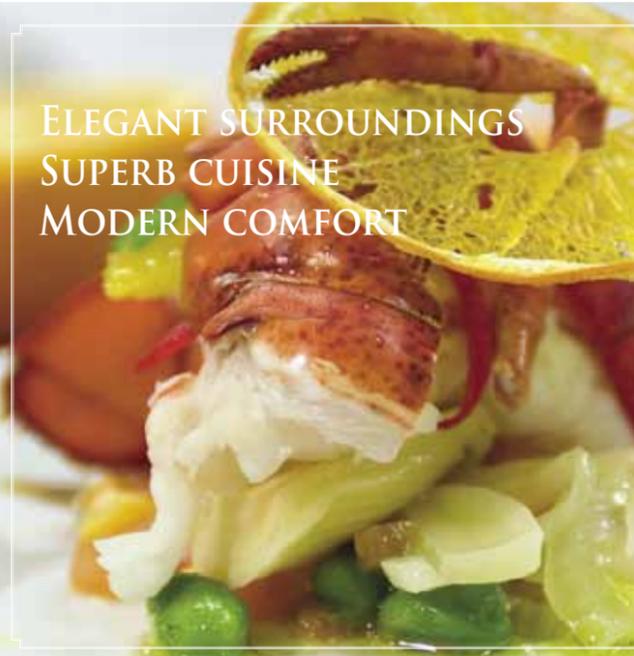


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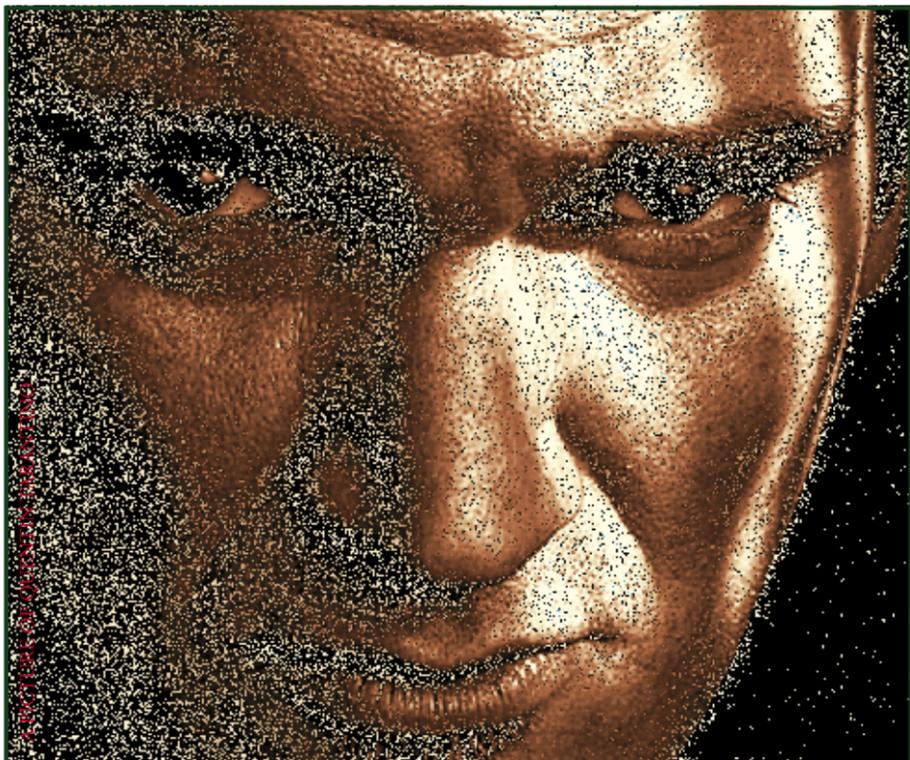
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www.nordichouse.is
Register for workshops: ilmur@nordice.is





The Formula For Water

Swimming pools between Reykjavík and Akureyri



Iceland is “all about the water” my mum said when she came to visit. She was referring to the dual influence of the Gulf Stream, making Iceland unusually warm for its latitude, and the country’s ubiquitous hot springs. Without the hot springs, Icelanders wouldn’t be the people they are—hot tub addicts.

The number of swimming pools here is big, per capita, and the hot tubs are the star of the show. If the midnight summer sun is keeping you awake, just take a dunk in the closest hot tub and you’ll melt into sleepy jelly. Some Icelanders love to switch between hot tub and shocking ocean swim, to maximize the effect. Hot pots, as they’re often called, also allow you to bathe outdoors on an otherwise frozen winter night.

Swimming pools in Iceland are pretty much all outdoors. They’re all well maintained, though some are newer than others. It is often customary to have little perks like free lockers, soap, and hair dryers in the change rooms. Many are part of sports complexes that have gyms, weight rooms, classes, and hold sports tournaments in the summer. But, like their towns, the swimming pools of Iceland each have a unique personality. My mother and I sampled several en route from Reykjavík to Akureyri.

SWIMMING POOL AT ÍPRÓTTAMIÐSTÖÐIN Í BORGARNESI BORGARNES 400 ISK per adult

With its clean and modern feel and aquatic colour scheme, the Borgarnes swimming pool was a pleasant start to our journey. About an hour out of Reykjavík, Borgarnes is a prime stopover point. The sun was out and the showers were hot. There are three outdoor hot pools, 35, 39, 42 degrees (with no jets), one kids’ wading pool, two lap pools (one inside), and three slides, each significantly different from each other. The top slide was fast!

Bergur Jónsson, a Borgarnes native and employee of the community centre, says: “The best thing about the swimming pool, for me, is to go to the hot tubs after lifting weights. We have a great view.” From the pool deck visitors can see over the ocean nearby, and can even watch football games being played in the adjoining field.

SWIMMING POOL AT ÍPRÓTTAMIÐSTÖÐ HÚNAPINGS VESTRA HVAMMSTANGI 400 ISK per adult

The Hvammstangi swimming pool is an unassuming little place. Some might even call it shabby. The building has the white-painted-concrete am-

bianche of an old hospital, but a clean one. Built in 1982, the pool uses geothermally heated water. Because it’s located higher up on the Hvammstangi’s hillside, the pool might have a nice view over town if we could see through the fence. The lack of lockers is a nuisance, but not a serious problem, because you can leave your valuables at reception. There is little to no theft. “Sometimes someone takes one towel, but nothing big,” the girl working there told us.

With two hot tubs at 37 and 40 degrees, this pool doesn’t have all the bells and whistles the others do, but I’ve got to hand it to them for having a hot tub at just the right temperature—and with jets! Despite the pool’s modesty, I can imagine crowds of kids hanging off floaty toys and parents lolling off lawn chairs on the deck when Hvammstangi congregates to enjoy this pool in summer.

BLÖNDUÓS SWIMMING POOL BLÖNDUÓS 380 ISK per adult

My mother and I picked our way through construction into this brand spanking new sports complex only to find it hadn’t officially opened yet. With two slides, two hot tubs, a tots’ pool (with mushroom fountain!) and a lap pool, all outdoors, plus a steam room, this pool will be much better

than the previous version, which was all indoors—mostly unheard of for a pool in Iceland. “For now we’re just cleaning up the place and getting ready for the opening,” Sara Jóhannsdóttir told us. She’ll be working there after the place opens on June 16. Much thought has been invested in this version. There are concrete floors rather than cushy rubbery ones because the latter become slippery in winter. The pool also uses a state-of-the-art chlorination system, and is electrically heated because there is no geothermal heat in the area. The best part of the pool? “I’m betting the slides are going to be awesome,” said Sara.

GRETTISLAUG HOT POOL GRETTISLAUG, JUST NORTH OF SAUÐÁRKRÓKUR Free

Okay, this isn’t officially a swimming pool, but if you’re anywhere near Sauðárkrókur you should go. It’s sixteen kilometres up a dirt road along the pretty Skagafjörður, through three gates you have to open yourself. The two outdoor hot pools are lined with large algae-covered stones that are smooth to sit on, but slippery. The smaller and larger pools are about 38 and 41 degrees, respectively. Even on a rainy day it’s worth a trip—park right beside, change in the car, and make a run for it.

Unfortunately there is no view of the fjord from



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the pools, but you can lay your eyes on the picturesque mountains and fields nearby instead. There were some nesting arctic terns nearby during our visit. The water is unfiltered, and apparently comes from directly beneath the hot pools. Some spots on the pool floor are too hot to step on. The downside of the spot's convenience is that it is well used. There were three other cars worth of tourists there with us on a Thursday at noon in early June. Luckily the water seems to circulate well.

SAUÐÁRKRÓKUR SWIMMING POOL
SAUÐÁRKRÓKUR

380 ISK per adult

Built in 1957, this lively pool doesn't act its age. When we got there it was full with swimming lessons—all foam crocodiles and kick boards. According to Eva Pandora Baldursdóttir, who works at reception, the patrons are “mostly townies, but in the summer there are many tourists and people passing by.”

The geothermally heated water feels quite chlorinated, and the supposedly 39-degree tub was hotter than the 41-degree tub, but the jets were nice and hard and the locals were friendly. The best part about the Sauðárkrókur swimming pool is “the service,” Eva told us. “Like when I'm on the deck sunbathing, I can go ask for a cup of

coffee!” It's all about the little things here. There is a courtesy water dispenser with cups in the lobby, and in the change rooms swabs and cotton pads are available alongside the requisite hair dryers. Best of all, on Fridays visitors can alleviate their post-swim munchies with a fresh cupcake—a new tradition.

AKUREYRI SWIMMING POOL

AKUREYRI

450 ISK per adult

The Akureyri pool was built in 2004, but has been a swimming spot in some way, shape, or form since 1897. It is by far the most professional pool we visited. No matter where you go, there is always an orange-t-shirted employee on guard. Several seem to take their jobs quite seriously.

It's a busy place. Helen Gunnarsdóttir at reception barely had time to talk to me—there was a steady stream of arriving patrons. “The security is very strong,” Helen said, pointing to the security cameras. “We take care of the children and make sure everyone is safe.”

The electrically heated pool is also the most deluxe pool we visited. The two small hot pots were respectively scalding and tepid, and the jets were weak, but the rest was great. There are two 25-metre lap pools, a kids' pool complete with mushroom fountain and snake statue, one larger

hot tub at about 40 degrees, one warm shallow area with fountains, two slides, one deeper pool at about 29 degrees that is part indoors, part outdoors, a steam bath outside and a sauna inside, plus one pool indoors for lessons.

And there is exercise equipment outdoors in case pool patrons want to work out between hot tub sessions. And there's a minigolf course and play structures in a grassy area beside the pool, which is supervised in the summer. Suffice it to say that this pool is disgustingly fun, and certainly roomy enough to comfortably accommodate the crowds that flock there. ☺

1. Borgarnes
2. Grettislaug
3. Akureyri
4. Sauðárkrókur

Bestest Bathing

Most exciting slide:

Borgarnes

Best hot tub:

Hvammstangi—40 degrees, plus jets

Nicest perk:

Free cupcakes on Friday in Sauðárkrókur

Busiest pool:

Akureyri

Quietest pool:

Hvammstangi

Safest pool:

Akureyri—patrols indoors and outdoors

Greatest variety of pools: Akureyri

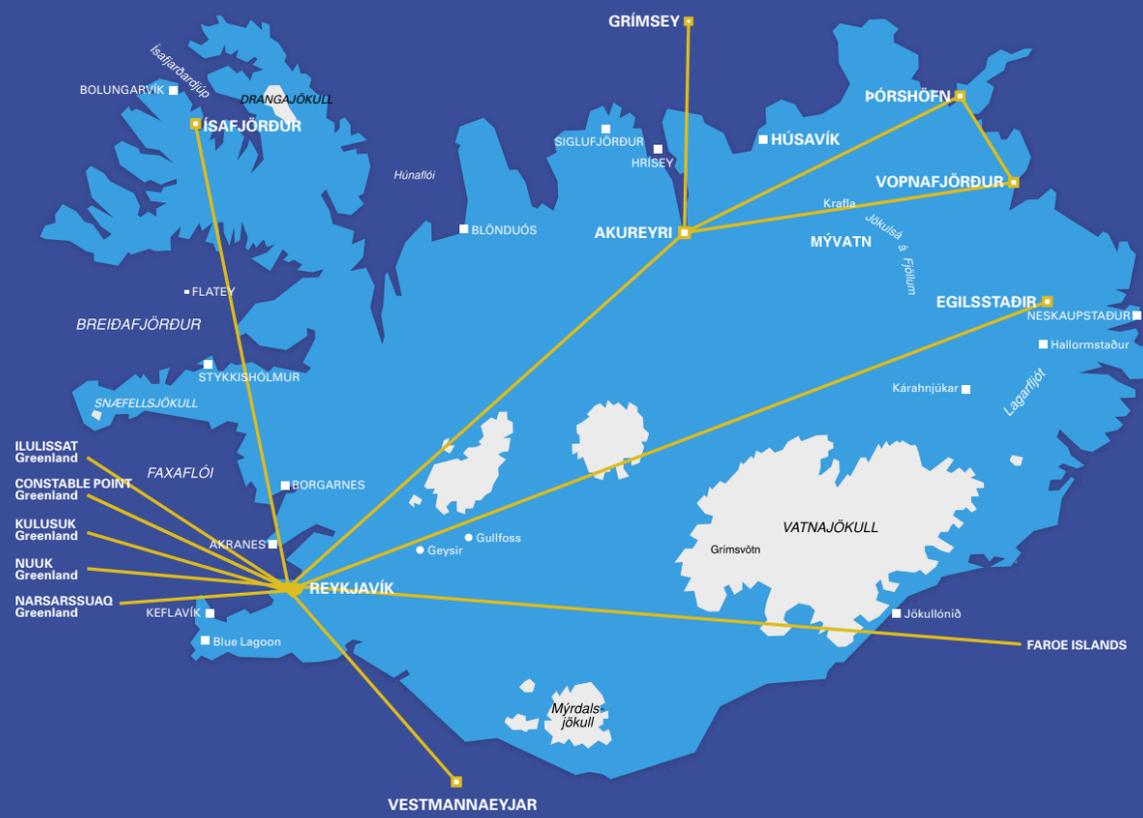
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Travel | Ghosts

Ghosts And Goblins And Trolls, Oh My!

Interesting freaky shit

When I was a kid, my favourite ride at my hometown amusement park was the haunted house. It was built in 1967; all the skeletons looked like they were made out of popsicle sticks and it was hilarious. Then they shut it down and I cried. Then I moved to Iceland, where there are no amusement parks, but there is a ghoulishly delightful museum in the beautiful coastal town of Stokkseyri.

Draugasetrið, The Ghost Centre, is a spooky maze of folk tales and frightening tricks that simultaneously delight and scare the living poo out of you. The tour is guided by an ominous, disembodied voice on a head-set as you walk through various creepy settings, telling you traditional folk tales of evil spirits that couldn't be quelled.

Then while you're nice and distracted by the story of a broken milk truck or that two-headed sheep in the corner, some perfectly still object starts



moving towards you and grabbing your arm! What the shit! Out of the twenty-four rooms and stories, number nineteen is the one least suitable for the faint of heart. I screamed like a hyena, and I am made of steel wool and whisky. Keeping your back against the wall is not even an option: things occasionally pop out of there.

Once your living daylighters are extinguished and you make it out of the last room (an equally scary church), the museum is readily equipped with a bar to ease your nerves and let you



mull over all the cool stories you just heard. You can also build some liquid courage before taking the tour, since that's where it starts too. I recommend it. Then you can head downstairs and see the mystical and magical world of the elves, trolls and northern lights in the Icelandic Wonders museum. Watch out for that little troll running about the place though. He may be made of bur-lap, but he'll spill your wine. ☹

✍ REBECCA LOUDER
📷 MERYEM YILDIZ

Travel | H₂O

The Iceland Aquaphiles



If you've seen the Icelandic Tourist Board's new 'Inspired by Iceland' video campaign, you may be under the impression that Iceland is always sunny and Icelanders are super-hip-dancing-machines. While that's debatable, the scene where the tanned couple goes skinny-dipping and makes out in a natural hot spring is pretty spot on.

Swimming is very much a part of Icelandic culture. I once read somewhere that Americans rendezvous at a coffeehouse, the Brits head to the pub, and Icelanders meet up at their local swimming pool. Although Icelanders do the coffee and pub thing too, they're really the only ones I know of that catch up with friends at the public swimming pool.

THE TOWN WATER COOLER

For the last thirty years, my grandma has been meeting up with her friends at their local swimming pool about three mornings per week. After swimming their laps, they sit in the hot tub and chat before getting out and having some coffee. It's quite the social affair and if you're looking for the town gossip, the hot tub is the place to go.

You'll find public swimming pools in nearly every town in Iceland and everyone from young kids to old folks frequents them. On a fantastic note, Reykjavik's newly elected mayor Jón Gnarr of the Best Party campaigned on the promise of making access to swimming pools free for students and losers. Not to mention, he also promised free towels.

Anyway, if you've seen one, don't think you've seen them all because each pool flaunts its own local flavour. In general though, they taste a lot less like chlorine than, say, US pools. Instead (not to scare away any prude Americans), you should know that everyone is expected to soap up naked in a communal shower before getting into the water.

THE COUNTRYSIDE BATH

However, pools in Iceland are not limited to the town. There are over 700 geothermal hot spots in Iceland and you'll find pools, hot tubs and springs in the remotest parts of the country. Heitar Laugar á Íslandi, a book that was released last year, describes quite a number of these pools in Iceland, along with their GPS coordinates. Admittedly some are more hidden than others, but it's also possible to spontaneously happen upon them.

Some of the greatest pools and hot springs can be found in the isolated Westfjords region on the Northwest corner of Iceland. On a recent road trip with friends from the States, as we wound our way around Reykjafjörður (Smokey-fjord), we spotted both a man made swimming pool and a natural hot spring in a majestic landscape of otherwise utter isolation. Given any desire to replicate that scene from the 'Inspired by Iceland' video, this would be a good place to do it.

So we veered off the road, climbed out of the car, stripped off our clothes and broke out in a dance to Emiliana Torrini's Jungle Drum. Well, not really. But we did enjoy an evening relaxing in a geothermal heated hot spring. I highly recommend it. Plus, you don't have to wait for Jón Gnarr to deliver on his promise of free admittance to swimming pools for students and losers because nature's tubs are usually free for all. ☹

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The Cult of 101

Now translated into over 14 languages, Hallgrímur Helgason's novel '101 Reykjavik' literally transformed the traditionally held view of Iceland as an untouched Eden into one of party excess. After the underground success of Baltasar Kormákur's 2002 movie starring Pedro Almodóvar's cult diva Victoria Abril, Faber and Faber (UK) bought the English-language rights. Hallgrímur's novel is one of the few pieces of contemporary Icelandic literature that are represented by the commercial mainstream.

Reviewing the book, American novelist Tim Sandlin said: "Imagine if Henry Miller had written Tropic of Cancer on crack instead of wine. ['101 Reykjavik'] has the least likeable narrator in literary history. Worse than Donleavy's Ginger Man or the fat guy in Confederacy of Dunces." Despite this, Sandlin highly recommends this book—if anything, for sheer maudlin disgust. Certainly '101 Reykjavik' is a tome to the urban slacker generation and Hlynur, the protagonist of the story, is not the man you'd want your daughter to bring home for dinner. He's a lame, grubby drunkard, but he has his moments of prophetic inspiration. In his thirties and weaving on the fringes of society, Hlynur still lives at home with his mother and does as little as possible. Mostly he

surfs the internet for porn, seeking any possible depravity he can get his hands on.

A loose deconstruction of Hamlet, this is a one-man rant against the world of normalcy; a coming of age story which never truly comes of age. Hallgrímur seems to favour the tragic character. Even in his more recent work 'Rokland' ('Stormland'—as yet unreleased in English), a misunderstood rebel named Böddi from the deep countryside village of Krókur, sets out across country to kill the Prime Minister.

'101 Reykjavik' reads a little like some kind of stream-of-consciousness, post-modernist novel in verse: "We watch the light as it slowly fades on the eastern horizon, witness the mountains in their final battle against the powers of darkness, a battle they're doomed to lose, heroic but doomed, about to be wiped off the map of a visible world...What the hell am I saying?...There are more ideas in one unsmoked cigarette than five hefty tomes of sagas."

And yes, you can feel the tragedy-comedy that emerges in Hallgrímur's unlikely Hamlet, Hlynur. At times, Hlynur's puns and jokes go a little over the top; and in the English translation it is hard to say, but it does appear that Hallgrímur has achieved the semblance of an Icelandic street jive. In a review in the

Guardian, Julie Myerson said: "What this writer is doing is being current, being new, shaking up notions of literariness with naughty terrier teeth...He has done the best thing possible: found a new way of telling. It is a kind of pop prose which looks easy, but is far from it." Yes, there are some real zingers in the book, but the comic plot takes its good old time to flesh out. And despite the capable translation by Brian FitzGibbon one cannot help but think that this novel might have better achieved its purpose with some heavy-handed editing.

Hallgrímur's slacker-hero Hlynur assigns each of the women he meets with a monetary value based on how much he would be willing to pay to sleep with them: Mother Teresa (1.700 ISK), Pamela Anderson (4.700.000 ISK). His divorced mother has just come out of the closet, and Hlynur finds himself sexually attracted to his mother's lover Lolla. All of a sudden Hlynur discovers out that Hófi, the girl he occasionally shags, is pregnant. Meanwhile, when his mother is conveniently out of town, Hlynur ends up having drunken sex with Lolla who he proceeds to impregnate too. This is Jerry Springer-inspired tragedy. It's funny, it's poignant, but it really doesn't lead us anywhere except back where we started.

I can't help but get the feeling that even if the Reykjavik party scene of the '90s—of the late nights with Björk and Blur's Damon Albarn (who co-wrote the score to the movie), that untold Icelandic youth empathised with Hlynur as they led their own shenanigans through Reykjavik's wild and cantankerous Eden of Ecstasy and debauched sex. But was Reykjavik ever really that wild?

All its flaws aside, '101 Reykjavik' is an iconic work that sets the tone for this decade and those to come. It has many interesting and humorous moments, and despite the fact that it is more of a poetic diatribe than a novel, that doesn't quite seem to matter. The New York Times called '101 Reykjavik' "...a desolate howl from an in-between decade and an in-between land." Without '101 Reykjavik' Iceland would be a far duller place. In some way, this novel may be seen as a prophetic lead-in to more current events: the amorality of hipsters and banksters gone mad. The world, of course, is entirely what you make of it. ☺

Waking Dreamstates and eyes like pissholes in the snow...



Have you ever seen the film *Insomnia*? Both the Norwegian and the Hollywood versions are a good watch. It's a detective drama with the added twist of the investigation being set above the Arctic Circle in the middle of summer. As the film progresses, we see the lead character in charge slowly come apart as the constant sunlight prevents him from sleeping. I can almost certainly relate to how he feels right now. Ladies and gentlemen: Icelandic summertime is here! And it's wrecking my waking world ...

Now, I don't hate summer full stop. Summer can be loads of fun. Eating charred BBQ and sitting in Austurvöllur drinking warm beer, while a friend's baby vomits on me I have no problem with. In fact, it's rather dandy in its own little way. Also having a massive party weekend in the middle of summer not only is hugely enjoyable, but is probably one of the few things keeping the economy afloat these days.

No, my issue is how the relentless march of daylight in Iceland literally takes a baseball bat to the kneecaps of my biorhythms. Unlike most people in Iceland, I'm definitely a winter person. I just seem to be more hardwired for the night, the cold and the snow. Perhaps I have vampiric DNA spliced into my own system, but rest assured, at least I won't fucking sparkle when you take me outside.

Of course like any other Útlegmaginganaga n00b, when I first came to Iceland the idea of nearly 24 hours of sunlight appealed to me greatly. Especially the more party-on aspects of this situation. And there were some lovely memories of that first summer. Having a pint in the Celtic Cross at 4 AM while watching the sun come up. Or doing a solo midnight hike up a mountain trail at Þórsmörk. At 3 AM, I'm miles from anyone, while I watch the sun rise over a mountain pass. I almost wished I had some decent psychedelic drugs and Sigur Rós on my MP3 player at the time, as I'm sure there would have been a transcendental moment that could have changed the course of my life in many different ways.

But as the years have progressed along with my need to perform mundane day-to-day tasks, like work, I find myself engaged in an ever increasing battle with nature as my insomnia grows worse and worse. Take right now. Right now, while I write these notes, it's 2:30 in the morning, I have to be up in 4 hours and I have PiL's Metal Box in my headphones (admittedly that's not the best choice of music when you're trying to wind down). I am fully aware that tomorrow I am going to experience waves of nausea while my eyes will look like pissholes in red snow.

Personally I'm not sure of how to alleviate my current predicament. I probably need to change my lifestyle. Perhaps I need to cut down on the 25 cups of tea I drink over a day, do more exercise and eat fresh fruit. It would probably also help to stop listening to stuff like experimental French Black Metal or Russian Drone-Folk and give something more calming and soothing a chance.

Or I could utilise my waking state and do something constructive. Perhaps work a second job, like several of my friends do over the weekend. Sounds okay, but I can't drive and I've had my fill of working in 101 dive bars. Or maybe I should start an illegal underground fighting club, using that as the base to create a semi anarchic anti-corporate terrorist group aiming to bring down Icelandic society with pranks and blowing up shit. Do you think I can get a government grant for that? Maybe Jón Gnarr will help? ☺

Inscribed Round The Rectum Of A Hollywood Superstar



The Kindle, the iPad, the Nook, the Cybook Opus, the Sony Reader, the iLiad—and now: Megan Fox's right flank.

We've come to accept the fact that books are no longer just pages tied together. Just as we graduated from scrolls and tablets, we're now in the process of graduating from paperbacks and hardcovers to more novel (pun intended) ways of presenting our texts. From storing entire libraries in a pocket-sized computer to encoding bacteria with poetry to programming machines that summarise, mash-up, read aloud and produce new texts, to print-on-demand and the immediate publishing that blogs offer—traditional books are no longer the only vehicles for poetry (or other texts), leaving traditional book publishers desperately clinging on to a past that'll never come back. The "book" has been born again—but the world of literature (from au-

thors to publishers to buyers) is still going through painful labour.

This doesn't necessarily mean that the old book is dead, although there'll probably be less of it around in ten years time. All the different vehicles for text, including the paperback and the hardcover, have their own value, their intrinsic qualities. Bacteria carrying poetry will probably outlive humanity. Storing text electronically takes a lot less space, doesn't waste paper (although the reading gadgets are hardly 'environmental') and reduces the cost of distribution (fiscally and environmentally). Print-on-demand makes (almost) anything that can be printed publishable in book form, no matter the "marketability". Blogs give us the chance to share text with lightning speed, making it easily accessible across the globe in a matter of seconds. And paperbacks and hardcovers feed our more fetishistic needs—reading as religion; personal librar-

ies as shrines of knowledge, tributes to genius.

But until recently, we've not cracked the mystery of how to make sure that what we write will be read by millions, rather than just our devoted mothers. We've not had an obvious vehicle for this, the most desired quality of all: guaranteed success (short of printing our poetry in humongous letters on the moon, of course).

Enter: ultra vixen of oozifying sex appeal, smooth-skinned smorgasbord of poetry, mighty transformer of all our textual realities, Megan Fox.

The first poem to be published on the oh-so-popular body of Megan Fox was the somewhat traditional "Chinese symbol"—in this case "strength"—on the back of her head. From Chinese minimalism, she moved on to publishing a bit of Shakespeare: "We will all laugh at gilded butterflies" on her right shoulderblade. She followed up

Shakespeare's success with a bit of her own poesy: "there once was a little girl who never knew love until a boy broke her HEART" on her right flank. Last but not least, quite recently she added a mysterious line to her left flank: "And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music"—variously attributed to Friedrich Nietzsche, Jelaluddin Rumi, the 18th century mystic Rabbi Nachman, Henri Bergson, George Carlin or an "unknown" poet by the name of Angela Monet. But no matter who wrote it, there is no doubt whatsoever no poem was read as widely last week.

But just like the iPad or the Kindle, blogs or bacteria, Megan Fox, although a welcome addition to the plethora of poetic vehicles, is more of an addition to book culture than a replacement of it. ☺

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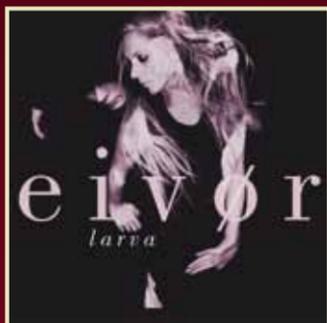
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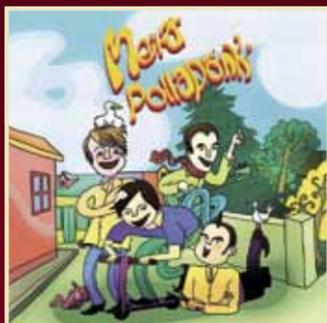
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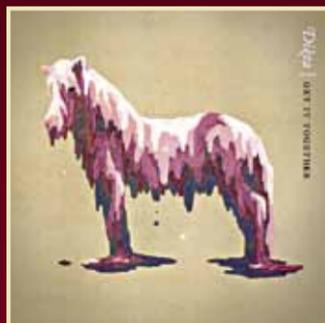
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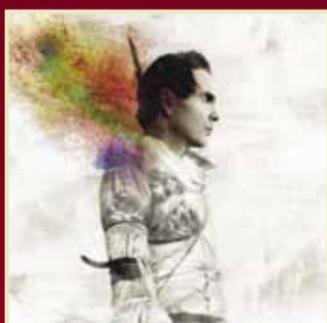
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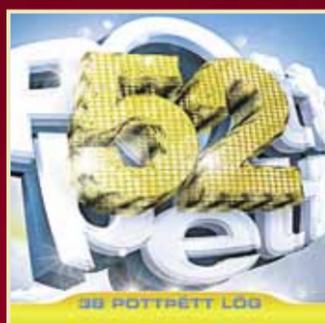
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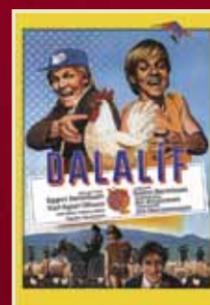
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PAGE 6

Iceland is only 320.000 people. It's acting like a country, but it has the resources of a small city.

Vooral Gerard van Vliet is royally pissed off at Icelanders. Too bad for him, huh?

PAGE 19

The old power interests simply disappeared with the fall of the banks.

So says former Morgunblaðið Styrmir Gunnarsson. And he should know. This is reassuring info.

PAGE 10

As history teaches us, revolutions tend to have unintended consequences, and sometime they even "eat their children." The Icelandic financial revolution that took place in the 1990s is no exception.

Historian Magnús Sveinn Helgason bursts Iceland's financial bubble of yore.

PAGE 20

"I never get bored of playing my own songs."

Ólafur Arnalds isn't unfond of himself or his work.

PAGE 26

Where do you draw the line between socially accepted violence and extreme and unacceptable violence? My work contains many different levels that contrast with each other: the softness, the cuteness, the blood.

Yes, Patrica Waller knits about violence. Fancy that!

PAGE 33

In my darkest nightmares I could not have foreseen the cunning way in which The Beast would penetrate this great fortress of mankind. The mainstream media is still ignoring my message, but those who have opened their eyes to the conspiracy of the Beast should not be in any doubt. This is the evil doing of the Knut, the White Spawn of Berlin.

Professor Berthold Manz has some crazy-ass words of warning

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