



The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE



Full Schedule
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IN THE ISSUE Issue 7 • 2012 • June 1 - 17

COMPLETE CITY LISTINGS - INSIDE!



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The Reykjavík Grapevine is published 18 times a year by Fröken Ltd. Monthly from November through April, and fortnightly from May til October. Nothing in this magazine may be reproduced in whole or in part without the written permission of the publishers. The Reykjavík Grapevine is distributed around Reykjavík, Akureyri, Egilsstaðir, Seyðisfjörður, Borgarnes, Keflavík, Ísafjörður and at key locations along road #1, and all major tourist attractions and tourist information centres in the country.

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



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Döðlur

Editorial | Anna Andersen

WARNING TO TRAVELERS

Anna's 8th Editorial



I had a drink with an elderly couple from Washington, D.C. the other day. They were stopping over for a few days before continuing elsewhere and our mutual friend in D.C. thought it would be fun for us to meet. So I met them and we chatted a bunch about what it's like to live in Iceland.

At some point, one of them asked, "So, what's the nightlife like?" Well, I thought, there's a lot to say about that. Notably, that director Quentin Tarantino once said: "In America, the idea is to get the girls drunk enough to go home with you; in Iceland it's to get the girls home with you before they get so drunk that they're passing out in your bathroom or vomiting all over you." But I didn't really feel like getting into that nightlife discussion.

Still, I told them that most people head downtown after midnight and then proceed to drink themselves silly until 6 AM. And that's when they told me something about Reykjavík's nightlife that I didn't know. Namely, the US State Department actually warns travellers about it.

I looked it up upon returning home and sure enough, after standard advice like, "Do not put any bags containing valuables, such as your passport, down on the ground" and "Do not leave your valuables in parked vehicles, even if the vehicle is locked," the State Department website states: "In addition, be aware that downtown Reykjavik can become disorderly in the early morning hours on weekends."

As much as I was surprised to see this on the State Department's website, it's true that Reykjavik becomes disorderly and people should be aware of it. Take a stroll downtown after 2 AM and you'll see drunken Icelanders smashing glass bottles on the streets, peeing on buildings, and puking on themselves. Yes, disorderly to say the least.

If that has you turned off, you should also know that some bars in 101 Reykjavik are less disorderly than others. To help you find your kind of bar, The Grapevine threw itself into harm's way last weekend and drank a beer at every single downtown bar to make a comprehensive bar guide, which you can find on page 19.



Japanese Super Shift And The Future Band

The Biggest Walls

Download the FREE track at www.grapevine.is

It's been a loooooong-ass wait, but local cult favourites Japanese Super Shift And The Future Band have finally released their debut LP, 'Futatsu', after taking over two years to make it. While they were never Iceland's most popular band, JSSATFB have long been revered by in-the-know Reykjavik hipsters and guitar rawk aficionados. The band's sound is big on lush melodies peppered with analogue synths and a slackerly attitude that fails to completely betray the complexity of their songwriting. Go to www.grapevine.is to download their track, and then stay on the lookout for the band's release gig, which is bound to happen sometime in the coming decade

TRÖLL by Gísli Darri



They are quite well mannered, unless there is bacon around.

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Attention: Our hamburger buns are not round. They are square. Does it taste better? You tell us.



HOW TO GET HERE

SOME TIPS ON HOW TO GET TO US WHILE LOOKING COOL AND LOCAL

This is what you say to the taxi driver or when asking locals for directions:

"Íslenska Hamborgarafabrikkan, takk"
(„The Icelandic Hamburger Factory, please“)

When you arrive you tell the waiter:

"Sælar! Hvað er að fréttá"
(Hello! What's up)

"Ég er þokkalega svangur, get ég fengið hamborgara"
(I'm quite hungry, can I get a hamburger)

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Sour grapes & stuff

MOST AWESOME LETTER FREE ICELANDIC GOURMET FEAST

There's prize for all your **MOST AWESOME LETTERS**. And it's a scorcher! No, really! It's a goddamn scorcher is what it is! Whoever sends us **THE MOST AWESOME LETTER** this issue will receive **A FRIGGING GOURMET FEAST FOR TWO** at **TAPAS BARINN**.

Did you hear that? Write in and complain about something (in an admirable way), win a gourmet feast at one of Reykjavik's Pnest? **THIS IS THE DEAL OF THE CENTURY IS WHAT IT IS!**

What's in a 'lobster feast'? Well, one has to assume that it has lobster-a-plenty. Is there more? Probably, but still... Gourmet feast? Wow! **DON'T PANIC** if your letter wasn't picked **AWESOME LETTER**. There's always next month!

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



MOST AWESOME LETTER:

Dear Cod Wars,
Are you familiar with the Icelandic phrase "farðu ekki að grenja"?

Unfortunately it played on repeat in my head from around the middle of your piece "Icelanders Invade Your Personal Space" and all the way to the end. This was a real shame, because it was excellently written and very funny. You obviously have a gift for writing. I just wish you would put your superpowers to better use.

I can understand that a lot of Icelandic mannerisms and customs can seem foreign and downright rude to you. That generally happens where there is a clash of cultures. However, a good rule-of-thumb is that "When in Rome..."

You don't go to a foreign country and, pardon my language, shit all over their customs and mannerisms because they are different from what you are used to back home. It is rude and disrespectful. I particularly enjoyed your choice of words for "yet another peasant farmer". You must think very highly of yourself since you can go around judging other people in that condescending manner.

Icelanders just don't need as much personal space as you do. It is a cultural difference that you will just have to get used to if you are going to continue to live here.

That being said, bumping into someone and not apologizing is not the general,

accepted Icelandic behaviour. I am Icelandic and I always apologize if I bump into someone, and would find it rude not to. I even apologize when someone bumps into me! Might I suggest that your uncouth friend from the airport was just plain rude and it, in fact, had nothing to do with his nationality?

I do so hope that you will try to be more accepting to the cultural behaviour of the country you yourself choose to live in. After all, unless you walk around wearing a sign saying "Keep away, I'm English," random strangers have no idea that you are uncomfortable with their Icelandic behaviour. And perhaps *they* shouldn't have to adjust *their* behaviour...

All the best,

Food for Thought

Dear Food For Thought (if that IS your real name),

thank you for your letter. You make a fair point. So fair, in fact, that we've decided to bestow upon you not one but TWO pairs of woollen socks to reward your efforts in standing up for the oppressed, uncivilized masses that inhabit this desolate rock of an island. Surely Mr. Cod Wars just doesn't understand that we need all the physical contact we can get, being born and raised in this most sparsely populated corner of Europe. It's just the way it is. We go around touching one another without asking

permission. It's sexy. It makes us feel good. Yum.

Also yeah, "farðu ekki að grenja" ("don't be a crybaby" for all you whiny Englishmen reading this) no doubt ran through the minds of other local readers as they engulfed Mr. Wars' rant.

However, you must understand that complaining about trivialities while condescending locals in a foreign country is a long-standing custom of the British Empire, dating back to when actually was an Empire (one that actively went around the globe looking for peasants to complain about, look down upon and enslave and stöff). As you said, "When in Rome..."

In fact, you should just be happy Mr. Wars didn't try to colonise you or mine you for resources or get you hooked on opium before complaining about your backward tribe's customs. Thank your stars!

But yeah. You might also consider how entertained you were by Mr. Wars' article. That's another custom of his people: being all tongue-in-cheek and entertaining on paper (and in real life!) Maybe he was just trying to have fun? Or maybe he was truly freaked out? No one will ever know, but as long as his writing is fun, we plan on publishing more of it.

OK write more letters! Love you!

Hello.

I just saw your status on FB and thought, maybe, if you are interested in sharing it, this is something I could tell you about.

<http://runesframe.blogspot.com/>

This is my freshly started blog about my travels. (Starting with this post: <http://runesframe.blogspot.com/2012/05/end-of-beginning.html>)

If it matters: Iceland isn't that much of a topic in this blog, since I am not traveling Iceland. But my mom is Icelandic and made me grow up there some time

of my life. She went back living there and I am therefore "á klakanum" pretty much, very much and often.

Just a thought.
Cheers and see you on FB,

Íris

Dear Íris,

thank you so much for your letter. And also thank you for making your blog. What the internet needs is more people expressing themselves. That much is clear. We read your blog and we can say with full certainty that it isn't any worse than any other blog out there. It turns out you are in Las Vegas, Nevada. That's

pretty cool. How is Vegas? Are you liking it? Surely, it must be different from Iceland. Or is it?

Wait, but you have left Vegas, a further read reveals. You sure do like to travel. We wish we could travel as much. Oh well.

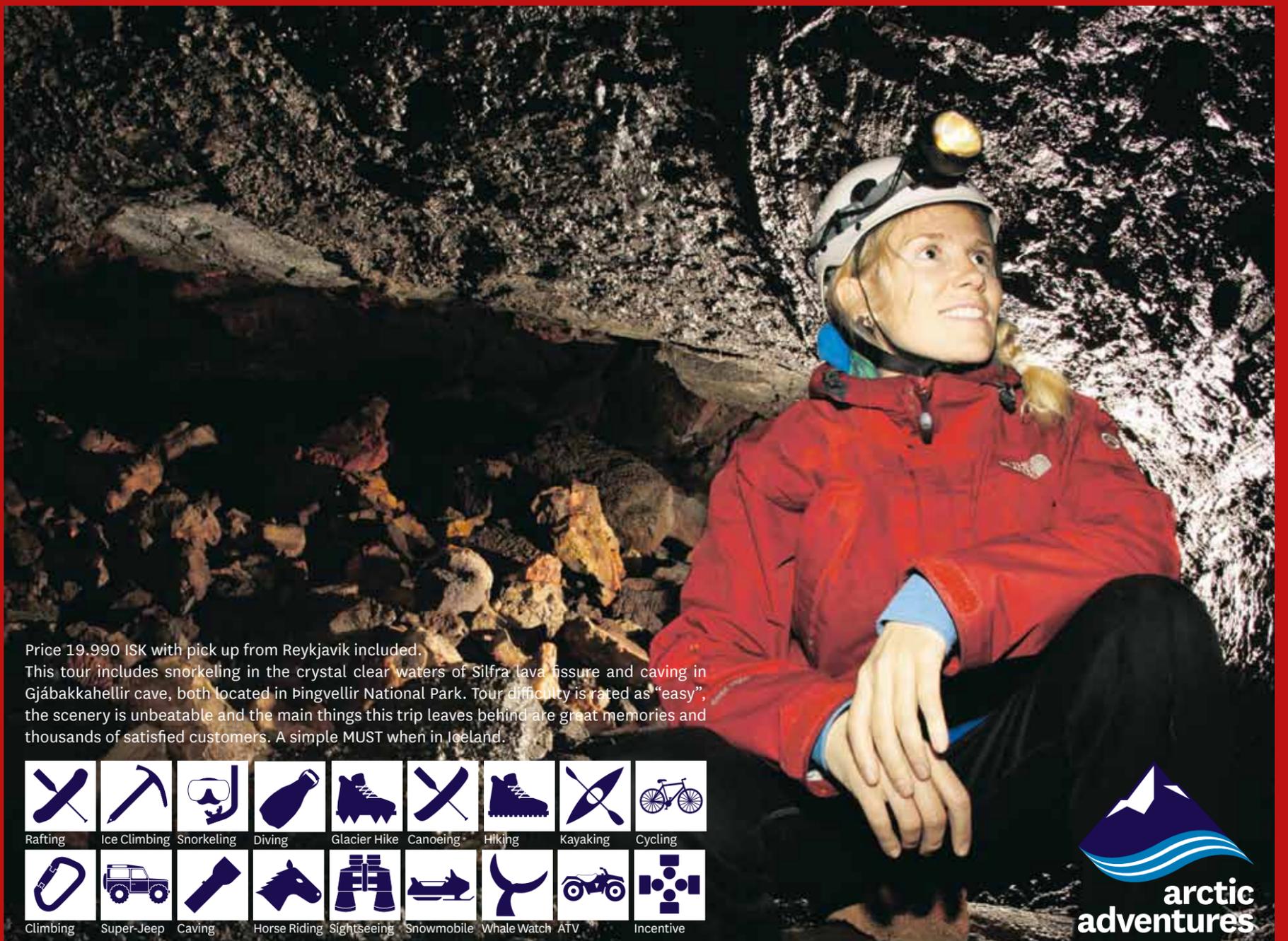
In any case, thank you for documenting your life and travels on your blog, and for writing us a letter about it. It is much appreciated.



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

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Reykjavík—If there's one thing Icelanders can appreciate, it's good weather. And for the first time this year, we're not just imagining it. The weather gods are truly beaming on us as temperatures last week peaked at 21 degrees in Eyjafjörður in the north of Iceland. Photo: DV/ Eyþór Árnason

News In Brief: May Edition

As the **presidential race** is weeks away from the home stretch, the two most viable candidates—incumbent Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson and challenger Þóra Arnórsdóttir—have been within single-digit leads of one another for weeks now. This is in sharp contrast to how things were earlier this month, when Þóra's lead seemed like all but a foregone conclusion. As it stands now, this may prove the closest presidential race in Icelandic history. Regardless of who people vote for, most Icelanders support the idea of term limits for whoever is president, with most preferring the office to be held by one person for no more than three four-year terms.

On a lighter note, it seems the idea of **Iceland adopting the Canadian dollar** as its official currency just won't go away. Economist Heiðar Már Guðjónsson told conference attendees in Toronto that Iceland could easily start using the loonie by merely buying \$300 million, shipping it over, and installing it in banks and ATMs around the country. Easy-peasy! The fact that Iceland is in accession talks with the European Union and would adopt the euro on admission is just a minor detail, right?

On the music front, the **success of Icelandic band Of Monsters And Men** seems to know no limits. Their album has topped the charts on Amazon and iTunes, and they're due to appear on the Tonight Show with Jay Leno

later in June. Closer to home, singer Páll Óskar isn't yet ready to give up **the fight to save NASA**, having called upon the city of Reykjavík and Parliament to buy the building in order to keep it from being made into a hotel.

Speaking of Parliament, our legislative body has been pretty busy as well, recently submitting a bill to Parliament that would **toughen child protection laws**, making it a crime to even look at child pornography (as it is, it is merely illegal to make, own or distribute it). A proposal to put **continuing EU talks up for referendum** was also submitted, but MPs defeated it. Referendums were a hot topic, though, as Parliament did approve to send some of the clauses of the proposed **constitution** to a referendum, including separation of church and state, protection of natural resources, and reforming the voting system.

While Parliament is working on making laws, police are stepping up their efforts to enforce them. Well, the law on **public urination** anyway. For two weekends, police have organised a dragnet operation downtown, stopping and fining those caught marking their territory in the public domain. Weekend revellers are advised to use indoor toilets.

F. Scott Fitzgerald once said, "there are no second acts in American lives." Fortunately, former Prime Minister **Geir H. Haarde** isn't American, as he has

found a **new job with a law firm**. The firm in question, Opus, has hired him as a consultant in "international affairs," and say that his experience will be a boon to the firm and its clients. Presumably he will not be consulted on when it's a good time to consult others over looming financial crises.

The **two Algerian refugees** who gained national attention when they were arrested and jailed upon their arrival in Iceland, despite being 15 and 16 respectively, are now free but aren't out of the woods yet. They have been asked to undergo an age verification test, which examines the development of their molars (which stop developing around the age of 18). While the results of these tests are not yet available, the refugees are appealing their case to the Supreme Court. Their lawyer Ragnar Aðalsteinsson argues that the asylum seekers should have special immunity from prosecution under international law.

It appears that Chinese entrepreneur **Huang Nubo** just can't stay out of the news either. A new poll conducted by Stöð 2 and Fréttablaðið shows that 42% of Icelanders support letting Huang rent the plot of land in east Iceland, while 30.7% are against it, and 27.3% have no opinion either way. The news may come as some comfort to him, as he has faced a lot of resistance from the government.

Eurovision once again captivated the nation, as singers Jónsi (of Í Svörtum Fötum, not Sigur Rós) and Greta Salóme made it to the finals with their song "Never Forget." The song seemed promising, as YouTube singers from around the world performed covers of the tune, even before Iceland won its way into the finals, but ultimately Sweden won the international song competition. Better luck next year, Iceland! 🇮🇸

Trivia Question!

How much alcohol does the average Icelander consume?

- A. 0 Litres per inhabitant. Iceland is a country of entirely sober, respectable gentlepeople.
- B. 3.5 Litres per inhabitant.
- C. 5.95 Litres per inhabitant.
- D. 7.75 Litres per inhabitant.
- E. 20 Litres per inhabitant. Putting Russia to shame since 1989.

Turn to page 25 for the answer. Hint: This is obvious.

Quote of the month



"I was afraid of them. To me they were like big trolls. I was not allowed to be angry with them, but they were quite mean sometimes, violent and sexual."

Actress **Noomi Rapace** on growing up in *Sólheimar*, an Icelandic haven for disabled people, *The New York Times Magazine*



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That statue is in front of Stjórnarráðið on Lækjargata. It shows Christian the ninth, King of Denmark, handing us our first constitution in 1874. Some children believe that he has a gun in his hand. We can see why.

Idiot's Guide To | The new constitution



So What's This New Constitution I Keep Hearing About?

After the 2008 financial crash there were loud calls for a new Republic of Iceland, where fat cats would have no more power than the public. The logical starting point was a new constitution. In 2010, an election was held to elect a Constitutional Assembly. Five hundred some people ran for 25 seats. The election was, however, nullified by The Supreme Court.

Why? Election fraud?

The Court considered the voting arrangement lax in ensuring voter privacy while voting, though there are no reported cases of votes being looked at by people who were not supposed to. Instead of rerunning the election, parliament decided to appoint the 25 people elected to a Constitutional Council. One person declined, leaving 24 people to start writing a new constitution for the Republic of Iceland.

Twenty-four people? I read on the web that it was crowd-sourced online!

No, not really. The Council people blogged about their deliberations and took suggestions from the public, but the proposed constitution was written by 24. I think you have got it confused with the one that starts: "We the People are no strangers to love, you know the rules and so do I, a full commitment's what I'm thinking of, you wouldn't get this from any other guy."

Don't rickroll me, that joke's a 1000 internet years old. And not funny to begin with.

I apologise. To be fair, the whole process has been very open and transparent. The Council has been very careful about making its reasoning clear and explained how it came to their conclusion and put everything online. The regular media has largely ignored all this information, choosing instead to focus on arguments between politicians about whether a new constitution is a good idea or not to begin with. Few Icelanders would be able to tell you how the proposed constitution begins, which is: "We who live in Iceland want to create a just society where everyone sits at the same table."

That would be one hell of a big table.

It is a metaphorical table. I think. If the Council really meant that all Icelanders should sit around an actual table together, that would be by far the most radical change in the proposed constitution. Mostly it encodes the current practices of the Icelandic executive, legislature and judicial system into a constitution.

It isn't a revolutionary document that takes power away from the fat cats and gives it to the public?

The most radical change proposed is that if ten percent of the Icelandic voting public signs a petition, they can propose a law that the

parliament has to vote on, or they can have most laws passed by the Icelandic parliament go to a national referendum. Optimists say that the public is the wisest legislator, pessimists point out that in

"It is a metaphorical table. I think. If the Council really meant that all Icelanders should sit around an actual table together, that would be by far the most radical change in the proposed constitution."

referendum-happy Switzerland, women did not have full voting rights in every part of the country until 1990, and sarcastic bastards expect all this to be great fun. It looks like the Constitutional Council takes the side of the optimists. In any case, the public at large will be able to vote for or against the proposed constitution in a national referendum this fall.

This Constitutional Council, was it a gathering of the best

and brightest, the Icelandic James Madisons, Thomas Jeffersons and Benjamin Franklins?

Well, the people elected were almost all known from television, radio and newspapers for commenting on social and political affairs. This included Iceland's best-known economist, a former TV news reporter in his '70s and a right-wing radio host.

So it was written by the Icelandic Paul Krugman, Dan Rather and Rush Limbaugh?

I would not go quite so far. Others would, though. All things considered, it is a fairly diverse crowd. Among the council people there was a disability rights activist, Björk's dad, and a mathematician of Polish descent.

Is this is a setup for a bad joke?

Oh, no, but I do know one joke about the constitution. Have you heard the one about the Icelanders who tried to write a new constitution? The dysfunctional system of Icelandic governance kept delaying the process for years and the dysfunctional Icelandic media did not bother to inform the public about the contents of the new constitution. ☹

✍ KÁRI TULINIUS
📷 ANNA ANDERSEN

Opinion | Byron Wilkes

Why I Think The Icelandic Bus System Rocks



Icelandic busses aren't that bad. There, I said it.

Hear me out. I may just be a lowly American intern here at The Grapevine, but I've had my fair share of public transportation experiences.

It seems like every time I compliment the Icelandic busses to a native, they roll their eyes or laugh at my feeble American naïveté. Understand, though, that I commute from Kjalarnes to downtown Reykjavík so I spend nearly two hours of each day on a bus.

Seriously, though, after living more than eight months in the San Francisco Bay area, your busses might as well be chariots to the gods.

In San Francisco, there's a subway (the BART, or Bay Area Rapid Transit), the MUNI (bus line for San Francisco), and the AC Transit (bus line for the East Bay). I'm not as well versed on the MUNI, but I've become quite acquainted with BART and AC Transit as I have no car and for a while, no bike.

Busses in Iceland are remarkably, incredibly on time. Icelanders I've spoken to complain about how the busses constantly run late, but let me re-define "late" for you.

For AC Transit, it's more of a loose guideline/crap shoot. AC Transit busses regularly show up half an hour to an hour late (and sometimes not at all). This often results in two busses passing by one behind the other, moving the bus-dependent population that much closer to open revolt.

Maybe the average Icelander's daily itinerary involves saving the president's life or something equally pressing, but frankly a few minutes is nothing compared to 45.

BART is relatively better. Even if the subway car doesn't come at its scheduled time, there's a display in every station that notifies how many minutes away the next train is.

In Iceland, where a bus driver scolded me just as I was going to prop my feet up, bus cleanliness is a rule. It seems typically indisputable that busses here are supposed to be clean, and that passengers are expected to help maintain said hygiene.

Each and every BART car has upholstered seats that as far as I can tell haven't changed since 1980. The greasy feeling (and odour) one gets after sitting on a BART seat is difficult to describe, but it's something like sitting in a soft, sunken-in sponge that's been used to clean an old hot dog grill.

Perhaps the biggest difference between the two transportation systems is safety. Busses here must be pretty safe, because I've seen children riding them alone. Children. Alone.

I'm pretty sure American child protective services would relieve anybody of future parental responsibilities who let their kid ride AC Transit solo.

But before we start comparing broader societal differences and you say I'm simply throwing my country's transportation system under the bus so to speak, all I'm trying to get across is that the Icelandic bus system isn't that bad. ☹



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Activities

AH35 South Coast & Jökulsárlón Lagoon -
Dar wrote: Sunday, April 22, 2012:



"I enjoyed this tour a lot! Taking in not only beautiful waterfalls and Jökulsárlón, but also the landscapes of southern Iceland."

AH12 The Golden Circle Classic -
VanEaton wrote: Tuesday, April 24, 2012:



"If you only have two days in Iceland this is the tour to take. Don't miss your chance to see it."

AH15 Iceland From Below -
liz and liam wrote: Monday, April 02, 2012



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The Elves Could Not Be Reached For Comment



Member of Parliament Árni Johnsen recently arranged for the transportation of a 50 tonne boulder from the Hellisheiði mountain pass to his backyard in Vestmannaeyjar—a more ideal environment Árni says, for the family of elves who inhabit it. Yes, a set of grandparents, a couple of parents and three children, who stand no more than 80 centimetres tall, have reportedly joined the 4,000 people who live on the small island off the south coast of Iceland.

Árni says he became acquainted with these particular elves after a high-speed crash in 2010, wherein his car torpedeed 40 metres off the highway, destroying the vehicle, but leaving him unscathed. “[The elves] told me that they wanted to be in the grass,” Árni says. “Now they have windows looking toward the sea and the island, and some sheep as neighbours. Everything is under control.”

COURTING THE ELF ELECTORATE

Árni, who will run for re-election next year, says he is not the only MP who believes in elves, though he refuses to give up the identities of others.

Despite the fact that only 8% of Icelanders admit to believing in elves out-

right, according to a 2007 poll conducted by Terry Gunnell, head of folkloristics at the University of Iceland, Headmaster of the Elf school, Magnús Skarphéðinsson says plenty of government officials and ministers, including President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, believe in elves. It would be “political suicide in Iceland to claim elves don’t exist,” Magnús adds.

“It would be political suicide in Iceland to claim elves don’t exist”

Indeed, some government projects take this elf stuff seriously. As an MP who sits on the Committee on the Environment and Transport, Árni says construction workers needed to move a large stone when building a road from Keflavík International Airport to Reykjavík two years ago. Árni sent a specialist to check if the boulder housed elves, and his suspicions were confirmed.

“When I came close to the stone, I could see light in it. There were a few elves there,” Árni says. “If you move them, it’s okay, you just have to be very careful and speak to them and be very gentle.”

More recently, residents of Bolungarvík in the Westfjords blamed elves for construction equipment breaking down as workers were drilling a tunnel through a mountain last June, potentially disturbing elf homes. Townspeople,

workers and a priest came together to try to ward off the elves’ spiritual backlash. “Of course they have lots power,” Árni says. “Even for such little creatures,” Árni says.

ELF RELOCATION IS CONTROVERSIAL

Árni maintains that the elves were willing immigrants to his backyard, noting that television personality and self-proclaimed elf specialist Ragnhildur Jónsdóttir signed off on the move. But elf scholar Magnús Skarphéðinsson is crying foul.

“This could be dangerous,” says Magnús, who has spent the last 30 years studying the lives of elves and hidden people (the latter being just as mystical as elves, but are reportedly human-sized), during which time he says he has met more than 700 people who have seen or talked to elves. Elves don’t typically consent to having their homes moved over land and sea, Magnús says. He claims Árni’s actions were a “maniac idea” that would likely result in “a sort of revenge.”

Árni has resuscitated his own political life after he was sentenced to two years in prison in 2003 for embezzling government funds from a project to refurbish the National Theatre. Former Prime Minister Geir Haarde pardoned him in 2006, and Árni wasn’t ready to say that the elves look down on his troubled past: “You should ask God that question. He knows it best.”

Little-Big Boat In A Bloody Ginormous Ocean



Last month The Wall Street Journal (WSJ)’s Charles Forelle praised Iceland’s unprecedented emergence from economic catastrophe. He was keen to note how Iceland has come out smelling of roses, in particular when compared to her fellow European economic disaster areas, Spain, Ireland, Portugal and Greece.

Echoing these sentiments in his farcically entitled piece “Iceland Continues Economic Rejuvenation by Purging Financial Parasites,” American Free Press journalist Pete Papaherakles states: “Iceland’s recovery is a shiny example for countries like Greece, Ireland and Spain to follow.”

Aren’t all Icelanders Shiny Happy People.

Above all else, as has been touted wily-nilly across much international media, Pete says, “Iceland has proven that default was the best thing it could have done.” This works, as Charles Forelle makes clear, because “...Iceland let its banks fail, and made foreign creditors, not Icelandic tax payers, largely responsible for covering losses.”

In a wily comparison to Hitler’s Germany, Pete says: “History has proven that countries experience growth once they get out from under the parasitic burden of debt to the bankers. National Socialist Germany from 1933–1939 is a perfect example.”

What was their quintessential slogan? “ARBEIT MACHT FREI?”

In his own foray into Icelandic econmechanics, Forelle states: “Greece is edging towards a cataclysmic exit from the euro, Spain is racked by a teetering banking system, and German politicians are squabbling over how to put it all together.”

Despite the fact that your average Icelandic citizen appears to be oblivious/impervious to it, Iceland is in fact growing and unemployment is easing. Yet, where are the signs? Where are the symbols?

In another WSJ piece, Sarka Halasova points out: “What has largely changed Iceland’s fortunes is that it has a monetary flexibility and control that others don’t have.” Due to the excessively weak króna, exports have become extremely competitive. Quoted in the same article, Jamie Studdard of Fidelity Investments, notes that “[t]hey have their own currency [the króna], and that means they were able to make that classic emerging market-style currency devaluation that we saw in Asia in 1997, in Latin America throughout the 1980s...” Remember Argentina?

Isn’t this all due to that classic seven-letter word synonymous with emerging markets? I’ll spell it out for you:
d-e-f-a-u-l-t

Both Reuters and WSJ tell us that Iceland’s little-big fishing industry is doing roaringly well. On May 3, Reuters points out that “[Icelandic] sailors are making double their pre-crisis pay, haddock sells to places like Boston and Brussels are booming, and unemployment is almost zero...”

Unemployment almost zero? Down from 7% to 6%, but hardly zero. Who takes those fracking statistics seriously anyway?

But, coming back to fishing: According to WSJ, “[Icelandic] fishermen now take home twice as many kronur for the same amount of fish...One captain in the VSV [a Vestmannaeyjar fishing company] made €43,000 last year...”

Minister of Economic Affairs and Fisheries Steingrímur Sigfússon rears his shiny head again and is proudly quoted as saying that Iceland’s present GDP is among the highest in all of Europe. “Sometimes it is easier to turn a small boat around than a big ship,” he chuckles to Reuters. Jón Bentsson, an Islandbanki economist, is quoted by Reuters as saying: “What we were left with was quite manageable.” If you read between the lines, what I think he’s really saying is: “[Because we defaulted on most of our debts,] what we were left with was quite manageable.”

Without having to study chicken entrails, omens are already extremely auspicious: At the beginning of May, Iceland successfully sold a \$1 billion bond and according to Reuters, “Icelanders are getting work, going shopping and their house prices are rising.”

And yet: “Household debt [still] exceeds 200 percent of GDP...There is little trust in government...The Parliament has the support of only 10 percent of the public...” and consumer prices have risen by 26% since 2008. As WSJ states: “Iceland hasn’t fully emerged. Even after loan forgiveness, high household debt crimps many families. The employment gains in fishing have not spread everywhere. Practically everyone agrees Iceland must end its capital controls, though there is little agreement when and how.”

Canada’s National Post recently interviewed Swiss-based Icelandic economist, Heiðar Guðjónsson, who is a major proponent of Iceland’s adoption of the Canadian dollar. When asked how serious this proposal was, he said “[w]e need a solution within the next year or two...capital controls which are in place are stifling economic growth...otherwise Iceland actually faces defaulting on its foreign debt as early as 2016...”

A word for the wise, Steingrímur: Don’t turn that little boat around. Not just yet.

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12 2012 HOTDOG

09 2009 MR COOL

11 2011 UMSLAG

09 2009 4 SALE

VISA

10 2010 SEX

12 2012 BLOW ME

11 2011 MILF

11 2011 HOWARD

11 2011 LOST

09 2009 IN SANE

YNOT

12 2012 MON-EY

12 2012 LOONEY

1. **HOWARD** Hopefully the vehicle's name is Howard.
2. **BOOZER** Thanks for the heads up
3. **TUBORG** This looks like a beer advertisement and those are illegal.
4. **HOTDOG** Yeah, they are yummy.
5. **MR TAN** Really?
6. **MRCOOL** Not so much.
7. **SEX** This is the number six in Icelandic.
8. **SHADY** Consider yourself warned.
9. **INSANE** Stay away from this vehicle.
10. **LOONEY** And this one.
11. **PSYCHO** and probably this one too.
12. **BASIC** Icelanders use this English word to mean something like, 'Yeah, pretty much'.
13. **MONEY** Hopefully this belongs to a really beat vehicle.
14. **LOST** Oh.
15. **SHALOM** Hello. Goodbye. Peace.
16. **UMSLAG** This is great. It means 'ENVELOPE'.
17. **BLOWME** Douche bag alert. How did it pass The Committee?
18. **VISA** Why?
19. **VIP** This is vain.
20. **YNOT** Well, why not?
21. **MILF** Not at all weird to be calling yourself a MILF...
22. **NÝGIFT** Good one; means 'Just Married'
23. **4 SALE** Another good one.

23 Awesome (Or Not So Awesome) Vanity Plates

Among his claims to fame, MP Árni Johnsen successfully lobbied for legalising vanity plates on vehicles in Iceland and became the first proud owner of one when he snagged "ÍS-LAND" in 1996. Today there are 5.295 vehicles with such plates, which is about two percent of all vehicles in Iceland.

Much like there are rules governing the naming of people in Iceland, there are rules governing the "naming" of vehicles, which reflects the ease at which Icelanders (and citizens of other Nordic countries) give up their personal freedoms for the greater good of society.

In the case of the vanity plates,

both English and Icelandic words are permitted, but if an Icelandic word is used, the law states that it must follow correct spelling and grammar rules.

Furthermore, the law states that vanity plates should not anger or make people feel uncomfortable. However, much like the condition that people's names may not cause their bearer embarrassment, this is a rather subjective rule and it's up to a committee to make the call.

Since 1996, the committee has rejected thirty or so plates. The plates "POLICE" and "KILLER" were amongst the first to be rejected because they could "make people feel uncomfortable." Additionally, the plate "KILLR" was

"Much like there are rules governing the naming of people in Iceland, there are rules governing the 'naming' of vehicles."

rejected three years later because it was too similar to "KILLER." The plates "STUNT," "STUNTS," "DEVIL," "SATAN," "Ó GUÐ" ("OH GOD"), and every variation of "FÍKNÓ" (NARCO) have also been rejected for this reason. "We try to follow ethics and be sure that plates are not hurtful or insulting," Vehicle Inspection Director Karl

Ragnars told a newspaper reporter in 1996.

Perhaps it's the freedom of not being required to use the English language correctly or the fact that many Icelandic words are just too long, but a perusal of registered vanity plates reveals that a great number of them are indeed in English.

So we decided to make a short list of vehicles to perhaps follow and get to know better and others to avoid at all costs if possible. Interestingly, suggesting that you're an alcoholic or just plain insane does not give the Committee reason to believe that some people might feel uncomfortable. Welcome to ÍSLAND! 🍷

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Iceland | Analysis

Iceland is one of the few nations in Europe that holds general elections to choose a president who is basically a figurehead. Most presidents of this kind in Europe are elected by parliaments. But Icelanders have a lot of feeling invested in the presidency, even if their past presidents wielded no political power.

The Icelandic presidency has in many ways been akin to the kingdoms of Scandinavia, where kings and queens are ornamental figures. It has been considered bad form, and even rude, to run against a sitting president, so presidents have essentially been able to remain in office for as long as they like. Ásgeir Ásgeirsson was president for 16 years between 1952 and 1968; followed by Kristján Eldjárn, who served for 12 years; and Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, who served for 16 years. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson has now been in office since 1996 and will become the longest standing president if he is elected for a fifth term this June.

A POLITICALLY NEUTRAL POST

In the days of former President Vigdís, one foreign analyst of Icelandic politics described her as "a queen without a crown." This was not far off. Presidents, once elected, could look at the office as their own, and they were treated with great reverence. At the same time they were not supposed to have real opinions on anything political. Kristján Eldjárn was a former director of the National Museum who made speeches on things historical and cultural, and Vigdís was a former theatre director who planted trees and talked generally about the meaning of being Icelandic.

Kristján Eldjárn and Vigdís did not play politics. They had both been against the US military base in Keflavík—for long the single most divisive issue in Icelandic politics—but when they became presidents they never talked about this. They were well loved by the population, even if their speeches tended to be rather boring. No one really dreamed of having a president who behaved otherwise.

ENTER ÓLAFUR RAGNAR GRÍMSSON

In 1996, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson was elected president. He had been an active politician since the late sixties, and had not been very popular. During the elections, however, he managed to transform into something modest and reasonable, somewhat in the vein of Kristján and Vigdís. Gone was the po-

Words

Egill Helgason

Illustration

Inga María Brynjarsdóttir

THE PRESIDENCY AT A CROSSROADS



litical warrior. Most of his votes came from the left wing; in fact, he was elected by only 40% of the vote. According to tradition, he was soon accepted by most as president, though a part of The Independence Party never forgot his political past and still had it in for him.

Behind his modest façade, Ólafur Ragnar was still a politician who craved power, and as a former professor of political science, he was also more knowledgeable about the constitution than most others. When it comes to the presidency, the constitution is horribly muddled. Since its adoption in 1944, when Iceland became a republic, there have been plans to change it, but a consensus has never been reached.

LATENT POWERS AWAKENED

Ólafur Ragnar realised that the constitution gave him certain powers, and that if he used them in cases where he would have a majority of the population behind him, Parliament would not be able to resist. He first exercised these political powers in 2004, vetoing an unpopular media bill passed by Parliament, and then again in 2009 and 2010, in both cases vetoing on bills stipulating how Iceland should repay the UK and Holland for losses incurred as result of the banking crash in 2008.

This proved to be immensely popular. Parliament was bereft of trust after the crash and Ólafur Ragnar came through as a guardian of public interest. This was also a case of self-reinvention, because just after the collapse Ólafur Ragnar was a despised figure for having cavorted with the financiers

who brought ruin on Iceland, entertaining them at his residence and decorating them with medals.

Now there was no stopping Ólafur Ragnar. He did interviews with foreign media such as the BBC, Al Jazeera and CNN, in which he expressed view-

“Ólafur has made himself out to be a guardian of the people. Unlike Parliament, which has a 10% approval rating, Ólafur enjoys more popularity”

points that were totally opposed to government policy. The government was mortified and opinions shifted: his old voters and admirers from the left abandoned him in droves, and instead he gained a large following on the right wing and from those with nationalistic sentiments. Now Ólafur Ragnar enjoys the support of about 60% of Independence Party voters, while less than 20% of the ruling Social Democratic Party says it is willing to vote for him.

THE GUARDIAN OF THE PEOPLE

Ólafur has made himself out to be a guardian of the people. Unlike Parliament, which has a 10% approval rating, Ólafur enjoys more popularity. So he keeps pushing the limits. Now he speaks as if it is normal for a president to have his own foreign policy, something that would have been unthinkable in the days of Kristján and Vigdís. He is

vocally against Iceland joining the EU, which is embarrassing for a government that is negotiating terms of accession.

There has even been talk that the constitution gives the president fur-

ther powers. Ólafur Ragnar has only broached this subject, but some of his followers have started talking openly about it. They claim that the president could actually dismiss a government and nominate a new one, though many would probably regard such a move as a coup d'état. Iceland is a parliamentary democracy and Parliament would most likely rise up to defend itself. Admittedly this is an unlikely scenario, but Ólafur Ragnar has indicated that this is something he pondered in January 2009 in the wake of the crash.

AN UNPRECEDENTED RACE

Will Ólafur Ragnar be re-elected for the fifth term? Possibly. But there are things that play against him. Many think he has been in office too long, and perhaps he thought so too, not announcing that he would run again

until March. His hesitation was rather awkward. Others point to his behaviour during the bubble years, when he was a sort of a chief spokesman for the financiers, espousing their ideas in speeches, which many now think are outrageous.

Also, for the first time in history, a reigning president faces real opposition. There are five candidates running against Ólafur Ragnar in the elections, which will be held on June 30. Only one of them seems to have a real chance of beating him: Þóra Arnórsdóttir, who was until recently the host of a popular television quiz show. Þóra is quite young, she is the mother of young children, including one born just a few weeks ago, and she is blond and somewhat reminiscent of the beloved president Vigdís. Politically, she is tabula rasa. It has really not been properly explained why she is running.

An overwhelming majority of those who support the present left-wing government intend to vote for her. This might be a weakness, as the government is extremely unpopular, and Ólafur Ragnar has tried to exploit this by linking Þóra to Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir.

True, Þóra was once a member of the Social Democratic movement, and she once was a member of the movement to join the EU. Nowadays this sentiment is not a vote winner, as 70% of the voters are against Iceland joining. Ólafur Ragnar has placed himself firmly in the anti-EU camp now and demands that Þóra explain her foreign policy. She resists, saying it is not the president's job to have views on such matters.

A RETURN TO THE PAST?

Þóra is very careful with her statements and thus it is uncertain what she stands for—many who say they plan to vote for her seem to do so mainly because they dislike Ólafur Ragnar. It is clear that she would not be using the powers of the president as Ólafur Ragnar has done; she might even hark back to the days of Kristján and Vigdís who never touched the presidential veto. But after the economic collapse and the two lcesave vetoes, this might not be the flavour of the year, and Þóra seems uncertain about this crucial matter.

It remains to be seen whether Ólafur Ragnar will get a mandate to keep on in this vein or if we will backtrack, which is really what the elections are about. It is said that the president should be a symbol of national unity—in the past this has sometimes taken the form of boring speechifying—but the moment a president starts using the veto power, some part of the nation will start disliking him. ☘

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WHY DO ICELANDERS DRINK LIKE COLLEGE FRESHMEN?

Icelanders are not the kind of people who go to a pub to drink a beer or two over the course of an evening spent chatting with friends. Quite the contrary, they are the kind of people who head to the pubs long after the evening has passed, and their intention is to drink themselves into oblivion. To understand this behaviour, we spoke to historian Stefán Pálsson, who teaches at Iceland's Beer School, about Icelandic drinking culture in the twentieth century.

Much like other Western countries at the turn of the century, Iceland had its period of prohibition. The decision was made in the nation's first referendum in 1908, with 60% voting in favour of the ban. It took parliament four years to pass the law, which then gave people three years—until January 1, 1915—to finish their liquor. Officially speaking, the dry spell then lasted until 1933, when 60% of the nation voted in a second referendum to lift the ban.

However, when the ban was lifted, beer was notably left out. Stefán Pálsson says the reason is unclear, but it seems that Icelandic goal-oriented drinking culture—drinking to become dead drunk—at least partially explains why beer wasn't made legal until 1989. "Today people are rewriting the story, giving the impression that everyone really wanted beer, but a few boring politicians were holding us back," Stefán says, "but that was certainly not the case."

BEER IS LEFT OUT

So beer was left out for no good reason?

Well, some argue that this was to soften the blow to the temperance movement: You lost your ban, but at least beer is still banned. Others argue that it may just have been an error when the regulation was



drawn up, that beer was simply forgotten and then nobody could be bothered to change it afterwards.

I actually blame the doctors who could prescribe legally imported alcohol to patients during prohibition. So if you had chest pains, the doctors could say, 'Okay,

I think that when it came to alcohol, Icelanders were very goal-oriented: men drank alcohol to become drunk and get into fights with each other. So you would have your flask with liquor in your pocket and there seemed to be very little demand for beer. And this was for a very long time so-

"The pub is not traditionally the same social institution as it is in many other countries"

you need whiskey' or if you had a neurotic disorder, perhaps it was gin. Somehow, however, the doctors never had the imagination to prescribe beer for anything. So, since there was no legal import of beer in place at the time, it was much easier to leave it out.

The strange thing is that nobody really complained. You would think that someone would at least have written to the papers when prohibition was dropped, asking 'Where is my beer?' But this did not happen.

GOAL-ORIENTED DRINKING

Were people just unfamiliar with beer then?

cially acceptable, though it has become more taboo today.

Also, this Danish culture of constantly drinking light lager during the day was frowned upon. While it was socially acceptable to become terribly drunk every weekend, or at least every now and then, you really had a problem if you were drinking socially on a weekday or even at lunchtime.

How and when did this change?

In the mid to late '70s, Icelanders began for the first time to go abroad as tourists, traveling to sunny coasts. While it used to be that people who went abroad were upper class or had a purpose, work related or had to do

with their studies, the average Icelander could afford to be drunk in Spain for three weeks, and this really brought in beer culture to Iceland.

BEER CULTURE IS BORN

But it was still illegal to sell beer in Iceland at this point...

Right, so in the early '80s you started to see Icelandic pubs selling 'bjórlíki, which was basically vodka mixed with Pilsner. You had places like Gaukurinn trying to look like an English-themed pub selling this nasty mix of Pilsner and hard liquor, and all these pubs pretended to have the secret ingredient that made this taste like delicious beer.

Obviously you'd think this wasn't allowed in a country with beer prohibition, but this went to court and the courts decided that this 'bjórlíki' was actually a cocktail. They were not brewing beer, but rather mixing something that was supposed to taste like beer.

At this point it was just a matter of time, and on March 1, 1989, the ban was dropped. Interestingly, opinion polls at the time suggest that the legislation would not have succeeded had it gone to referendum...

A PROLIFERATION OF PUBS

Did drinking culture change after the ban was lifted?

Nightlife had very much been restricted to weekends. Clubs would book concerts with people buying tickets to dance and drink lots of alcohol. The idea was not to pop into a pub or a café to see if you saw someone you knew and then continue to the next pub.

So beer really led to a growth in pub culture. The number of small pubs and restaurants and cafes has grown ridiculously since the beer ban was lifted. In a way, I think that Kaffibarinn in the early

'90s and Café Au Lait, where I think Nonnabiti is now, were probably the first examples of really crowded, tiny, pubs, which were seen as the place to be.

Then there was also the fact that Kringlan—Iceland's first shopping mall—opened in 1987. It had a devastating effect on commerce for downtown shops. The city centre went into a steep decline and property value dropped, which meant that you could sustain a pub or a café where you could not in the past.

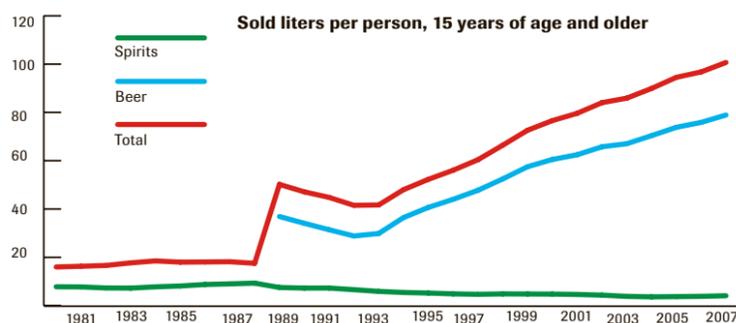
AND MORE DRINKING

Now, Iceland's nightlife is pretty infamous. Icelanders are known to go out and drink themselves silly. Why don't we have a more refined beer drinking culture?

It's difficult to say, but the pub is not traditionally the same social institution as it is in many other countries. It takes decades to change that... If you go to the countryside you'll see how the scene used to be here in Reykjavík. Locals watch television weekdays and go out on weekends to see a band play, and there will be lots of drinking, dancing, and some people fighting. In Reykjavík, however, we are moving more in the direction of having something more European.

But it's not quite there yet?

No, it's not quite there yet, and perhaps instead of replacing the heavy weekend drinking, the casual beer drinking during the week is simply an addition. The level of alcohol consumption has been rising very rapidly in most Western countries, but especially here in Iceland. Specialists in the field are worried about this trend.



Words

Anna Andersen

Photography

Alisa Kalyanova



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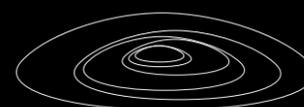
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See preview of the tour



101 Bar

Hverfisgata 10



Overexcited media types from abroad and bourgeois locals networking 4 reelz or playing make believe with Mr. Overdraft.



Atmosphere: Swanky; clean; sophisticated; busy but not crammed.

Music Playlists.
Genre Inoffensive background music.

Age Youngish (20-30s).

Clientele Artsy fartsy; business people/bankers; tourists; celebrities; actors; legends; designers.

Dress code Business casual; chic (but modest) design wear; casual-casual.

"OMG Kirsten, that whole multimedia thing at Coachella was crazy."

Food a full menu of small dishes

Notable beer Tuborg classic, Viking (the usual)

Special feature Mock fireplace, polished reflecting wall, table service.

Primary reason to go there To chat with friends, To see celebrities, To network or connect, To bolster an image.

1919 (Radisson)

Pósthússtræti 2



Same fancy designer furniture they have at 101 Hotel. Insane amount of Spanish-speaking people on both sides of the bar. A nice enough place for a drink if you're having a casual business meeting or pre-gaming with the crew, so long as you all happen to be quite well off.



Atmosphere: Swanky; lounge; quiet.

Music Playlists.
Genre Inoffensive background music.

Age Youngish (20-30s); middle age (40-50s); older (50s plus).

Clientele Business people; bankers; tourists.

Dress code Suits and inertia.

"...that she would say something like that in front of the whole marketing department is just fucking insane..."

Food Tapas and cheese platters (far from complimentary).

Notable beer Stella Artois.

Primary reason to go there To chat with friends; to network or connect; to bolster an image.

Amsterdam

Hafnarstræti 5



Deadbeat dive bar where no one cares how you dance.



Atmosphere: Grungy; trashy; loud; up beat; dive bar.

Music Occasional live music
Genre Top 40; metal; RAWK; Golden Oldies; NICKELBACK.

Age Too young (under 20); youngish (20-30s).

Clientele 101 rats; bikers; professional drinkers; metalheads; teenagers; people who like NICKELBACK.

Dress code Derelict! Dresscode is to undress: a girl standing in the middle of the dance floor took off her actually very nice pink skirt and high heels and proceeded to dance the night away in her socks and bike-shorts.

"Look at this photograph, every time I do it makes me laugh."

Special feature A special secret smokers room in the basement just past the bathrooms; VLT machines; silver CD mural adorning the wall behind the stage.

Primary reason to go there To drink yourself silly; to find a mate; to go dancing; to chat with friends; to forget; to smoke inside.



GRAPEVINE GOES DRINKING...

AFTER HAVING LOADS OF FUN MAKING A BAR GUIDE LAST YEAR (WE REALLY LOVE DRINKING), WE DECIDED TO MAKE IT AN ANNUAL EVENT (YES, WE REALLY LOVE DRINKING). SO, WE DECIDED ONCE AGAIN TO REVIEW AND RATE EVERY SINGLE BAR IN 101 REYKJAVÍK. AND OUR RESEARCH REVEALS THAT THERE ARE, MUCH LIKE LAST YEAR, AROUND FIFTY BARS IN TOWN.

Perhaps you're thinking that we could have simply updated last year's guide. Well, first of all, that wouldn't have been as much fun (less drinking), and a lot has changed in the last year. A bunch of bars have probably closed, and then opened under a new name, and then perhaps returned to their old name, or even moved across town. And of course, a bar or two has probably

Austur

Austurstræti 7



This is a steak house by day and an expensive bar that looks like a strip joint without a stage by night!



Atmosphere: Swanky; clean; lounge; quiet; low key.

Music Playlists
Genre R&B; top 40.

Age Youngish (20-30s), Middle age (40-50s)

Clientele Business people; bankers; tourists; professional drinkers.

opened or closed by the time this issue goes to print. Such is the nature of the game.

So we ganged together a bunch of fun-loving writers (and drinking lovers), divided the bars between them, and sent them off to work. Of course you may not agree with everything we've written as our tastes may differ greatly from yours or we may just be wrong (you can write us an angry letter about that), but ultimately this guide is for entertainment and informational purposes, and it is meant to incite discourse more than anything. And if it helps you find a new bar you love, then that's all the better.

There was at least some method to our madness, which you can read below.

REVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS:

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

DEFINE: BAR

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

METHOD

Each reviewer was instructed to drink one beer at each bar reviewed. To ensure that all bars were reviewed under similar circumstances, they were asked to go there between the hours of 23:00 and 1:00 on a djamm ("party") night. These are typically Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, but because Monday was a holiday, Sunday was also for partying. Any excuse, right...

Dress code Business suits!

"I don't like this music"

Special feature The staircase to the second floor is decorated with broken mirrors! Bottle service on offer.

Primary reason to go there To drink yourself silly; to find a mate.

B5

Bankastræti 5



If Patrick Bateman came to Iceland, this is where he'd hang out.

At the bar, they were instructed to take notes in their fancy notebook, which they did not forget to bring (because forgetting that would be horrible). They noted the following:



Atmosphere

Music / Genre

Age

Clientele

Dress code

Quote of note

Food

Notable beer

Special feature

Primary reason to go there

OUR REVIEW TEAM:

Rebecca Louder, Sindri Eldon, Ragnar Egilsson, Magnús Sveinn Helgason, David P. Nickel, Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir, Alfrun Gísladóttir, Davíð Roach Gunnarsson, Alísa Kalyanova, Anna Andersen, Óli Dóri, Cory Weinberg, Taylor Selsback, Melanie Franz, Paul Fontaine



Atmosphere Swanky; clean; sophisticated; meat market; lounge; up beat.

Music DJ
Genre R&B; house; disco.

Age Too young (under 20); youngish (20-30s).

Clientele Business people; bankers; tourists; body builders/tan-bots; Jakob Frimann; yuppies and students with a big clothing budget.

Dress code Expensive, trendy stuff; nice shoes, designer jackets, carefully accessorized outfits worn tight.

"Whoop whoop! Guess who's in the house?"

Special feature This is, essentially, one big room with very little in it. Perfect for dancing, and these guys shell out real money for a real fucking DJ, not just some douchebag with a playlist.

Primary reason to go there To find a mate; to go dancing; to fulfill a fantasy; to feed your ego; to network or connect; to bolster an image.

Bakkus

Laugavegur 22



A smelly, sticky plasma of creativity.



Atmosphere Grunge; trashy; loud; up beat.

Music DJs; regular live music.
Genre Modern hipsterfare; Pitchfork core.

Age Youngish (20-30s)

Clientele 101 rats; journos; tourists; musicians.

Dress code Men wear bright coloured t-shirts, braces and some sort of post-converse shoe. Women wear dresses that can be worn in fifty ways coupled with tights that are more expensive than their dress, but less expensive than their asymmetrical hair cuts.

"Did Sweden win Eurovision?" "I wouldn't know." "Oh, I only watched it ironically anyway."

Special feature Foosball tables; a covered smoking patio; decorations by artist Davíð Örn Halldórsson.

Primary reason to go there To drink yourself silly, To listen to music, To bolster an image

Bar 7

Frakkastígur 7



When ÁTVR is closed, fear not! Bar 7 will hook you up.



Atmosphere Grungy; trashy; flaky

Music The radio
Genre Whatever comes up...

Age Too young (under 20), Youngish (20-30s), Middle age (40-50s), Older (50s plus)

Clientele People picking up booze on the go

Dress code Literally whatever.

"What the fuck? It's still closed!"

Special feature Room to seat 4 and completely unpredictable opening hours.

Primary reason to go there To drink yourself silly; to pick up to-go beers.

Bar 11

Hverfisgata 18



A fair live venue, but mostly just teenagers trying to decide what tattoos to get.



Atmosphere: Grungy, Loud, Gimmicky

Music Regular live music, DJs
Genre Top 40, RAWK, Hipster music - modern hipsterfare, pitchfork core

Age Too young (under 20), Youngish (20-30s)

Clientele Metalheads, Goths, Conspiracy theorists

Dress code Latest fashions, the occasional leather jacket and those awful neckties kids sometimes wear.

"Dude! I was so drunk that time that I thought you were a girl!"

Special feature There is a pretty decent stage for live music in the basement.

Primary reason to go there To drink yourself silly, To feed your ego, To bolster an image.

Bar 22

Laugavegur 22



A respectable, comfortable bar to start your night with.

950 1200 1100

Atmosphere Homey

Music Playlists
Genre R&B, Golden Oldies

Age Middle age (40-50s)

Clientele Tourists; professional drinkers; writers or poets/Bukowski types; people who can't be bothered waiting in line to get into Bakkus.

Dress code Mostly casual wear. The T-shirt-and-jeans crowd would fit in just as well as suit-and-jacket types, although the mood is decidedly laid back.

"Didn't this used to be Trúnó?" (It did.)

Notable beer Guinness; Kilkenny; Úlfur; Bjartur.

Special feature This is the sort of place to start the night at - taper candles in liquor bottles, wood paneling, 60s music (Doors, Stones, Zeppelin) played at a volume where you can still hold a conversation. Also has a big screen TV, usually playing Sky Sports.

Primary reason to go there To chat with friends; to listen to music; to read.

Bjarni Fel

Austurstræti 20

★★★★☆

A place where sports fans can be social, where watching sports is the only purpose you have.

990 1100 1080

Atmosphere: Loud, sports bar chic; practical non-stylish interior; sporty!

Music No music. Sport commentators and TV noise.

Age Youngish (20-30s), Middle age (40-50s)

Clientele Sport fans of all shapes and kinds, mostly male.

Dress code There's none, perhaps jerseys to support your team

"Yeeeahhh! Go, go, goooo!..... Uhhh"

Notable beer Einstök

Special feature TV screens in all directions to show the latest sport games.

Primary reason to go there To watch sports on television.

Boston

Laugavegur 28b

★★★★★

If you want to mingle with an older crowd that's full of interesting locals, while listening to a varied selection of music, Boston is the place to be.

850 1000 900

Atmosphere: Clean; loud; reminiscent of an Icelandic version of Cheers.

Music DJ
Genre Jazz; golden oldies; whatever comes up...

Age Youngish (20-30s); middle age (40-50s).

Artsy fartsy; professional drinkers; musicians.

The dress code is very flexible, from the skimpiest of clothing to the guy in the huge winter jacket. No one's judging you.

"Dancing in Florence is quite amazing, but it's nice to be back here in Iceland."

Food Pizza

Notable beer Einstök; Groeschel; Bjartur.

Special feature Large outdoor patio, Upstairs lounge area. Lots of tables to sit and chat, while having enough space in between to dance.

Primary reason to go there To drink yourself silly; to go dancing; to listen to music.

Café Paris

Austurstræti 14

★★★★☆

Jazzy, touristy and pricey, with a Starbucks-feel.

900 1100 950

Atmosphere: Clean; lounge.

Music Playlists
Genre Jazz; inoffensive background music.

Age Youngish (20-30s), Middle age (40-50s)

Clientele Tourists

Dress code Tourists dress smart, donning the few better items they managed to pack.

Couldn't make out a thing.

Food Nachos, crêpes and such

Notable beer Leffe; Guinness;

Special feature Books and magazines cupboard

Primary reason to go there To listen to music. To bolster an image. To pretend to work on your book of poetry.

Café Rósenberg

Klappartígur 25-27

★★★★☆

A sophisticated venue for taking in live music where people actually shut up during performances.

800 1150 900

Atmosphere Clean; sophisticated; romantic.

Music: Regular live music.
Genre: Inoffensive background music; Jazz; TROUBADOUR ALERT, folk rock; modern hipster fare; Pitchfork-core.

Age Youngish (20-30s), Middle age (40-50s), Older (50s plus)

Clientele Artsy fartsy; journos; Writers or poets/Bukowski types; celebrities; actors; legends; musicians.

Dress code "Men wear suits, ironic or otherwise, which must be accompanied by a special feature, a hat, large black rimmed glasses, or pink suede shoes. Women wear Icelandic design and lots of Icelandic design jewellery that you can wear all at once."

"Have you read Haruki Murakami's IQ84?"

Food A full menu of reasonably priced food, as well as bar snacks such as nuts and crisps from 250 ISK

Primary reason to go there To chat with friends; to listen to music; to network or connect.

Celtic Cross

Hverfisgata 26

★★★☆☆

College kids on dates chit-chatting over troubadors. Oh yeah, and it's like an Irish pub, we guess.

800 1200 800

Atmosphere: Loud; gimmicky.

Music Troubadour ALERT
Genre RAWK; Golden Oldies.

Age Too young (under 20), Youngish (20-30s)

Clientele Musicians, Straight-laced blue-collar types.

Dress code Band t-shirts; sweatshirts; jeans.

"If my boyfriend ever grew a mustache, I'd break up with him."

Special feature Sometimes the troubador will be backed by a second guy on another guitar, who occasionally goes outside and plays a verse or two, hoping it will "attract" customers." The basement is like a commissary where they only serve alcohol.

Primary reason to go there To find a mate, To network or connect

Centre Hotel - Plaza

Aðalstræti 4

★★★★☆

Since the clientele is primarily composed of hotel guests it is a neat, tastefully decorated and quiet place to drink a couple of beers without having to look at Icelanders!

900 1300 1100

Atmosphere: Clean; sophisticated; lounge; quiet.

Music Playlists.
Genre Inoffensive background music.

Age Middle age (40-50s), Older (50s plus)

Clientele Tourists .

Dress code Whatever you are wearing: It's a hotel lobby!

"...and they are so friendly!" Overheard from some well off middle aged Swedish tourists who were relaxing after a long day, apparently going horseback riding- presumably the Icelandic ponies are friendly, but it might have been the locals. Who knows!

Primary reason to go there To chat with friends

Chateaux des dix/ Tíu Dropar

Laugavegur 27

★★★★☆

This is a cosy coffee shop, which turns into a wine bar during the evening, but they also serve hard alcohol and beer too.

750 1150 750

Atmosphere: Homey; clean; romantic; low key.

Music Playlists.
Genre Inoffensive background music; Jazz; folksy stuff.

Age Youngish (20-30s).

Clientele Artsy fartsy; expats; Writers or poets/Bukowski types; musicians.

Dress code People wear pretty casual stuff, but no sweat pants or anything like that.

"Do you have a queen of hearts? No, go fish!"

Food Cheeses

Notable beer Bjartur, Úlfur

Special feature Old photos and artefacts on the walls.

Primary reason to go there To chat with friends; to pretend to work on your book of poetry.

Den Danske Kro

Ingólfsstræti 3

★★★★☆

Carpets, dark-stained furniture, people there to chat, drink and sing; in England we'd call this a pub.

850 1250 950

Atmosphere: Trashy; loud; up beat.

Music Regular live music.
Genre Top 40; Europop; Golden Oldies; Icelandic hits; Danish Pop/Rock; Troubadour ALERT.

Age Youngish (20-30s); middle age (40-50s).

Clientele Tourists; expats; your average 9-5 Joe.

Dress code Smart Casual. Male: neat jeans and ironed shirt
Female: a two tone short dress.

The lyrics to popular Eagles hit "Hotel California"

Food Potato chips and, on occasion, smorrebrod.

Special feature Dartboard and big smokers' patio in front.

Primary reason to go there To drink yourself silly; to sing karaoke; to chat with friends; to have an unashamedly good time.

Dillon

Laugavegur 30

★★★★☆

Tries to be a typical American rock bar, we need at least one of those downtown.

850 1100 900

Atmosphere: Grunge; trashy; loud.

Music Playlists; DJs.
Genre Metal; RAWK; Golden Oldies; lots of classic RAWK.

Age Youngish (20-30s).

Clientele Tourists; professional drinkers; metalheads.

Dress code Jeans and leather jackets.

"We came to pick up chicks, whats happening?"

Notable beer Pils Organic; Viking Stout; Einstök.

Special feature They have a beer

garden behind the bar.

Primary reason to go there To drink yourself silly; to chat with friends; to forget.

Dubliner

Naustin 1

★★★★☆

This is a place where you can go and be middle-aged in peace and privacy.

800 1100 900

Atmosphere Trashy, Gimmicky

Music Troubadour ALERT
Genre Golden Oldies

Age Middle age (40-50s), Older (50s plus)

Clientele Tourists, Expats, Professional drinkers, Writers or poets/ Bukowski types, Conspiracy theorists

Dress code Turtlenecks, blazers and way too much perfume.

"No no no no no, Connery was the best Bond. I just won't accept another answer."

Primary reason to go there To drink yourself silly; to chat with friends; to forget.

English Pub

Austurstræti 12

★★★★☆

Once you find your way to the bar through the crowd, singing along with the troubadour you're the king!

900 1300 1000

Atmosphere Loud, Gimmicky, Packed

Music Troubadour ALERT
Genre Whatever comes up..., troubadours performing Oasis very badly

Age Middle age (40-50s), Older (50s plus)

Clientele Tourists, Expats, Professional drinkers, men mostly

Dress code Dress like a suburbanite

"TOOODAYY IS GONNA BE THE DAAAAYYY THAT THEY'RE GONNA THROW IT BACK TO YOUUUU"

Food Panini, pizza

Notable beer Guinness and Kilkenny on draft.

Special feature Wheel of beer fortune; pictures of nobel Englishmen on a walls; not a minute without a troubadour (or two).

Primary reason to go there To drink yourself silly; to find a mate; to sing karaoke; to fulfill a fantasy; to feed your ego; to network or connect; to forget.

Esja

Austurstræti 16

★★★★☆

Esja is going for an upscale club. You can reserve a table and buy Finlandia by the bottle. There is a blow drier and hair straightener in the girl's bathroom.

850 1200 990

Atmosphere: Part quiet lounge, part up-beat; meat market.

Music Playlists; DJ.
Genre R&B; techno; 90s nostalgia.

Age Youngish (20-30s).

Clientele Body builders/tan-bots; Jersey Shore.

Dress code Don't show up too casual.

"Will you come with me to the bathroom, I need to fix my hair."

Special feature Set in a beautiful old building in downtown Reykjavik designed by Guðjón Samúelsson in 1916 after someone decided that the top 2 floors of houses in Iceland should look like masonic-zionist temples gilded with Gothic romance. At the time, the building was a symbol of Iceland moving into the twentieth century and gave people something to be proud of.

Primary reason to go there To find a mate, To go dancing, To blow dry your hair

Factory

Smíðjustigur 6

★★★★☆

Faktorý used to be only a hangout for the 101 rats and musicians but lately it's been getting a little more "hnakkified". It is a mid-sized concert venue upstairs that usually has a cover,In other words. It is a confused scruffy disco-cum-concert hall.

850 1000 NA

Atmosphere: Up beat

Music Regular live music
Genre House; old skool hip-hop; Icelandic indie-party-techno.

Age Youngish (20-30s).

Clientele 101 rats; body builders/ tan-bots; musicians.

Dress code For the most part it's whatever the standard dress code for your average twenty-something Icelander is that month (Icelanders all dress the same). Now we seem to be at some strange folky-hipster-futuristic-hiphop crossroads.

"Ha!?"

Special feature It's a good place to catch up-and-coming indie bands and attend the occasional hip hop night. Downstairs has two rooms, a backroom with the usual electronic fare (house mostly) but occasionally plays host to dub and dancehall nights. The front room has a foosball table the usual tiny dance floor cramming you up against the main entrance. Low ceiling height and DJ booth in the corner by the bar. 3 bathrooms, 2 of which are working at any given time, 1 of which is likely to not be flooded.

Primary reason to go there To drink yourself silly; to find a mate; to go dancing; to listen to music; to bolster an image.

Gay 46

Hverfisgata 46

Doesn't measure up to the city's prolific gay reputation, and the dance room did not get bumpin' until 2.

600 1300 1000

Atmosphere: Clean; meat market.

Music Playlists.
Genre Top 40; Europop.

Age Youngish (20-30s), Middle age (40-50s)

Clientele Reykjavik gays.

Dress code Up to you!

"I thought gay clubs weren't supposed to be boring."

Notable beer Budweiser!

Special feature Gay 46 has a bar and a spacious seating area with tables and couches in the venue's front section. There is an area with pool tables in the middle of the building. The back room is for dancing.

Primary reason to go there To find a mate; to go dancing; to chat with friends.

Glaumbar

Tryggvagata 20

★☆☆☆☆

A party-boat on dry land.

790 1000 1000

Atmosphere: Grungy; meat market; loud; gimmicky; up beat; downright sleazy.

Music DJ
Genre House; top 40; Europop; disco; Golden Oldies.

Age Youngish (20-30s).

Clientele 101 rats; tourists; professional drinkers; celebrities; actors; legends; fishermen; Julian Assange.

Dress code Whatever. Kringlan-fancy: clean clothes from Top Shop and All Saints; Graduation caps; Fishermen in jeans and sweaters.

"Rough, tough & wild!"

Food Nachos & Burgers

Special feature Designed to look like the inside of a sailship which is actually pretty cool despite the crowd

</

- and music. TVs showing Top 40 music videos on mute; foosball table; LETHAL WEAPON 3 PINBALL!
- 📍 **Primary reason to go there** To drink yourself silly; to find a mate; to go dancing; to play games; to see Julian Assange

Hótel Holt

Bergstaðastræti 37

★★★★★★

If we could afford it, we would hang out there ALL THE TIME.

🍺 **950** 🍻 **1390** 🍷 **1290**

🌍 **Atmosphere** Clean, Sophisticated, Lounge, Quiet, Romantic, Low key

🎵 **Music** Playlists
Genre Inoffensive background music; Jazz; Icelandic hits.

👤 **Age** Middle age (40-50s), Older (50s plus)

👨 **Clientele** Artsy fartsy; business people; bankers; tourists; writers or poets/Bukowski types; celebrities; actors; legends.

👔 **Dress code** Dressy.

💬 "Look at that Kjarval! Look at THAT Kjarval!"

🍴 **Food** A whole menu of it from 16:00 on...

🍺 **Notable beer** Stella; Kaldi on tap.

★ **Special feature** The walls of the bar are overflowing with drawings and paintings by Kjarval, one of Iceland's most famous artists.

📍 **Primary reason to go there** to chat with friends; to read; to pass the time; to wait for your reservation at one of the best restaurants in Reykjavik.

Hressó

Austurstræti 20

★★★★★☆☆

Faded American diner, with leather booths next to the main window, simple tables and chairs.

🍺 **890** 🍻 **1100** 🍷 **1090**

🌍 **Atmosphere:** Loud; up beat.

🎵 **Music** Occasional live music; troubadour ALERT; playlist.
Genre RAWK; modern hipster fare; Pitchfork core.

👤 **Age** Youngish (20-30s); middle age (40-50s).

👨 **Clientele** 101 rats; artsy fartsy; musicians; moms; dads.

👔 **Dress code** Everything goes.

💬 "Do you have a smoke?"

🍴 **Food** Plenty of appetisers, etc.

🍺 **Notable beer** Einstök.

★ **Special feature** There is a massive and beautiful courtyard where people can sit, drink, eat and (more importantly to some), there's a covered smoking area.

📍 **Primary reason to go there** To drink yourself silly; to chat with friends; to listen to music; to eat.

Íslenski

Pósthússtræti 9

★★★★☆☆

This bar is very Icelandic, from the wall decor to the food to the booze.

🍺 **750** 🍻 **1300** 🍷 **1200**

🌍 **Atmosphere** Clean; low key; gimmicky

🎵 **Music** Playlists
Genre Icelandic tunes exclusively

👤 **Age** Youngish (20-30s), Middle age (40-50s)

👨 **Clientele** Tourists; expats; CCP gamers; Hannes Hólmsteinn.

👔 **Dress code** Totally casual

💬 "I'll have some shark and brennivín."

🍴 **Food** Nuts and stuff like that

🍺 **Notable beer** Lots of Icelandic microbrews!

★ **Special feature** They have a nice selection of Icelandic beers and you can get fermented shark and brennivín.

📍 **Primary reason to go there** To chat with friends, To network or connect

Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

★★★★★★

An artsy drinking den of great repute, where the bartenders know more about music than you ever will. On most tourists' 'must visit' list.

🍺 **750** 🍻 **1000** 🍷 **800**

🌍 **Atmosphere** Grunge; low key.

🎵 **Music** Regular live music.
Genre Modern hipster fare; Pitchfork core.

👤 **Age** Youngish (20-30s)

👨 **Clientele** 101 rats, Journos, Tourists, Writers or poets/ Bukowski types, Celebrities/actors/legends, Musicians

👔 **Dress code** Men sport stubble beards, wear bowler hats, band t-shirts and jackets. Women get their vintage garb from Sputnik and wear horn rimmed glasses.

💬 "Psst...does Damon Albarn own this place? Answer: Urgh."

🍺 **Notable beer** Large selection of bottled beers, including Icelandic white and pale ale.

★ **Special feature** Partially covered smoking patio; was featured in that movie.

📍 **Primary reason to go there** To drink yourself silly; to listen to music; to network or connect; to bolster an image.

Kaffi Sólon

Bankastræti 7a

★★★★☆☆

A fine place to start the evening with some dinner and drinks before going out on the town.

🍺 **950** 🍻 **1200** 🍷 **950**

🌍 **Atmosphere:** Clean; sophisticated; romantic.

🎵 **Music** Playlists
Genre Jazz

👤 **Age** Middle age (40-50s)

👨 **Clientele** Business people; bankers; tourists.

👔 **Dress code** There is no dress code, but you might feel a little awkward walking in with jeans and a t-shirt on.

💬 "We should really buy some vitamin C."

🍴 **Food** Full kitchen open until 23:30

🍺 **Notable beer** Úlfur, Bjartur

★ **Special feature** Artist of the month displayed on their walls.

📍 **Primary reason to go there** To chat with friends; to network or connect.

Kaffi Zimsen

Hafnarstræti 18

★★★☆☆☆☆

It's really cheap!

🍺 **600** 🍻 **1000** 🍷 **750**

🌍 **Atmosphere:** Grunge; loud.

🎵 **Music** Troubadour ALERT
Genre Top 40; Golden Oldies; Whatever comes up...

👤 **Age** Youngish (20-30s), Middle age (40-50s)

👨 **Clientele** Tourists; body builders; tan-bots.

👔 **Dress code** Tracksuits; hoodies; sweatpants!

💬 "Tourists love to eat pizza in the smoking area."

🍺 **Notable beer** Black Death!

★ **Special feature** You can buy pizza from Pizza Royale in the smoking area! They have pickup lines written on the bar tables!

📍 **Primary reason to go there** To drink yourself silly; to find a mate.

Kofi Tómasar Frænda

Laugavegur 2

★★★★☆☆

A great place for magically making eye contact with a romantic stranger.

🍺 **790** 🍻 **1000** 🍷 **990**

🌍 **Atmosphere** Homey; grunge; lounge; quiet; romantic; low key.

🎵 **Music** Playlists.
Genre Top 40; inoffensive; background music; RAWK; modern hipsterfare; pitchfork core; whatever comes up...

👤 **Age** Too young (under 20); youngish (20-30s).

👨 **Clientele** 101 rats; artsy fartsy; tourists; expats; goths; writers or poets/Bukowski types.

👔 **Dress code** Sort of loose amalgam of vaguely fashionable street clothes and warm, comfortable Cintamani-type stuff.

💬 "I kinda wanna grab a smoke, but this couch is so comfortable."

★ **Special feature** Some pretty damn comfortable couches, apparently, and an utterly gorgeous waitress.

📍 **Primary reason to go there** To find a mate; to chat with friends; to network or connect; to forget; to read; to pretend to work on your book of poetry.

Kolabrautin

(4th floor of Harpa) Austurbakki 2
Ingólfsstræti 3

★★★★☆☆

Swanky swank swank; expensive; everyone judging me with their middle-aged eyes.

🍺 **900** 🍻 **1300** 🍷 **1050**

🌍 **Atmosphere:** Swanky; clean; lounge.

🎵 **Music** None.

👤 **Age** Middle age (40-50s)

👨 **Clientele** Business people; bankers; tourists; Jakob Frímann; politicians.

👔 **Dress code** The dress code is somewhat fancy; men wear suits and women are in heels.

💬 Very drunk man: "Don't you put more in the glass than this?"

★ **Special feature** On the top floor of Harpa; cocktails.

📍 **Primary reason to go there** To drink yourself silly; to chat with friends; to see celebrities; to feed your ego; to bolster an image; following or proceeding a concert/ opera; for a business meeting.

Laundromat

Austurstræti 9

★★★★☆☆

A diner-style establishment that offers unique respite for those with children or without washing machines.

🍺 **900** 🍻 **1100** 🍷 **1000**

🌍 **Atmosphere:** Clean, Lounge, Loud, Gimmicky, Yankeeish

🎵 **Music** Playlists
Genre Inoffensive background music

👤 **Age** Youngish (20-30s), Middle age (40-50s)

👨 **Clientele** 101 rats, Tourists

👔 **Dress code** Icelandic hipster, tourist-casual

💬 "Crack, quack, crack" goes the noisy coffee grinder, "pffffbrrr" sings the milk foamer, only to be interrupted by the mixer's "crrrrrrrrrrckcchhh," which was louder than the music.

🍴 **Food** Burgers, sandwiches and stuff served 'til 22:00

🍺 **Notable beer** Skjálfti, Bjartur, Corona, Leffe

★ **Special feature** Basement features coin-op washing machines and dryers (a laundromat!) and a very nice children's area with plenty of games. Also a massive wall of old Grapevines!

📍 **Primary reason to go there** To have a beer while doing your laundry, to forget about your kids for a moment.

Lebowski Bar

Laugavegur 20a

★★★★☆☆

Ostensibly, Lebowski bar is a theme bar modeled after the 1998 comedy Big Lebowski starring Jeff Bridges as a slacker and bowling-enthusiast bouncing from one ludicrous situation to another. A feeling you will come to recognise when partying in downtown Reykjavík. The theme might not be quite as nailed down as expected,

but the place looks nice and plenty of attention is paid to detail. This is a transitioning theme bar with a taste for creamy cocktails and Americana.

🍺 **850** 🍻 **1100** 🍷 **900**

🌍 **Atmosphere:** Clean; lounge; gimmicky.

🎵 **Music** Playlists.
Genre R&B; inoffensive background music; Golden Oldies; soul.

👤 **Age** Too young (under 20); youngish (20-30s); middle age (40-50s)

👨 **Clientele** 101 rats; business people; bankers; tourists; body builders/ tan-bots; celebrities; actors; legends; young professionals; country bumpkins. It's a bit of a mixed crowd. Fancyboy 101 fella has to awkwardly elbow up next to farmer's son in an ill-fitting suit watching his White Russian turning Snookie orange as beads of tanning lotion drip from his forehead.

👔 **Dress code** Blazers and checkered shirts seem popular. Short and iffy cocktail dresses later in the evening. Pretty informal otherwise.

💬 "Shut the fuck up, Donny"

🍴 **Food** A pretty affordable and tasty burger place in the back although the burgers are quite dainty.

★ **Special feature** Downstairs offers White Russians in all kinds of strange variations, Wii Sports (set on bowling of course) and a gorgeous-looking but hideously over-priced jukebox. Upstairs is a little more loungey (before 2 in the morning) and features the biggest smoking balcony in Iceland which is not a bad choice for warm summer days (trololol - Iceland doesn't swing like that).

📍 **Primary reason to go there** To drink yourself silly; to find a mate; to chat with friends; to network or connect.

Live Pub

Frakkastigur 8

★★★★☆☆

Sports and karaoke on demand with VH1 classics all night long.

🍺 **800** 🍻 **1000** 🍷 **1000**

🌍 **Atmosphere:** Grunge; lounge; low key; sporty.

🎵 **Music** The radio.
Genre Top 40; karaoke

👤 **Age** Youngish (20-30s), Middle age (40-50s)

👨 **Clientele** Expats; professional drinkers; Eurovision fans.

👔 **Dress code** Leather jackets and jeans. Ladies in red. Whatever you rolled out of bed in.

💬 "Don't say that about Engelbert! That's my Humperdinck!"

★ **Special feature** KARAOKE; worst ever painting of Johnny Cash; a cat walked into the bar and took a 15 minute nap on a chair until it got booted out by security (true fucking story).

📍 **Primary reason to go there** To sing karaoke; to chat with friends; to play games; to feed your ego; to find your missing cat.

Næsti bar

Ingólfsstræti 1a

★★★★☆☆

As neutral and un-exciting as Switzerland.

🍺 **750** 🍻 **1100** 🍷 **900**

🌍 **Atmosphere:** Quiet

🎵 **Music** The radio
Genre Top 40; whatever comes up...

👤 **Age** Youngish (20-30s)

👨 **Clientele** Nonexistent, other than the boyfriend of the barmaid.

👔 **Dress code** The barmaid's boyfriend was wearing jeans.

💬 None was uttered.

🍴 **Food** They sometimes offer complimentary nuts.

★ **Special feature** They have a lot of special offers on cocktails.

📍 **Primary reason to go there** To read; to pretend to work on your book of poetry.

Pingholtsbar

Pingholtsstræti 5

★★★★☆☆

A slick and quiet hotel lounge bar.

🍺 **33cl** 🍻 **1300** 🍷 **1100**

🌍 **Atmosphere:** Clean; sophisticated; lounge.

🎵 **Music** Playlists
Genre Inoffensive background music; lounge music.

👤 **Age** Middle age (40-50s

	romantic; low key; not loud but not quiet either; classy, but not posh; straight-forward; cozy.
	Music No fucking music, except when there is occasional live music
	Genre I told you already, no fucking music.
	Age Youngish (20-30s), Middle age (40-50s)
	Clientele 101 rats; artsy fartsy; tourists; expats; writers or poets/Bukowski types; musicians.
	Dress code Casual dress-code. Though there is definitely some hipster fare.
	"Hey, I like your scarf!"
	Food They have a whole bar snacks menu: salted nuts, nut mix, lemon marinated olives, chocolate with chili and nuts, hardfiskur with butter, bone marrow with toasted bread, dates wrapped in bacon.
	Notable beer Stout, Kex Special, Pale Ale
	Special feature Good selection of beer; big patio; often have concerts; decor is all hand-selected, deliciously vintage; super hip but also cosy. Comes with a hostel attached.
	Primary reason to go there To chat with friends; to listen to music; to play games; to see celebrities; to pretend to work on your book of poetry.

Obladi Oblada

Laugavegur 45a

★★★★☆☆

Ladies, don't come here on your own, as you have to fight your way passed the regulars, but if it wasn't for the regulars it would be a nice and cheap hang out bar.

	800		1100		700
	Atmosphere: Gimmicky; low key; sleazy		Music Playlists; occasional live music		Genre Golden Oldies; Beatles, Beatles, Beatles.
	Age Middle age (40-50s), Older (50s plus)		Clientele Professional drinkers.		Dress code Clothes. You are here to drink, not to look good.
	"It was my day. What the fuck! I had cake. You just get beautifully stupid."		Notable beer Krombacher		Special feature Comfortable leather couches. And The Beatles on all walls.
	Primary reason to go there To drink yourself silly.				

Prikið

Bankastræti 12

★★★★★☆☆

Laid back cool kids and funky beats.

	690		1000		800
	Atmosphere Homey; low key.		Music DJ		Genre R&B; blues; rap; hip-hop; breakbeat.
	Age Too young (under 20), Youngish (20-30s)		Clientele 101 rats; artsy fartsy; professional drinkers; writers or poets/Bukowski types; conspiracy theorists; anarchists; celebrities; actors; legends; musicians; potheads; fashionistas.		Dress code Hippie-hip hop upscale chic; buffalo; fur and gold; always the latest kicks.
	"Hér er krútt-swag með kærleik í hjarta whoop whoop!" ("This is cute-swag with love in our hearts whoop whoop!")		Food Burgers and all sorts of other stuff.		Notable beer Guinness.
	Special feature Huge smoking area; basketball court; graffiti space. Upstairs deck and patio; kitchen open late; diner atmosphere; booths!		Primary reason to go there To find a mate; to chat with friends; to bolster an image; to pretend to work on your book of poetry; to toke on a doobie.		

	Reykjavík Backpackers
	Laugavegur 28
	★★★★★☆☆

A nice place to meet other tourists and maybe find your true love from the exotic country you've always dreamt about. However, the guy wearing the wedding dress kinda scared me.

	850		1100		800
	Atmosphere: Lounge; loud; up beat.		Music Occasional live music.		Genre Top 40; europop; whatever comes up...
	Age Youngish (20-30s)		Clientele Tourists		Dress code No dress code, in fact you'd probably fit in more if you tried to dress touristy.
	"A: "You've dug yourself a grave and I can't fix your life for you." (Completely random translation) A: "So you're completley deaf in one ear?" B: " Yeah, I just hear low frequencies, which is nice if I go home with a girl and she keeps talking I can just turn my head and I don't hear a thing."		Food Sandwiches and snacks (chips, cookies).		Notable beer Boli; Polar Beer.
	Special feature Airline style seating, foosball table, large outdoor patio. And hey, it's a hostel so if you are to drunk to go home feel free to rent a room for the night.		Primary reason to go there To find a mate; to chat with friends; to play games; to network or connect.		

Úrilla Górilla

Austurstræti 12

★★★★★☆☆

Where the tan girls and young skinkas meet football geeks, college guys, troubadours and BBQ burgers.

	850		1200		900
	Atmosphere: Clean, Quiet, Gimmicky, Low key, Sporty		Music Troubadour ALERT		Genre R&B, House, Europop, MTV dance channel
	Age Youngish (20-30s)		Clientele Body builders/tan-bots; high school cheerleaders; their bully boyfrienders; football fans and beer-lovers.		Dress code It didn't seem like anybody was trying to make an effort to look hip, although we spotted one heavy hair-gelled boy with a diamond earring.
	"Hahahahah"		Food American/Mexican fast food		Special feature There are a few tables on the second floor by the TV screen with personal built-in beer tap (you can order a 25-litre can or less). Also, they have a huge smoking balcony with nice view over Austurvöllur; Pacman slot machines; comfy sofas; a spacey dancefloor and plenty of dark corners to cry your eyes out if your football team has lost.
	Primary reason to go there To find a mate; to go dancing; to chat with friends; to play games; to watch football championship on a big screen and drink beer from your personal tap; to feel old and wise.				

Slippbarinn (Icelandair Hótel Reykjavík Marina)

Mýrargata 2-8

Ingólfstræti 3

★★★★☆☆☆

It's a bit uppity, everyone looks like they just came from their job at the bank.

	950		1280		1000
	Atmosphere Swanky; clean; sophisticated; quiet.		Music Playlists		Genre Inoffensive background music
	Age Youngish (20-30s), Middle age (40-50s)		Clientele Business people; bankers; celebrities; actors; legends.		Dress code BUSINESS CASUAL

	"There was crab salad and deep fried lobster..."
	Food They have a whole menu of it until 22:00
	Notable beer Guinness; Borg; Kilkenny.
	Special feature Right by 'slippurinn', where the ships come in to be painted/repaired, which is a really novel location.
	Primary reason to go there To drink yourself silly; to chat with friends; to see celebrities; to feed your ego; to network or connect; to bolster an image.

Strawberries

Lækjargata 6a

★★★☆☆☆☆

The decor is moderately cosy and they serve expensive champagne. If scantily clad women are your thing, it's the only place of this kind in downtown Reykjavik.

	1000		1500		1500
	Atmosphere Clean, Meat market, Gimmicky		Music Playlists		Genre R&B, Top 40
	Age Youngish (20-30s), Middle age (40-50s)		Clientele Business people/bankers - , Tourists .		Dress code The female employees have a pretty strict skin code.
	"Are you writing for Grapevine? They were just in here a couple of months ago" --Bartender.		Special feature There are about 10 scantily clad women hanging around the bar who will propably talk to you if you buy champagne.		Primary reason to go there To drink yourself silly; to fulfill a fantasy; to feed your ego; to forget.

Thorvaldsen

Austurstræti 8-10

★★★☆☆☆☆

Elegant sleekness accentuated by hip, modern urbanism!

	900		1000		1000
	Atmosphere: Swanky; clean; sophisticated; classy.		Music DJ.		Genre R&B; top 40; Europop; disco; New Wave; 90s dance.
	Age Middle age (40-50s).		Clientele Business people; bankers; expats; body builders/tan-bots; mallrats; people from Grafarvogur; Sex & The City watchers.		Dress code Lots of black, very clean. Women in leggings with large, fancy tunic shirts/short dress on top, sky-high heels. Men in jeans and blazers with dress shoes, aka the look Kanye West invented and now hates.
	"They won't give us a group discount!"		Food Small bar tapas		Special feature Salsa dancing on Thursday nights (sometimes Wednesday), massive selection of specialty cocktails, good wine list.
	Primary reason to go there To find a mate, To go dancing, Salsa., To chat with friends, To fulfill a fantasy, To feed your ego, To bolster an image				

Vegamót

Vegamótastígur 4

★★★★★☆☆

It's a meat market.

	1000		1200		900
	Atmosphere Grunge; sophisticated; meat market; lounge; loud, up beat.		Music DJ		Genre R&B; top 40; hip-hop and plenty of it.
	Age Too young (under 20); youngish (20-30s).		Clientele Hip-hop kids, all of them.		Dress code Tight t-shirts with designer prints; expensive haircuts. The girls have knee-high boots and sport some proud cleavage.
	"Bryan Ferry? Who's that?"		Food Bistro food during the day,		

	including a respectable brunch menu
	Special feature It's full of weird little nooks and places to sit and talk, including an upstairs lounge with a second bar.
	Primary reason to go there To find a mate; to go dancing; to chat with friends; to fulfill a fantasy; to feed your ego; to network or connect; to bolster an image.

Vitabar

Bergþórugata 21

★★★★★☆☆

An authentic Icelandic drinking establishment often lauded for its hamburgers.

	750		950		950
	Atmosphere Grunge; trashy; quiet; low key.		Music The radio.		Genre Golden Oldies; Icelandic hits; whatever comes up.
	Age Youngish (20-30s); middle age (40-50s); older (50s plus).		Clientele 101 rats; artsy fartsy; body builders/tan-bots; professional drinkers; writers or poets/Bukowski types; Helgi Björns; people from pretty much all walks of life can be found here at any given time.		Dress code Whatever, really.
	"How about that Albanian Eurovision song? That was really something."		Food Renowned for its burgers, the blue cheese burger is admittedly delectable.		Special feature The blue cheese burger. Fucking go eat it right now. Oh, and they also serve steak, which is best avoided.
	Primary reason to go there To chat with friends; to grab a burger or beer or combination of the two.				

Ölstofa Kormáks og Skjaldar

Vegamótastígur 4

★★★★★☆☆

Just a great bar to hang out for a taste of the nightlife of Icelandic artsy/intellectual types.

	800		1100		900
	Atmosphere: Loud; "Icelandic intellectual."		Music Playlists.		Genre Inoffensive background music; modern hipsterfare; Pitchfork core.
	Age Youngish (20-30s); middle age (40-50s); older (50s plus).		Clientele Artsy fartsy; journos; professional drinkers; writers or poets/Bukowski types; middle aged scenesters.		Dress code Just what you would expect at a congregation of intellectual types (and those who wish to be mistaken as intellectual types) in their 30s and 40s who are determined to get drunk. Also, a nice beard does not look out of place at this bar.
	"Shouldn't you be home writing your dissertation?"		Notable beer Huge beer selection - including excellent house beer, Brio		Special feature Dartboard and big smokers' patio in front. Ölstofan has a house-beer, Brio, which is brewed specifically for Ölstofan. Brio recently won the gold medal as the "best German-Style Pilsener in the world" at the World Beer Cup 2012 contest held in California. And it is actually pretty good - well worth trying out.
	Primary reason to go there To drink yourself silly; to feed your ego; to bolster an image.				

Ölsmiðjan

Lækjargata 10

★★★★☆☆☆

Looking for a pub feel, which it has before the evening drinkers arrive and the pregame drinking show begins.

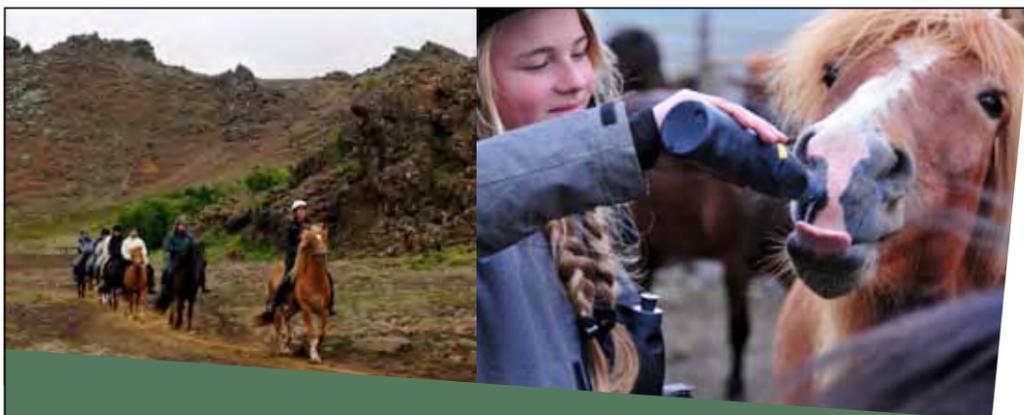
	490		1150		900
	Atmosphere: Clean; loud.		Music Playlists		Genre Top 40.
	Age Too young (under 20); youngish (20-30s).		Clientele Tourists and locals alike.		Dress code Young folks decked

out in whatever you see on everyone walking down Laugavegur (yet they make it seem like their individual style). Gore-tex/flannel tourist costume (complete with big camera and writing journal) for those who haven't yet got their visitor's uniform from 66° North or whatever."

	"Gaur! Where should we go next?"
	Food Nachos and cheese from a machine + one draught beer for 1090
	Notable beer El Grillo
	Two floors but the second floor seems to be for reservations only. A "spin the wheel get a drink deal" jobby behind the bar; doesn't seem to be in use all too often.
	To drink yourself silly; to chat with friends.

Photo of the German Bar, taken during a review.

Note: Þýski barinn (The German Bar) was closed when our reviewer visited. On two occasions.



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The Bars Of Weekends Past

Some 101 legends revisited

Running a bar in Reykjavik has never been the most stable of businesses. Indeed, for the past twenty years, 101 Reykjavik has seen hundreds of bars open their doors briefly before vanishing into the ether (or bankruptcy). Most of them have a short lifespan and are mourned by few (mostly their creditors), but some have left a permanent mark on the city's consciousness. One can regularly hear veterans of the nightlife reminisce over them. The following list is by no means complete and is based on no scientific data whatsoever.

SIRKÚS

Location: Klappartígur 30

Lifespan: 1999-2008

Peak: 2003-2005

Clientele: Artists, foreigners, heavy drinkers, a melting pot of hipness

Painted in turquoise and green with palm trees on the front entrance on Klappartígur, Sirkús looked like a tropical haven in the middle of an urban desert. The 40 square metre ground floor supported steel tables, old chairs of various kinds and only two toilets. This was the place where a big chunk of the Icelandic creative task force gathered any day of the week, musicians, writers, visual and performance artists. Frequent guests were the whole krúttscene, like the kids from múm, Sigur Rós and Seabear. "I've never known a bar that had so much good music. Bodies exploding on the dance floor, sweat dripping from the walls, people cheering for their songs. High on life, high on love," Helga Þórey Jónsdóttir, former doorwoman, describes the atmosphere to me.

It hosted a moustache competition before they became fodder for cancer awareness campaigns. When Sirkús closed, over 200 musicians, from Sigur Rós to Páll Óskar, performed a music marathon in the bar over a whole weekend to protest the planned demolition of the house (which never happened, mostly because of the economic collapse). The bar on the other hand was closed but the legacy lives on. As a testament to its influence the whole bar was recreated as an art installation at London's Frieze Art Fair and a bar with the same name was founded in Þórshöfn in the Faroe Islands with the intention of preserving its heritage.

KAFFI THOMSEN

Location: Hafnarstræti 17

Lifespan: 1996-2002

Peak: 2000

Clientele: Club kids, dance music enthusiasts, people who didn't want to go to sleep

There has never been a strong club culture in Reykjavik. Many attempts have been made but one of the few successful ones was Kaffi Thomsen which was located in Hafnarstræti. It started as a small café on the upper floor but as a result of the booming dance music craze of the mid to late '90s it slowly morphed into the decadent monster of a club on two floors it was during its peak around the turn of the century. It had a massive sound system and the finest DJs in the country spinning techno, drum 'n' bass, deep house and whatever sub-genre of electronic music you can



think of every weekend. During the summer of 2000, the Reykjavik city council was experimenting with free opening hours for bars and Thomsen was the place where everybody went when other bars closed. Walking out from a nightclub at 9 AM and stepping into the morning sun feeling like a vampire is an experience I haven't enjoyed since.





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			10:00	10:00	10:00		
13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00
		14:00	14:00	14:00	14:00		
		17:00*	17:00	17:00	17:00	17:00*	
		20:30**	20:30	20:30**			

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Trivia question answer from page six:

In 2007, consumption of alcoholic beverages was about 5.95 litres per inhabitant. Naturally, this average figure does not take in account babies, teetotalers or booze imported by tourists or exported by ÁTVR.



on amphetamines. People dancing in the window ledges and up on every table was not an uncommon sight after 2 AM and bands like Retro Stefson and FM Belfast played frequent concerts there. Unnsteinn Manúel, singer of Retro Stefson, resident DJ and bartender told me "There were no rules at Karamba. You could play any song you would think of and nobody was playing it cool".

TUNGLIÐ:

Location: Lækjargata 2a where the bookstore Iða is now
Lifespan: 1987-1998
Peak: Early to mid '90s
Clientele: Concertgoers of all kinds

Tunglið served a similar purpose as Nasa has done for the past ten years, a medium sized concert venue open for all kinds of music and debauchery. Prodigy performed there in 1995 and Ham performed their infamous final show there in 1994. The club went down in flames when the house burned to the ground in 1998 and was sincerely missed by the whole spectrum of music lovers in the city.

RÓSENBERGKJALLARINN:

Lifespan: 1991-1998
Location: Lækjargata 2a, in the basement of Tunglið (see above)
Clientele: Rave kids and rockers
Peak: Ca. 1994 around the same time as Reykjavík rave culture

It started out as a hybrid between a rock bar and a dance club but was soon overtaken and became headquarters for the country's emerging rave scene. "It was a down and dirty party basement where sweat dripped from the ceiling" DJ Kári told me. Rósenberg was later sold and became more of a rock hangout again before it burned down alongside Tunglið.

BÍÓBARINN:

Location: The corner of Klapparstígur and Hverfisgata
Lifespan: 1991-1999
Peak: Mid '90s
Clientele: Movie buffs, bohemians and music lovers

Located on the corner of Klapparstígur and Hverfisgata and was a sort of precursor to Sirkús as a gathering place for musicians, bohemians and indie kids. It used to show movies on the upper floor which was covered in movie posters and memorabilia, while DJs like KGB and Kári hosted dance parties in the sweat soaked basement. Legendary Icelandic bands like Quarashi, Stjörnukist and Botnleðja all performed there. 🍷

KARAMBA

Location: Laugavegur 22
Lifespan: Spring 2009 until summer 2010
Clientele: Young indie kids

Karamba had a short but good run and seemed to fill a certain void that had emerged after Sirkús but before Bakkus. The crowd was young and wild and the atmosphere during weekends was like a zoo

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Lækjargata 8

Hooray For Boobies!

Grapevine's former poetry columnist collects his work, clears his desk



Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl is surely one of Iceland's finest authors/experimental poets/literary translators. Although Eiríkur spends most of his time in Finland (when he's not travelling the world, relentlessly marketing his experimental poetry at fancy conferences, clinking glasses with the glitzy superstars of modern literature), most of what he writes is in Icelandic. Aside from some anthologies Eiríkur edited and various collaborative projects—many under the banner of now-defunct poetry collective Nýhil, which he co-founded—he has thus far published three novels, five books of poetry and a meditation on copyright and piracy in Icelandic (with a fourth novel forthcoming this fall).

Through it all he still somehow found time to get married, conceive and raise a child and write dozens of awesome poetry columns for Reykjavík Grapevine—most of which have now been collected in an omnibus of his English-language writing. We wrote him some emails to ask about it.

Hi Eiríkur. We hear you've compiled in a new book some of the many fine columns you wrote for us back when we were younger and more innocent. Is this true?
It is!

What is it called?
'Booby, Be Quiet!'

Is this an attempt to boost sales by passing your work off as pornography? Why/why not?
It's an allusion to W.H. Auden's translation of the Elder Edda: "The ignorant booby had best be silent / When he moves among other men, / No one will know what a nit-wit he is / Until he begins to talk." Booby also means fool, but for marketing reasons I don't tell people that until they've bought the book.

Where can we get it?
You can get it online—for instance on norddahl.org (go to the English part of the site).

SADLY, NO IRON MAIDEN

Did you include that five thousand-word Iron Maiden live review of yours we published on a spread back when? Why/Why not?

I did not. That was an oversight. I am an ignorant booby. I will include it in my upcoming nostalgic metal review book—when I've gone to enough metal concerts. But it does include my seventeen thousand word insightful rant on Icelandic literature and the crisis.

Does the book include all of your columns that we published? Or just some? How did you choose?

At around the same time I wrote said Iron Maiden live review I also wrote a few bad columns for the Grapevine and got fired. Later, with a new editor in charge, I was rehired (the new editor may not have read my bad columns). I did not include any of these bad columns, only my excellent columns about poetry. Except the first one, about the mad poet Tóbbi—that one ended up cannibalized in a larger essay that's also included.

What else is in there?

Essays and lectures about poetry and literature written for a foreign audience. I travel quite a lot to festivals to perform sound poetry and sometimes they ask me to talk or contribute an article for some publication. Most of these have been written in English (and then translated to Pol-

ish, Danish, Faroese etc.)—but one was written in Icelandic and translated to German and I translated it to English myself (fucking personally!) for the book. It's a book of poetics, aesthetics—about the art of word. There's stuff in there about sound poetry, about Nýhil, about politics and literature—about half of the book is the short Grapevine columns and the other half is the longer essays.

Will you be upset if it gets pirated all over the place? Can we send a copy to our friend Einar?

Yes, of course, I would love it if Einar read the book, I'm sure he'd like it. If you tell him about the donation thing, that'd be good too.

You've written about the subject of piracy and copyright quite extensively. What is your conclusion?

A) Readers should not steal books because writers and publishers need to eat too—even when they don't like the books and are never going to read them again, they should pay for them (e-books distributed on a donation scheme, like 'Booby', are an exception—it is the right of writers and publishers to make these exceptions; these rights are not for the reader to take).

B) Publishers should not overcharge for books or lock them up with useless, expensive, socially restrictive, geographically absurdist and undemocratic DRM mechanisms and laws.

C) Information should be free and it should be the job of government (and non-government) institutions to make

Cool! When is that due out?
September 15.

How about in English?
As soon as possible! (I don't have an English publisher for it).

Can our foreign readers access any of your fiction in other languages? Where? Is there more coming?

My second novel, 'Eitur fyrir byrjendur' ("Poison for Beginners"), is available in Swedish and German ('Gift för nybörjare' / 'Gift für Anfänger'). There'll certainly be more coming at some point, or so I hope. It would be fine for me if my books were never to be translated again, but horrible for almost everyone else.

Which Icelandic authors should we be seeking out and reading? Who, in your opinion, needs translating the most?

It's hard to name a few. For one thing we all tend to have the clearest vision of the literature that is closest to us—so in nepotistic Iceland I just start naming my friends. We all do this when asked. And I could and perhaps should do that—Steinar Bragi, Ófeigur Sigurðsson, Kristín Eiríksdóttir, Hermann Stefánsson, Haukur Már Helgason. They're all brilliant authors. But I'd also be forgetting a lot of authors (both friends and strangers, and certainly I'd never mention any of my sworn nemesi) and maybe it's not about authors but about books. And then the list could go on and on.

Specially if we're speaking about English translations—the English book market is notoriously disinterested in other literature than its own, to the extent that Horace Engdahl (a member of the Swedish Nobel Academy) has suggested that American authors should not receive Nobel prizes due to their insularity; that is to say, by translating very little literature they are choosing not to participate in the wider world of literature (these are of course horrible generalisations—and I am to an extent putting words in Engdahl's mouth—and the same standards would leave Icelandic literature totally out of the picture—but let's still say it's 65–85% true). So to any English speaking literary agent or publisher reading this I'll say: translate all of it or admit total spiritual defeat! 🍷

"To any English speaking literary agent or publisher reading this I'll say: translate all of it or admit total spiritual defeat!"

sure that information can be free—without the people of the information industry needing to starve or whore themselves out.

EVIL IS COMING

What are you up to these days?

I am finishing the mother of all holocaust novels. It is called 'Illska' ("Evil") and is about a young Lithuanian immigrant in Iceland, Agnes (Agné) Lukauskas, whose family comes from a town called Jurbarkas on the Kaliningrad border where, in the summer of 1941, half of the inhabitants (the non-Jewish) killed the other half of the inhabitants. Agnes is born and raised in Iceland, but obsessed with her holocaust past.

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

From The US Army To Army of Me: Becoming Björk

The US Naval Air Station in Keflavík, which operated for 55 years before closing in 2006, has cast a long shadow over Icelandic culture. Before the advent of Icelandic media other than state-sponsored radio, American Armed Forces Radio and Television was the country's main window into the wider world of pop culture.

If one looks at the generation of Icelandic artists that grew up in the decades after the war, the American presence is everywhere, be it in the novels of Einar Kára-son and Már Guðmundsson, the films of Friðrik Þór Friðriksson, and the songs of Bubbi and Megas. But, it is perhaps best captured in Einar Kára-son's first trilogy, as represented in the books' titles: 'Devil's Island' (this being Iceland, of course), 'The Golden Island' (referring to the post-war boom) and 'The Promised Land' (a semi-ironic allusion to some of the characters' relocation to America).

THE BIRTH OF TV

Two examples of the new batch are Icelandic journalist Haukur Ingvarsson, who published his first novel 'Nóvember 1976' last year, and Norwegian writer Mette Karlsvik, who wrote 'Bli Björk' (which could be translated as "Become Björk"), also published last year.

Haukur Ingvarsson, himself a presenter at RÚV State Radio, focuses his novel on television. A repressed housewife breaks the family TV and her son tries to procure a new one, first hoping to buy it with money raised by smuggling beer (illegal in Iceland until 1989) out of the US Station and later by stealing a set from the Americans outright.

In between, we get flashes of the history of the groove tube in Iceland, from the Armed Forces Broadcasts in the '50s to the beginning of Icelandic television itself in 1966, and the glorious advent of colour TV in the year of the title. The book begins rather symbolically with TV sets going off in every window of an apartment building at the moment the evening news begins, and ends with the radio waves leaving Earth and heading into the universe.

THE ROMEO AND JULIET OF KEFLAVÍK

Mette Karlsvik's book is a work of fiction based on the life of singer Björk Guðmundsdóttir. Karlsvik also works as a journalist for the Norwegian daily

"Dagsavisen," and the novel is as thoroughly researched as it is poetically phrased. As all good Icelandic sagas do, it begins with the ancestors of the titular character, her grandfather Gunnar and her mother Heiða, but most of all her father, Guðmundur.

Guðmundur (from whom Björk's surname is derived) is born in 1945, the year World War II ends and the year after Iceland declares independence.

"Like a character out of a Gunther Grass novel, a young Björk walks around beating on a tin drum, announcing her arrival at her parent's respective households with loud singing."

Guðmundur and Heiða are an Icelandic Romeo and Juliet of sorts; love draws them together, but the Naval Station pulls them apart. He is an aspiring electrician who works on the Station alongside his father, and she an aspiring hippie who proudly wears her "Iceland out of NATO" badges and participates in protests against the damming of a river in the countryside.

A BJÖRK IS BORN

Björk is born a year before Icelandic television begins broadcasting. Like a character out of a Gunther Grass novel, a young Björk walks around beating on a tin drum, announcing her arrival at her parent's respective households with loud singing. She wears American rubber boots and listens to Julie Andrews while turning her immediate surroundings into a wellspring of sounds, tapping on hot water tanks or kitchenware, claiming this to be music. Her father disagrees, however, and gives her a Beatles record instead.

We look on as the child slowly discovers the larger world through television, wondering whether the Americans and the Russians will start fighting in space and learning to tell the difference between images of Sæmi Rokk, a swing dance champion and Bobby Fischer's bodyguard, and Boris Spassky, the defeated Soviet champion, during the world chess championship in 1972

ALCOHOL AND TV

Much like Mette, the older Einar and the younger Haukur purport to tell Iceland's post-war history through a family saga, and, to paraphrase Tolstoy: All unhappy families are unhappy in their own particular way.

Einar's trilogy focuses on the dislocation as well as the opportunities available in the post-war years. The poor of Reykjavík moved into abandoned military barracks, which were then littered around the city, and many women left the country with American soldiers, sending back-stories and presents from the land of wonder. Still others fail to find their place in this brave new world and become cheaters,

drunkards and thieves.

The situation in Haukur's 'November 1976' is less colourful in its ups and downs; it's more quietly desperate. Small wonder then that everything centres on the colour emanating from television, and that this would be the perspective of someone writing many decades later. The US military may have left and we no longer need to break into the Station to get beer, but it is precisely the American influence on culture rather than the cityscape that is most enduring. The barracks in downtown Reykjavík are long gone, but we still have television.

VIOLENTLY HAPPY

It is only from the Norwegian perspective that the people in post-war Iceland, at least some of them, find their own way. Björk grew up with her father's American influences and her mother's opposition to them and her search for refuge in Iceland's nature instead. It was the offspring of this combination that became the first Icelandic artist to truly conquer the English speaking world.

Where Einar's characters succumb to drunkenness and Haukur's to boredom, Mette's eventually sit perched on top of the world with Iceland proving to be more of a golden island than a demon one in this case. ♥



Dinosaur Skin And Green Hair

We Snoop-Around EYGLO's studio

We met fashion designer Eygló Margrét Lárusdóttir at her studio on a sunny afternoon in downtown Reykjavík. Eygló is the brain behind the label EYGLO, which she started in 2006 after graduation from the Iceland Academy of the Arts. She has been busy since then, co-founding the cooperative design shop Kiosk in 2010, which carries her work as well as that of nine other Icelandic designers.

Eygló just received a grant from the Aurora Design Fund to expand her brand, which features strong feminine collections with humorous undertones. Not to mention the newly crowned Eurovision winner Loreen from Sweden was also recently spotted sporting one of Eygló's new swimsuits. Eygló was yawning when we first arrived, but it didn't take her long to wake up as soon as she started talking about her work.

How did you wind up becoming a fashion designer?

Well, I kind of just woke up one day and wanted to become one and then there was just no turning back.

What is the concept behind your current spring/summer line?

I started with a book about dinosaurs that my son brought back from the library; I was inspired by the interesting patterns. I also scanned my hair, and

"My customer base is very broad; the designs seem to appeal to a wide audience. There is a sporty element; maybe it's just the zeitgeist, but it always sneaks up on me. I'm not romantic at all."

then I combined them. So the collection is based on a natural look, but it's also weird because obviously I don't have green hair and we don't know what dinosaurs looked like; it's all just speculation.

I try to make practical cuts that work. It thought there was a lack of swimwear, so I made two types of swimsuits that I'm really pleased with. A specialist in Estonia manufactures them, and I am actually on my way to visit them to see the winter collection as well as to make prototypes for next summer.

I'll also be going to the opening of a new shop in Copenhagen called Karusel, and later this summer I'm participating in the DottirDottir project in Berlin which is a month long pop-up shop and showroom.

How do opportunities for fashion designers abroad compare to opportunities in Iceland?

Well, the consumer group is ridiculously small here. If you can make it work here, you can make it work elsewhere. If you get into a few shops, you're doing ok. There is so much cost involved with all of this; things that you forget to calculate. You don't really even pay yourself in the beginning. I never recommend this job to anyone unless they are 100% sure that they want to do this

and nothing else. But I would just be depressed if I weren't doing it. It's a mental rollercoaster.

What is the ethos behind EYGLO as a whole?

I use a lot of print, at least in my latest collections. My customer base is very broad; the designs seem to appeal to a wide audience. There is a sporty element; maybe it's just the zeitgeist, but it always sneaks up on me. I'm not romantic at all.

You prefer stronger forms?

Yes and a bit of power dressing. Well, next summer I'm going to be really cliché. I went to Þingvellir and took pictures of rocks. I'm not joking! I'm making an Icelandic camouflage; it will be insane! I was just like, 'fuck, what am I doing, organising some rocks in Photoshop,' but I like doing something taboo and attempting to do it well. This idea could totally fail in Iceland, because these natural patterns are so close to us, but then it might work somewhere else. It's a delicate balance to strike... ☺



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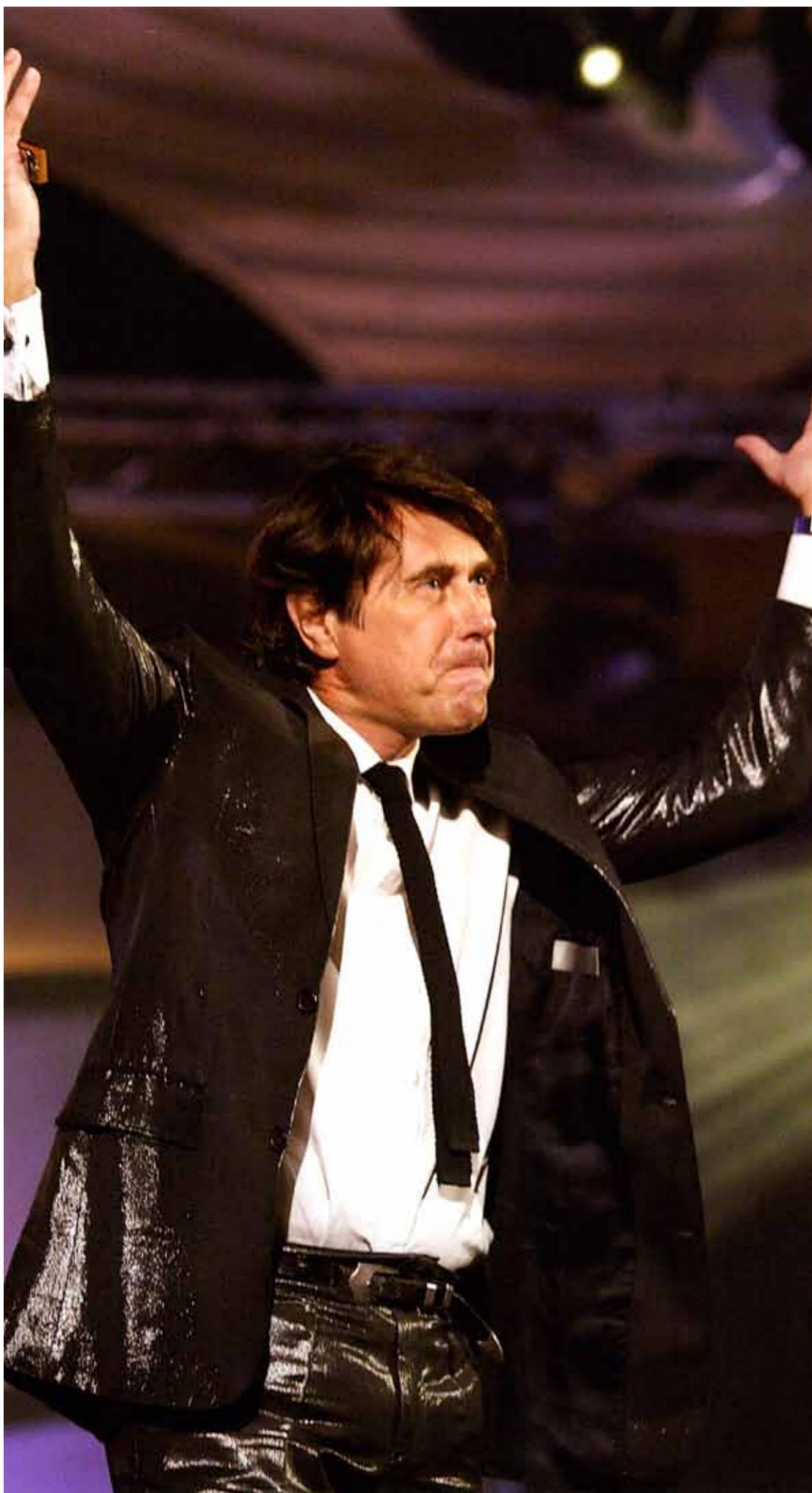
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Music | Live review

Rock Me, Sexy Jesus?

Bryan Ferry performs at Harpa on May 27

Let me just say this right off the bat: it's not Bryan Ferry's fault he's old, and I am in no way insinuating he should retire. He's made a half-dozen terrific albums since Roxy Music called it a day in the mid-eighties (their 2001 comeback doesn't fucking count because they still haven't fucking done anything). If anything, his most recent studio album, 2010's 'Olympia,' sounds better than most of the stuff he's put out since 1985's seminal 'Boys & Girls,' and includes some very rewarding collaborations with the likes of Jonny Greenwood, Scissor Sisters and Dave Stewart. As a songwriter, he's still at the top of his game, draping beautiful atmospheres over minimal compositions, and he still has an ear for some devilishly catchy hooks.

Now. All that said, he's still an old fucker, and live, he just doesn't quite sound like the Bryan Ferry anymore. His fluttering, warbling vibrato has all but disappeared, and his breathy, carnal whisper is a shallow husk of what it used to be. Onstage, he occasionally jilts and sways and makes gestures as vague as a politician's, but for the most part, simply stands and sings. His voice is an odd mixture of hoarseness and warmth, like John Hurt with ice cream in his throat.

Of course, that could just be the pathetic fucking sound in Eldborg. The treble skitters randomly across the room, somehow managing to make Ferry's vocals and the guitars and the saxophone sound dull, and yet making his harmonica and backup singers sound shrill and scraping. And I don't even want to talk about what happens to the bass in that room.

But whatever. The infirmities of age and the lameness of Eldborg aside, the man and his band did put on two more-than-decent shows of two sets each, with beautiful atmospheres prevailing in the first set ("Don't Stop The Dance," "Alphaville," "Reason Or Rhyme") and passion and nostalgia winning the day in the second set ("More Than This," "Avalon," "Love Is The Drug"). They also reached '70s-Roxy-levels of hedonism and pomp, with "Like A Hurricane's" lengthy guitar solos and "Let's Stay Together's" scantily clad dancing girls.

His choice of songs was pretty disappointing, though. There was way, way too much Dylan going on—nearly every other song was a Dylan cover—with 'All Along The Watchtower' feeling particularly hackneyed and unneces-

sary, and an encore of two more covers (Lennon's "Jealous Guy" and Sam & Dave's "Hold On, I'm Coming") was a thoroughly unmemorable way to end the night. Five of his greatest albums, 'In Your Mind,' 'Boys & Girls,' 'Taxi,' 'Mamouna' and 'Frantic,' were represented by maybe four songs, if even that. This, coupled with the backing band's general stiffness and business-like delivery, left one feeling somewhat wanting.

But, like I said, it was still a kick-ass experience, even with all of the aforementioned detractory attributes. His guitarists, veteran sessionist Chris Spedding and the 24-year-old Oliver Thompson, did have occasional moments of ferocity, with Thompson's wall-of-noise guitar solo in the Sunday night rendition of "Reason Or Rhyme" being particularly memorable. Also, it's important to note that these were the first two gigs of the tour; there may be some stress and chemistry issues left to work out in the band, and hopefully they'll drop some of the poorer num-

"This is Bryan fucking Ferry. Just look at him. Go ahead, Google Image Search him, right now. I'll wait."

bers from the set list, or at least move them around.

And I mean, come on. This is Bryan fucking Ferry. Just look at him. Go ahead, Google Image Search him, right now. I'll wait. Find pics of him in glam-drag on stage with Brian Eno, or in that omnisexual white tux on the cover of "Another Time, Another Place." Or better yet, YouTube him. YouTube old stuff or new stuff, I don't care. There's some Jools Holland stuff from like 2010, and he's still a sexy-ass bastard. The man encapsulates cool at any age, with his impossible combination of flair and suaveness, perfectly fitting suits and piercing gaze. You try going to his show and having a bad time. ♪

SINDRI ELDON
PROMOTIONAL



Prog Till You Drop

Manfred Mann performs at Háskólabíó on May 16

When Manfred Mann's Earth Band takes the stage, they open, not unsurprisingly, with Bruce Springsteen's "Spirit in the Night." The Earth Band formula is quite simple. Take a lesser known Bob Dylan or Springsteen track, substitute some of the many verses with a very long guitar or Moog synthesizer solo (or both), return to chorus, and repeat. The result, while perhaps not genius, is nonetheless surprisingly engaging.

By the time they are done, the score is 4-3 for Bruce vs. Bob (out of a total of 13 songs played). The Dylan choices are interesting, ranging from the obscure hymn "Father of Day, Father of Night" to their number one version of "The Mighty Quinn," incidentally released years before a Dylan version emerged.

REVVED UP LIKE A DEUCE

The Earth Band grew out of sixties pop group Manfred Mann, best known for metaphysically titled hits such as "Do Wah Ditty Ditty" and "Hubble Bubble." However, the band was seen as somewhat effeminate at the time and was apparently routinely beaten up when touring Ireland. South African bandleader Manfred decided on a tougher approach (yes, Earth Band is tough) in the '70s, turning to prog rock and making a debut with his current band in 1972. The band's name reflected his growing ecological concerns (how's that for tough?) and copies of its fifth album in 1974 even came with deeds to small plots of land in that hippie haven, Wales. While failing to make much of a dent in Wales, the album became a minor success in Norway. In early 1977, the band entered the big time with a Billboard number one version of Bruce's "Blinded By the Light,"

which led them on their current path.

EVERYBODY'S GONNA JUMP FOR JOY

Another Earth Band staple seems to be to drop rock history quotes into their versions. For instance, we get a verse from "House of the Rising Sun" in Bruce's "Dancing in the Dark," Dylan's "You Angel You" concludes as Bob Marley's "Redemption Song" and most bizarrely, "Smoke on the Water" makes an appearance in "Quinn."

The vocalist, not having very much to do in the long instrumental parts, periodically leaves the stage, while Manfred himself, in a fedora hat, looks cool, plays well and sings blandly. An attempted sing-along to the chorus of Bruce's "For You" comes to naught,

"All in all, Earth Band is well worth seeing and deserves its place in the rock family tree"

but "Blinded By the Light" gets a great response and all goes well from there. The audience acts as a choir to the chorus of "Doh Wah Diddy" and rises out of its seats for the set closer, "Quinn," although the 'repeat the noises the singer makes' bit hasn't really been interesting since Cab Calloway.

All in all, Earth Band is well worth seeing and deserves its place in the rock family tree, although one might be forgiven for viewing them more as distant cousins than favourite sons in the vein of Bob 'n' Bruce. ♪

✍ VALUR GUNNARSSON
📷 ALÍSA KALYANOVA

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The Legends Return

Sweden's Entombed to set Reykjavík ablaze for the third time

Make no bones about it, Entombed are one of death metal's pioneers and arguably amongst the elite that influenced and changed extreme metal as we know it. In 1990 the underground opened up to their debut, 'Left Hand Path,' praised for its unique sound. Little did they know that many of today's most lauded and popular bands would shamelessly rip off their sound, style and vibe. They say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery and Alex Hellid (guitar) agrees. "We've ripped off so many bands in the past, so I'm honoured when bands look to us for inspiration. Plus, it's never identical. All these bands add something new to what we've done because they are not us."

It's been hard to reach you lately...

We've been playing shows, developing designs that pertain to future releases and merchandise, while working on new material: writing, rehearsing and recording. We're also planning the re-release of our back catalogue. This year we hope to finish recording songs for a new album to be released early next year. Come fall, we aim to get some of the re-releases out there as well as updating our web presence, which has been lacking for a long time.

FOR THE LOVE OF MUSIC

Will you approach the new album differently than usual?

Yes. In the past we've found ourselves losing focus in the studio, so now we're going to try something different. We won't record the album in one go, rather in intervals, like, one or two songs at a time. Often when you do fifteen songs at a time, focusing becomes more difficult and some songs get too much attention at the expense of others, who in turn get rushed because you get tired of being in the studio tweaking knobs and listening to the same stuff over and over. This way we hope to capture the feeling you get when you listen to first cuts of songs because they are usually raw and pure. But when you work on an album's worth of cuts in one go, something gets lost that can be hard to find again.

Your next album marks your tenth full length...

To justify another Entombed record, I want to impress and surprise ourselves and feature lots of material that's strong enough to be included in our live set. Currently the majority of our setlist consists of early '90s and early '00s songs that have stood the test of time. We want the new material to do that as

"To justify another Entombed record, I want to impress and surprise ourselves and feature lots of material that's strong enough to be included in our live set"

well. That's why I want the new stuff to be urgent enough to find its way into our set for years to come. Thus we have to take the songwriting into a new direction.

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

Entombed is relentless in finding new ways to channel your love for the music and the entity Entombed has become. It's certainly not for cash and fame...

We've never been really huge. We're used to trends coming and going, and we've always maintained a similar level of success throughout, be it small or big tours, compact venues or spacious concert halls. But for me, what makes it interesting is that we try to make things happen that are a bit outside the box and in addition there's this need to make a better album than the last one, basically. Musically speaking I still believe there are places we can go but haven't yet been.

Absolutely. You've consistently presented us with surprises and excitement since 'Clandestine' followed 'Left Hand Path' in 1991 to this day. In that light, tell us how the new album will compare to your existing legacy?

I want us to keep the core sound, the soul of Entombed if you will, so that

people will know it's us, but at the same time I want to raise the bar on the production. The new stuff will be brutal but I want it to sound crystal clear, so people can make out everything that is being played. It should be dynamic in that if there's a dirty, punky song it will get a production that fits that vibe. And when there's a song with more parts, melodies and harmonies it's treated differently. I do not want it to sound like a particular era of Entombed, rather I'd like people to be somewhat alarmed with the development between our albums, much like they were when we made the first four or five albums.

For example when 'Wolverine Blues' hit, people were like "What happened now, what are you doing? It's not the same band anymore." Subsequently, it gets harder to come up with new things, yet we don't want to get too comfortable or lazy. That is the enemy.

Your upcoming show at Gaukurinn marks your third time in Iceland. What keeps you coming back, and what will be different?

I'm pretty sure it's always the same bunch of guys that know each other that keep inviting us back. They wanted to see Entombed play in Iceland, so instead of waiting for someone to make that a reality, they did it themselves. Those shows have always been fun, so we cannot say no. Also, look forward to see us as a five-piece again, with two guitars! 🎸

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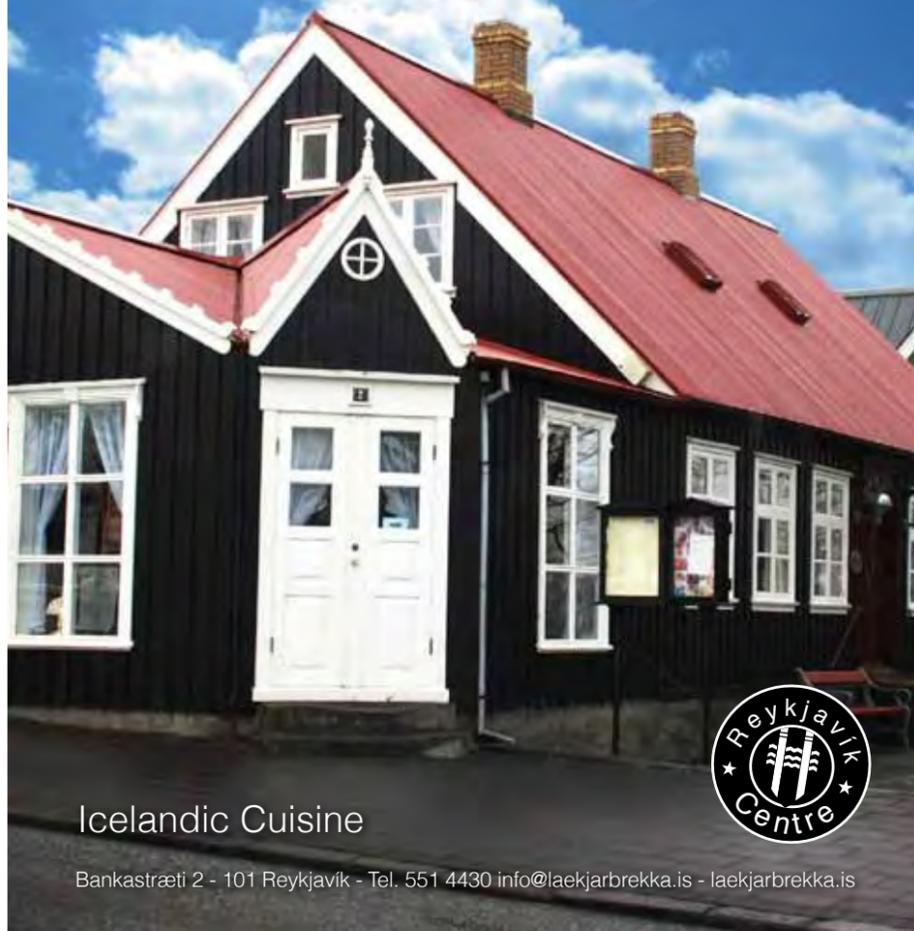
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Tickle Against The Machine



On an international scale, Erna Ómarsdóttir is undoubtedly Iceland's best-known contemporary dancer. Ticking Death Machine is her most recent project, which she describes as a 'concert performance' and collaboration with her partner Valdimar Jóhannsson, the couple's band Lazyblood and his band Reykjavík! The project is currently touring the world, with performances lined up as far away as Kyoto, Japan.

The text accompanying some of your latest pieces—in the promotional material and on your website—is quite beautiful, poetic even. Do you work that way, conceive of your pieces first in words?

Words

Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir

Photography

Alisa Kalyanova

That's always the problem, you know, putting it into words. Because it's so much about physical expression: the dance and the music. But to me they have always intertwined, the ugly and the beautiful. The beauty is in the ugliness and vice versa. We use a lot of elements from metal—like the scream and things like that, which people may not think of as beautiful at first. But to me there's always some beauty to it. I try to find a balance between the harsh and the poetic. I often describe it even as satanic versus angelic. There is always tension there in between.

What about this latest piece, Ticking Death Machine? What are its roots?

It was an idea Valdi and I got in Australia. We went to a concert and there was this one concert-goer who was in such a trance, he was just having such a good time. And it was incredibly beautiful to see, especially because this wasn't the usual kind of music to be in a trance over. So we start-

ed thinking about the spectator, thinking about him as the main focus, without necessarily thinking about doing anything with audience-participation.

Usually I use elements from the concert form, or the music

"Usually I use elements from the concert form, or the music realm, and put them into a dance performance. But now it's the opposite—this is a concert entwined with theatrical elements"

realm, and put them into a dance performance. But now it's the opposite—this is a concert entwined with theatrical elements. It's not necessarily dance or choreography. We're just using that which pertains to the concert format, like head-banging, which is my favourite dance-step of all time and which I have used a lot. And also looking at the idea of the space between songs, what happens there, in the pause.

Does that mean that you started with the music, and worked out from that?

We started first and foremost with the concept. There are new songs and there are also songs that have been done before but put in another costume, so to speak. People who know the music of Reykjavík! are going to recognise some stuff, but the songs are chosen with a certain script in mind and are used in a new way. So this idea became a reality when Valdi and I were doing a little concert in Reykjavík, the town, and the band Reykjavík! was playing after us. There was a programmer there from the Kunsten Festival Des Arts, which is one of the main alternative performance art festivals in the world, really. And he loved the energy from both bands and knew that we were related as Valdi was in both bands and very instinctively he invited us to make a project together and premiere it at his festival.

Also music from you and Valdi in Lazyblood?

Yes. It's completely mixed. Really I think Lazyblood, our band, came about sort of as a result of this project. Or the other way around. But we're playing around with the rock'n'roll image. It's interesting to compare rock idols and prophets. This power or influence that you have when you are on stage,

and the arts, they can save lives, I would say. I believe very strongly in these art forms. That they are often the best medicine.

You said something similar the last time you were interviewed for the Grapevine, that without dance you would have died.

Yes, I'm always thinking the same things. Maybe I would have found something else. But no, I think this was my way. The starting point for me is always dance, but I still find it very difficult to keep to one art form, and that has led me into working with musicians and visual artists and there was a certain freedom for me in discovering how concerts work. Because the theatre is so often nailed down, everything has to happen on cue. With music it's the same way to a certain extent but then there is this phenomenon of the pause between songs, this space, which is so fascinating to me.

But these prophets, are they all sort of right in a certain way?

That's the question, whether or not the prophets are achieving that they're setting out to do, or whether we are false prophets. Mostly they are trying to get people to enjoy all the pleasures of life, but I'm pushing more for the spiritual aspects. Especially this idea of dancing your pain away, dancing your brain away; head-banging yourself headless.

It's almost like meditation, the movement is a mantra.

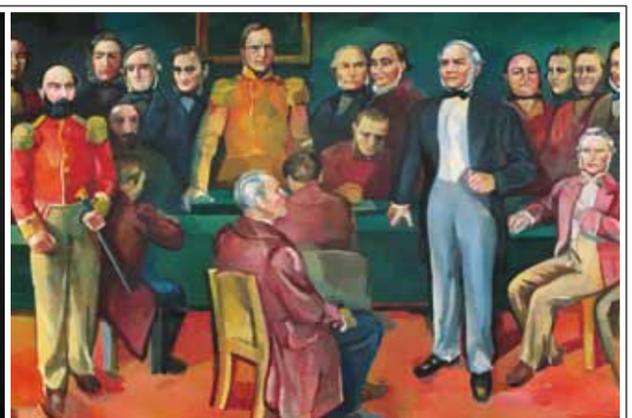
We're trying to exaggerate this feeling one often gets when one goes to a good concert. But like I said, I think it's incredible how some people are able to reach the masses. So in a sense we believe in it, we hope to be able to free audiences, even if it's only for a few seconds. 🍷



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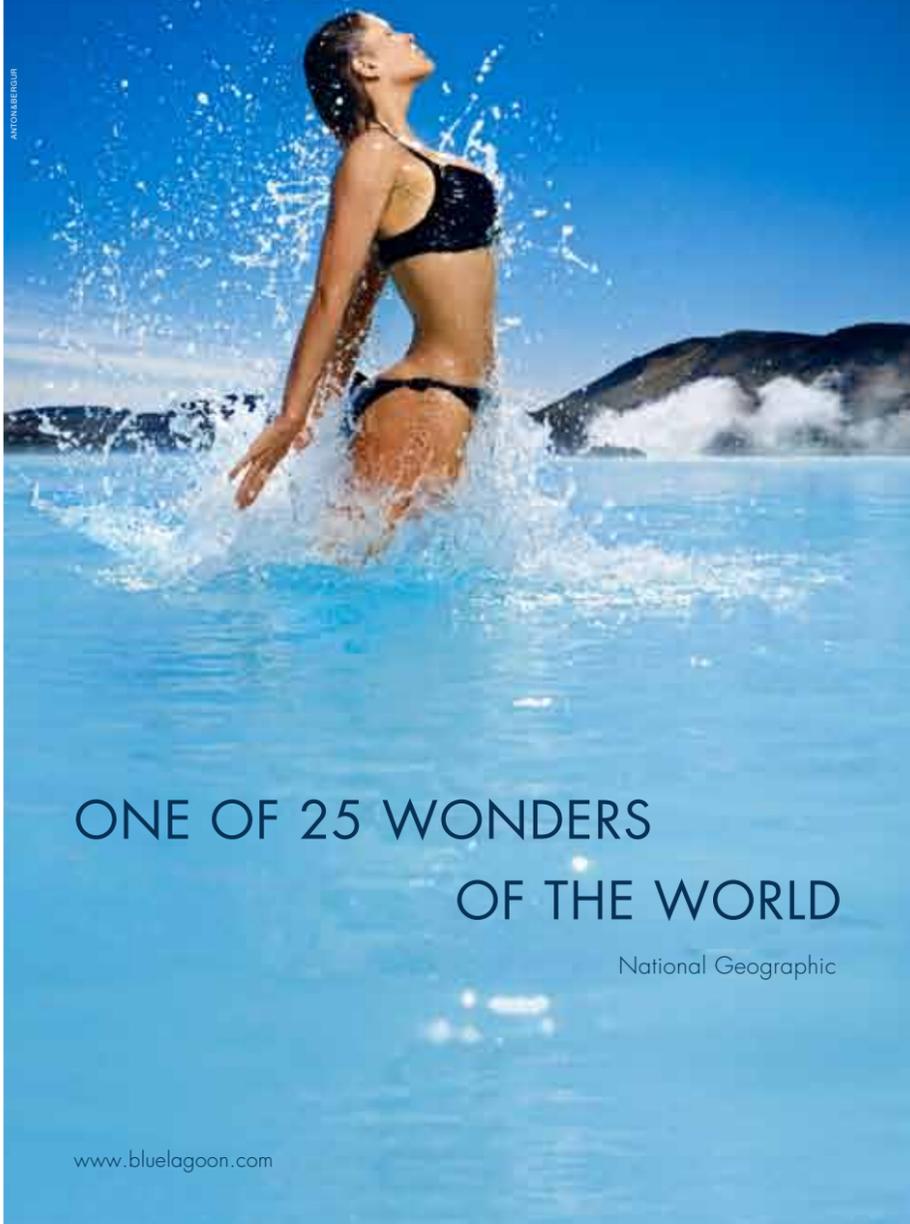


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The Holy _____ Hike

Mountain is the blank



You have one more day in Reykjavík. Later in the night you plan on going out and getting drinks. You've seen the Golden Circle, and you're all foss'd out. However, you still want to get one more nature trek in. But there's so little time. If only there was a hike you could complete in under four hours and be ready to go out and dance your pants off...

GO TO HAFNARFJÖRÐUR

Helgafell, or "Holy Mountain," is a mountain just outside the town of Hafnarfjörður, a half hour drive from Reykjavík's city centre. It's a climb that doesn't take long to hike, yet the view from the top is spectacular. Locals will walk their dogs up this mountain, go for a light walk, or even go mountain running, an exercise which is growing in popularity in Iceland. This makes a hike up Helgafell the perfect trip if you don't want to spend an entire day hiking, or just take a break from the city for a few hours.

To get to Helgafell, you pass through Hafnarfjörður, a town also known as "Lava Town"

Words

Alessio Tummolillo

Photography

Atli Arnarson

because it was built on lava and there are lava boulders and the like found all around town. It is also known as the "Town of the Hidden People," because of all the elf sightings, having to do with the fact that lava boulders are a known home for the hidden people.

ANCIENT WATERS

After the drive through the town, we arrived outside the fences of Helgafell. Just outside the fence, there is a body of water that looks more like a pond or a stream than anything else. It runs 1.1 km long, making it the smallest river in Iceland.

The water's also over 1000 years old, which made me think it must be extremely unsanitary. Helga, the tour guide, handed me a cup and announced we'd be starting the tour by drinking this water. I walked over to the small river and dipped my cup in and took a hesitant sip. I was pleasantly surprised to find that the water was crisp and clean tasting and I didn't keel over and die immediately.

Newly refreshed, we began our hike. We went through the opening of the fence, which is there to keep out folks on All Terrain Vehicles, and began walking through the lava fields to the foot of the mountain. On the way there, off to the left on a high peak, there are three stone figure-looking objects in a line. These are night trolls.

According to legend, night trolls once roamed the area and one night they heard through the

grapevine that there was a beached whale at the nearby shore. Craving some whale meat, they made their way to the location of the whale, where many other night trolls were already arguing over the foodstuff.

Long story short, the arguments went on a little too long, because as these three guys were heading back to their dwellings, whale meat in hand, the sun started to come up. And we all know what happens to night trolls stuck in the sun (hint: they turn to stone). Gluttony truly is a deadly sin, it seems.

GUEST BOOKS & REFRESHMENTS

On our way up, once we left the lava field and were onto Helgafell, at each step of the way there was a noticeable difference in the rock. The rock towards the bottom of the mountain was black and very edgy, where as when we moved towards the top of the mountain, the rock took on a golden colour and had cracks through it, bringing to mind what I thought the back of a very large dinosaur would look like.

This difference in rock is due to the rock towards the bottom being much older than the smooth rock near the top, into which people were able to carve their names and testaments of love, something usually seen in tree bark in really bad romances.

When we reached the very top, in a metal container to protect from wind and rain, there lay a

guestbook where all the participants signed their name. And the view from the top of Helgafell is stunning. Being only 352 m high, our expectations weren't high, but again we were pleased with the breathtaking view.

AND BACK AGAIN

While taking in the panoramic of Hafnarfjörður and the other mountains that surround the area, we were treated to home-brewed tea and kleinur. Once we were warmed and refreshed, we began hiking down the south side of the mountain.

We reached the bottom and made our way back to the car where there were more refreshments waiting. We got back in the vehicle and were handed certificates of completion. This was a nice way to make us feel accomplished for completing a fun hike. And, when you go downtown, you can take it with you to show your mates that you accomplished something aside from hitting all the bars in 101 Reykjavík! 🍷

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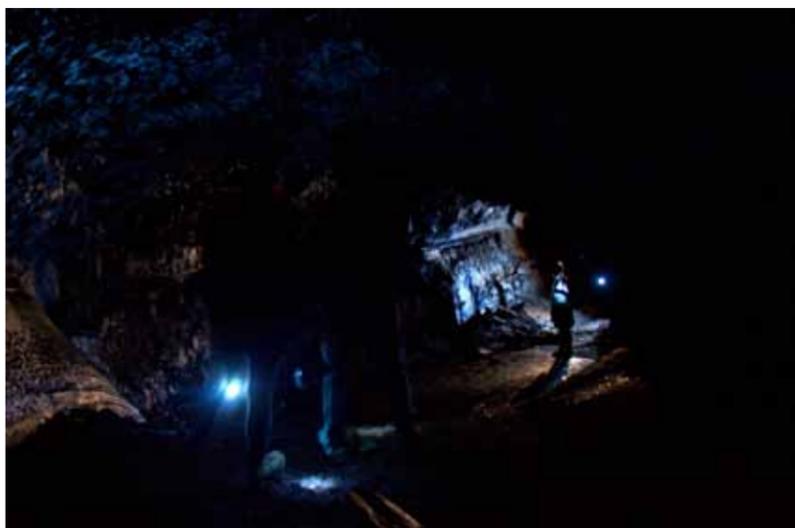


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WE WENT INTO THE GROUND

Exploring Búri



Just as Reykjavík began to fade out of view, we turned off the highway into an area known as the Leitarhraun lava field. There we were handed a helmet and a flashlight as we admired the view of Hekla, Þorlákshöfn, and Vestmannaeyjar. The flashlights, as it turned out, would be our only source of light for the next three hours.

I had assumed the helmet was just tourist fodder, serving the dual purposes of protecting me from falling rocks and making me look ridiculous. Little did I know that I would come to consider that helmet my best friend, as I repeatedly crashed my head into rocks of varying degrees of sharpness.

Before entering the cave, one of our guides, Kári, told us the story of how the cave was discovered. Removing the tons of rocks, which blocked the entry into the cave, was a joint effort between Kári's father, Björn and his friend Guðmundur. Using only their hands and axes, they managed to open the cave in 2005, christening it Búri. Fewer

than 1000 people have set foot in Búri and it has not been altered for tourists in any way.

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

I was the first to shimmy down a hole so small it had me wishing I had stuck to my diet. After a minute or two my eyes adjusted to the darkness and an expansive space opened up before me, with strange ice sculptures growing out of the ground. Each face lit up with a mixture of surprise and terror as the rest of our group squeezed through the hole. I couldn't help but think of the cavern discovered by the Professor and his nephew in Jules Verne's 'Journey To The Centre Of The Earth.' How could something hidden from view be so alive?

The guides showed us to a small crack in the wall where we would enter the main chamber. Making it the few metres over to that first crack was quite a challenge, as the floor of the cave is completely covered with icy boulders. The walls of the cave are layered, clearly showing the progression of time, and stones of every colour and texture imaginable litter the floor. The path of the lava river that formed this cave 2000 years ago is marked by a stripe of silver magma running the entire length of the cave, ending in a 17-metre deep lava pit.

ARE WE THERE YET?

The journey through Búri is 1,000 metres in length, which doesn't sound like much until you realise

”

Drenched in sweat, most of us lost our coats pretty quickly and some of us started to wonder what we had gotten ourselves into. “How much longer?” echoed through the darkness more than once.

each step must be carefully planned and cautiously executed due to the unstable and icy terrain. Drenched in sweat, most of us lost our coats pretty quickly and some of us started to wonder what we had gotten ourselves into. “How much longer?” echoed through the darkness more than once. At one point I was truly scared—shaking, heart-pounding, pee-in-my-pants, terrified— as I hung onto an icy boulder for dear life.

When we reached the end, we sat down to eat what we had brought along for lunch and to catch our breath. It is amazing just how good a sub-par gas-station sandwich can taste when it is washed down with a big gulp of self-respect.

NO MAN LEFT BEHIND

The trek back out of the cave was a much different experience. The guides fell back and allowed us to take the lead. I took off first, as I wanted to pretend I was an explorer and had fun turning off my flashlight and experiencing pitch black. With the lights out and alone, the cave came to life in a chorus of drips and crackles.

Witnessing the glow of the group approaching around the bend was like a scene straight out of a horror movie. Scrambling up and over wobbly rocks covered with ice was a difficult challenge and it was interesting how complete strangers bonded and worked as a team to find their way out of the cave.

The Búri cave at Leitarhraun is a strange and alien environment. It's a must-see for anyone who is up for the challenge. As I write this I admire my black and blue legs with pride and will treasure the memory of emerging out of a tiny hole into the daylight with all the triumph of a Chilean miner, long after the bruises have faded. 🍷

Words

B.R. Neal

Photography

Juli Vol

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R.I.P NASA

Where shall we wear our Gusgus track-suits now?



The day this issue of Grapevine hits the streets is also the day Nasa closes its doors for the final time. Grapevine has followed the story closely from the announcement that the venue might be in danger through to its eventual planned closure and, as you read this, this hal- lowed Reykjavík music venue will be gone for good.

The first time I heard of Nasa was when an Icelandic friend of mine showed me a YouTube video of his band Æla playing there, dressed as mummies, nurses and bridegrooms. They absolutely tore it up on the big stage, with Halli teetering dramatically on a tall chair, towering over the crowd. Based on the strength of that performance, I said I'd help book them a UK tour, which turned out to be an absolute blast. At the end of those few days, Halli invited me to come to Reykjavík.

I took up his invitation in 2008 and flew out for Airwaves. We spent much

of the festival walking between what was then Tunglið (in typical Reykjavík style it's been at least three different places since then) and Nasa, catching the spirit of the festival and the cream of the crop of the young Icelandic scene.

Nasa particularly stuck with us, from the mint green townhouse facade, into the warm, welcoming atmosphere of the carpeted bar, the well positioned balcony spaces that allow everyone to get a good view, down to the hall with its old fashioned wooden dance floor, and the prettily framed stage with its twinkling back-lights. The warmth and clarity of the sound and the historic feel of Nasa combine to make it a special concert hall. Some kind of rare alchemy can occur here that no freshly-built space can replicate. Harpa or no Harpa, if Nasa goes, Reykjavík loses something unique.

I saw one of the best concerts of my life there at Airwaves 2009. A long-time fan of GusGus since 'Polydistortion,' I was curious to see them retooled and reconfigured as a minimal techno three-piece, fronted once more by Daníel Agúst. As the lights went down, the pulsing intro of "Thin Ice" oozed through the space like tendrils of warm electronic fog. The bass drum felt like it

was vibrating up through the legs of the crowd. When the beat kicked in, people went batshit crazy. The synth stabs at the start of "Hateful" seemed to make my bones shake; by the time GusGus closed with "Add This Song," everyone in the room had their hands in the air, twisting and shaking and whirling around in euphoria. Daníel gripped the mic and dropped his head in anticipation of the crowd-sound just before the song finished, and then vanished as the stage lights blinked out in a deafening roar.

It simply couldn't have been this way anywhere else. Hundreds and thousands of people have experienced moments like this at Nasa, which is widely thought of as more of a cultural centre than a traditional venue or bar. About 1700 concertgoers (and counting) from Iceland and around the world signed a petition to save Nasa, some telling their own stories and giving emotional appeals to save the space.

Here are a few of our favourites.

"I was a volunteer at the 2010 Iceland Airwaves. A musician and lover of music, I could see that shows at NASA had the most energy and emotion in the room. I have some very incredible memories from there, and want others from around the world to be able to

come to Iceland Airwaves, and experience the pure energy and adrenaline that runs through the club during performances."

Charles Coy, Boston, USA

"People will never sleep peacefully in NASA, the energetic ghosts of countless legendary concerts will continue to vibrate the airwaves there for eternity."

L. Shannon

"I've been coming to Iceland for Iceland Airwaves since 2007 and entering NASA for the first time always feels like coming home. It's beautiful. I would KILL to have a location like that in Dusseldorf and so would everyone I know."

Anonymous

"As the editor of IQ Magazine, which reports on the international live music industry, I was shocked and dismayed to read that NASA is in danger of closure. Iceland's music community is regarded as one of the finest and most unique in the world and to take away arguably the best venue on the island would be a huge step backwards in the development of the country's music industry and its ability to attract international acts."

Gordon Masson

"The place has been the venue for all the University parties over many years... End of exams ball, winter dance, halloween party and so on. Part of my life is in there, and I cannot bear the thought of NASA being demolished!"

Maddalena Tovazzi

"NASA is a cultural landmark in Reykjavik, and the city wouldn't be the same without it. End of story."

Victoria Coady

"I've played there and it is a magnificent feeling."

Hallur Guðmundsson

"Such heritage is priceless and once destroyed is gone forever."

Andy Pickering

"I first knew of the Icelandic band "Of Monsters and Men" in NASA concert hall. This place definitely holds wonderful memories for me. Would be sad and disappointed if this venue is no longer around the next time I visit Iceland." -

Kah Yau Han, Japan

"I love Nasa, it's a big part of my social life, i would hate for this beautiful building and space to get torn down."

- Helene Rún Benjamínsdóttir

"NASA is a unique music venue of worldwide cultural significance."

Doug Higgins

"I am a writer for NME magazine in the UK, and have visited Iceland twice. I was impressed not only by the Reykjavik music scene but the city's venues, and NASA stands out particularly in my memory. We need to preserve live music venues."

Emily McKay, NME

"This is a truly wonderful venue, offering up a rich and varied programme of art and culture to the residents of Reykjavik - to lose it would be an abject shame."

Mischa Pearlman, Kerrang! & Q Magazine

"NASA was one the places I used to dream to visit one day as a tourist and music lover... last year i had the opportunity to visit Reykjavik and watch some concerts there - it is a very important venue for music culture."

Bruno Ganato, Brazil

"As a music journalist NASA showed me the spirit of the culture of Iceland creativity. Venues like this are very valuable on not just a local but a world level."

Joe Shooman, The Fly

"An incredible venue - the place I went to every night without fail at Iceland Airwaves Festival. There is no location like it in Iceland, a unique venue to be diversified if it does not earn enough money - not torn down."

Natalie Wills

"I regularly come to Reykjavik simply because I fell in love with Iceland. For its culture, not its hotels." -

Alexis Prier, London

Words

John Rogers

Photography

Alisa Kalyanova

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PAGE 16

"Icelanders are not the kind of people who go to a pub to drink a beer or two over the course of an evening spent chatting with friends. Quite the contrary, they are the kind of people who head to the pubs long after the evening has passed, and their intention is to drink themselves into oblivion."

Why do Icelanders party harder than American tourists at Oktoberfest? A look at Icelanders' often complicated relationship with booze.

PAGE 25

"Most [bars] only have a short lifespan and are mourned by few (mostly their creditors), but some have left a permanent mark on the city's consciousness. One can regularly hear veterans of the nightlife reminisce over them."

We shed a tear and pour some of our beer out while reminiscing about The Bars of Weekends Past.

PAGE 30

"And I mean, come on. This is Bryan fucking Ferry. Just look at him. Go ahead, Google Image Search him, right now. I'll wait. Find pics of him in glam-drag on stage with Brian Eno, or in that omnisexual white tux on the cover of 'Another Time, Another Place.' "

We review Bryan Ferry's performance at the Harpa! No, seriously, Google him.

PAGE 35

"Perhaps unsurprisingly, the US has asserted a less significant influence on Vietnamese cuisine. Not that you would know by looking at the red vinyl diner seats, but we are mercifully in Iceland so there is no need to fret about sweaty summer dresses clinging to the polyvinyl chloride and sully the reputation of Reykjavík's chaste maidens."

We noshed at Reykjavík's Vietnamese restaurant, which you won't find anywhere online.

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The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

LISTINGS



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

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ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

Issue 7 - 2012

www.grapevine.is

Tickling Death Machine



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June 8, 20:00 - Iðnó



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MUSIC

concerts & nightlife in June

Prescribing music with love for your live experience

How to use the listings
Venues are listed alphabetically by day.
For complete listings and detailed information on venues or to add your listing, visit www.listings.grapevine.is

1 FRI

- 1919 Hotel Radisson Blu**
21:00 Brazilian Jazz
- Amsterdam**
23:00 DJ Tommy
- Bakkus**
23:00 DJ KGB
- Bar 11**
22:00 Langi Seli og Skuggarnir
- Boston**
21:00 Daniel Ágúst DJ Set
- Café Rosenberg**
21:00 Anna Mjöll
- Dillon**
23:00 DJ Andrea Jónsdóttir
- Esja**
23:00 Finlandia Night
- Harpa - Eldborg**
19:30 Beethoven-Hringurinn III
- Harpa - Kaldalón**
17:00 Páll Ragnar Pálsson
- Hemmi Og Valdi**
22:00 DJ Benson Is Fantastic
- Kaffibarinn**
22:00 fknhdsm
- Prikið**
23:00 DJ Danni Deluxe
- Thorvaldsen**
22:00 Local DJ
- Vegamót**
23:00 DJ Jónas

2 SAT

- Amsterdam**
23:00 DJ Skuli
- Austur**
23:00 DJ Gunnar
- Bakkus**
22:00 DJ Kári
- Bar 11**
22:00 Langi Seli og Skuggarnir
- Boston**
21:00 Maggi Legó
- Dillon**
23:00 DJ Andrea Jonsdóttir
- Esja**
23:00 DJ Hlynar & DJ Bogi
- Faktorý**
23:00 Reyk Veek Celebrates 4 Years of Fun
- Hallgrímskirkja**
16:00 The Reykjavík Boys Choir Springconcert
- Harpa - Eldborg**
20:30 Hljómskálinn
- Harpa - Kaldalón**
17:00 Berglind María Tómasdóttir
- Kaffibarinn**
23:00 DJ KGB
- Salurinn**
23:00 Jazz and Blues Festival 2012
- Thorvaldsen**
22:00 Local DJ
- Vegamót**
23:00 Finger & DJ Danni Deluxe

3 SUN

- Esja**
23:00 DJ Hlynar
- Harpa - Eldborg**
20:00 Buika
- Harpa - Kaldalón**
13:00 Jóns Leifs and Haukur Tómasson

4 MON

- Kaffibarinn**
22:00 These Fists



VINTAGE 25 years is a damn good run for a band. Way to go, Langi Seli og Skuggarnir!

Rokkabilly at Bar 11!

Bar 11

June 1 and 2 at 22:00

Free

Hey guys and gals we've got the word from the bird: Langi Seli og Skuggarnir are celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary of rocking Reykjavík. The band is most famous for its single, 'Breiðholtsbúg' which came out in 1988. The band has continued to refine its sound and play live for the past 25 years. They are inviting all you dolls and daddy-o's to get chrome-plated and come celebrate their birthday. They are so excited that one birthday bash won't do, both June 1 and June 2, Bar 11 will be exclusively hep cats and kool kitties. **BRN**

6 WED

- Celtic Cross**
22:00 Open Mic Night
- Faktorý**
22:00 DJ Benson Is Fantastic

- Esja**
22:00 Partyzone Lounge Session
- Harpa - Eldborg**
19:30 Beethoven-Hringurinn IV
2000-6500 ISK
- Hemmi Og Valdi**
21:00 Jón Þór & Markús Bjarnason

7 THU

- Bakkus**
22:00 Elvar (RVK Soundsystem)
- Bar 11**
23:00 Icelandic Tattoo
Convention Gigs: Texas Muffin and Dusty Miller

- National Theatre**
20:00 Kristján Eldjárn 4500 ISK
- Prikið**
23:00 DJ Breakbeat.is
- Reykjanesbær**
21:00 Keflavík Music Festival
6900 ISK
- Salurinn**
20:30 KK and Maggi Eiríks 3300 ISK



Fancy-schmancy A classical music show at the palace known as Harpa (Look at all that pretty glass!) is sure to fill your fanciness quota for the month.

Taking On Beethoven's 8th and 9th at Harpa

June 6 and 7, 19:30

Harpa, Eldborg

2000 ISK - 6500 ISK

Harpa invites all of you classical music aficionados to come and enjoy some Beethoven on June 6 and June 7 in Eldborg Hall. The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra will complete its 'Beethoven cycle' by enchanting you with two of the German classical composer's masterpieces—Symphony No. 8 and Symphony No. 9, both of which form an integral part of the classical repertoire. Completed in 1824, the Ninth Symphony is considered one of the cornerstones of the Western musical tradition. The final movement incorporates a choir of singers who sing an adapted version of the poem 'Ode to Joy' by Friedrich Schiller. The light-hearted Eighth symphony was composed in 1812 and ideally complements the Ninth. This will surely be an orgasm. **SP**

MUSIC

concerts & nightlife in June

Eclectic Tunes On The Reykjanes Peninsula

June 7 – June 10

All around the town of Keflavík

6900 ISK for a 3-day ticket

Keflavík—probably best known for being home to Iceland's main international airport—has more to offer than what meets the eye at first glance. Case in point, the Keflavík Music Festival.

The town was also home to the American military base until 2006, and so was also one of the first towns in Iceland to be infected with 'Beatle-mania.' In the '60s and '70s, many popular bands developed in Keflavík, such as Hjólmar and Trúbrot. Keflavík is also home to 'Geimsteinn,' one of the more famous Icelandic recording studios. In order to celebrate its musical heritage, Keflavík will host a music festival the weekend of June 7. The likes of Of Monsters and Men, Valdimar, Hjólmar, and Snorri Helgason will be performing amongst many others. Keflavík Music Festival is one of the biggest of its kind on this island; over a hundred different musicians will be participating. The festival is an opportunity to catch a rare



NUDITY The bands at the Keflavík festival won't be naked like Kiriama Family is here.

glimpse of relatively established bands, but also offers a platform for new and upcoming bands—which this year include RetRoBot, Tilbury and Kiriama Family.

The shindig takes place at several

venues in town: Paddy's, Manhattan Rain, and Thai Keflavík. Put your dancing shoes on, then catch a bus, rent a car, or hitchhike to Keflavík for this fine festival. Tickets are available at midi.is. **SP**

FRI

Amsterdam

23:00 DJ Skinny Pete

Bar 11

21:00 The Icelandic Tattoo

Convention Gig: Sólstafr, Foreign Monkeys and Endless Dark Celtic Cross

24:00 Playmo

Esja

23:00 DJ Hlynar & DJ Bogi

Harpa - Eldborg

19:30 Beethoven-Hringurinn IV

2000-6500 ISK

Hemmi Og Valdi

22:00 DJ Viktor Birgiss

Iónó

21:00 Tickling Death Machine

2490 ISK

Kaffibarinn

23:00 Maggi Legó

Reykjanesbær

21:00 Keflavík Music Festival

6900 ISK

Vegamót

23:00 DJ Símon

SAT

Amsterdam

23:00 DJ Skúli

Bar 11

21:00 The Icelandic Tattoo

Convention Gig: Sykur, Samaris and RetRoBot

Esja

23:00 DJ Hlynar & DJ Bogi

Mark Your Calendar With Permanent Ink

June 7-9, 21:00

Bar 11, Hverfisgata 18

Free

The famous (perhaps infamous) Icelandic Tattoo Convention Gigs are taking place at Bar 11 the weekend of June 7-9. Prominent tattoo artists as well as several bands will be at the three-night rock fest, so quit your bitching and get to Bar 11.

Texas Muffin and Dusty Miller lead off the convention on Thursday night, and admission is free of charge. So if you're bored and complaining about Reykjavík's lack of nightlife, you have absolutely no excuse not to go.

Friday night boasts a more face-melting atmosphere, with harder rock sounds coming from bands such as Solstafr, Endless Dark and Foreign Monkeys (currently working on their second album).

The final night, Saturday, is the night to dust off your dancing shoes. Sykur, Samaris and RetRoBot will rip you from your seat and have you cavorting on the dance floor like that weird 3D dancing baby from the '90s.

Three of these bands are one-time winners of Iceland's Battle of The Bands (Foreign Monkeys in 2006, Samaris in 2011 and RetRoBot in 2012). Clear your calendar and get ready to party: don't and you'll regret it worse than that shitty ankle tattoo of The Little Mermaid you got in 1996. **BW**



BIG SHOTS RetRoBot won the band competition *Músiktilraunir* in April...impressive.



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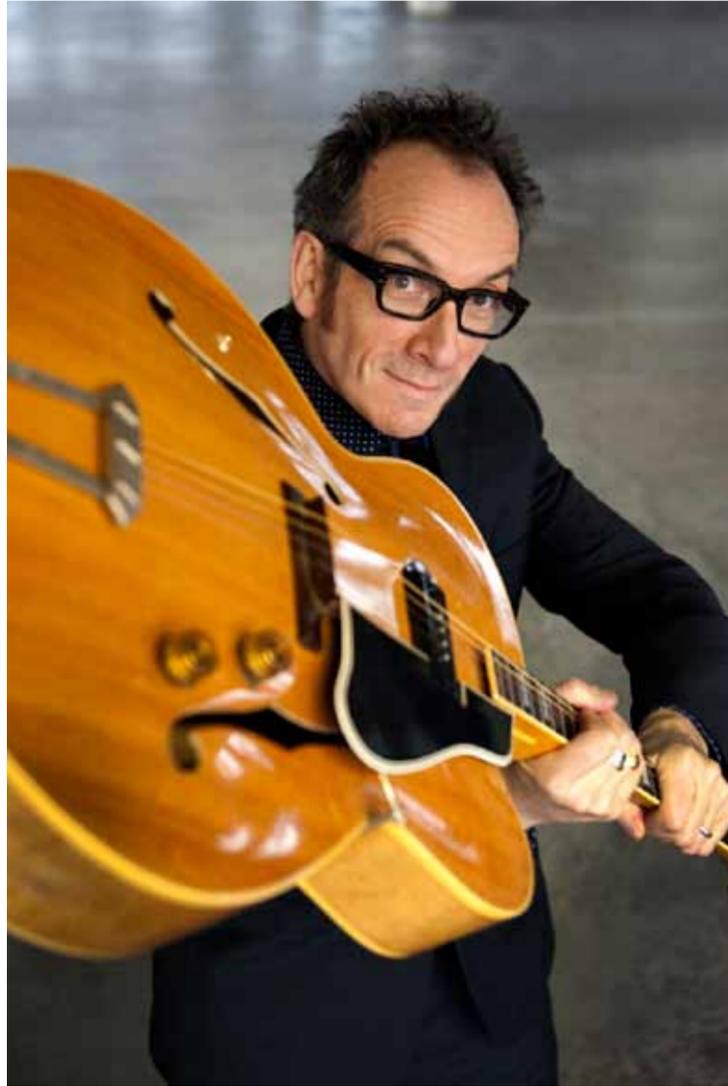
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MUSIC

concerts & nightlife in June



NOT DEAD YET *Elvis Costello still plays great shows even though he's an old guy.*

The Man With The Famous Glasses Comes To The Famous Glass House

Harpa, Eldborg

June 10

6900 ISK - 12900 ISK

At 57 years old, Elvis Costello has surely mellowed out a bit since his big glasses and bigger guitar chords broke onto the British pub scene in the '70s. But in his recent European shows, Costello has been getting back to his roots by putting on a carnival-like "Spinning Songbook" tour that he first staged three decades ago. Some of the shows on the tour have spanned three hours—a filibuster of music that showcases Costello's eclectic range from new wave to jazz.

Originally tapped to play Harpa last November, Costello had to reschedule his visit due to his father's illness. But a June show is perhaps more appropriate for Costello's sunny voice, which will highlight Harpa's summer season with hits like 'What's So Funny 'Bout Peace, Love and Understanding.' **CW**

Faktorý
23:00 **Retro Stefson and Jón Jónsson** 1500 ISK
Gaukurinn
21:00 **Entombed** 2900 ISK
Harpa - Kaldalón
7:00 **Pearls of Icelandic Song** 3000 ISK
Harpa - Norðurljós
17:00 and 20:00 **Songs of the Soul**

Hemmi og Valdi
22:00 **Rvk Soundsystem's Reggae Night**
Kaffibarinn
22:00 **DJ Kári**
Reykjanesbær
21:00 **Keflavík Music Festival** 6900 ISK
Salurinn
20:30 **Tass** 2000 ISK

Vegamót
23:00 **DJ Jónas**

10 SUN

Esja
23:00 **DJ Hlynar**
Faktorý
23:00 **Live Jazz**
Harpa - Eldborg
20:00 **Elvis Costello** 6900-12900 ISK
Reykjanesbær
21:00 **Keflavík Music Festival** 6900 ISK

11 MON

Kaffibarinn
22:00 **Ívar Pétur**

12 TUE

Kaffibarinn
22:00 **Paul Evans**
Nordic House
20:00 **Magical sounds from Eastern Europe**

13 WED

Celtic Cross
22:00 **Open Mic Night**
Dubliner
20:00 **Pub Quiz** (in English) 500 ISK per person with cash prizes
Esja
23:00 **Positive Vibrations / DJ Tommi White**
Faktorý
22:00 **DJ Atli Kanill**
Kaffibarinn
22:00 **DJ Pilsner**

14 THU

Bakkus
22:00 **Hashi & Will**
Esja
23:00 **Partyzone Lounge Session**
Faktorý
22:00 **DJ Pabbi**
Harpa - Eldborg
19:30 **Mozart and Schäfer** 2000-6500 ISK
Hemmi Og Valdi
22:00 **Heiladans**
Kaffibarinn
21:00 **Hús DJús - Gunni Ewok & Kalli**
Vegamót
23:00 **DJ Jónas**

TOP SIX TRACKS WE PLAYED IN THE GRAPEVINE OFFICES WHILE MAKING THIS ISSUE

- 1 Never Forget
Greta Salome and Jónsi
- 2 Lazuli
Beach House
- 3 I'm Not Your Toy
La Roux
- 4 You Know What I Mean
Cults
- 5 All The Things She Said
t.A.t.U.
- 6 I'll Drown
Sóley



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ART

in June

Space: The Final Frontier

Gallery i8

Runs until June 30

Free

While the days of NASA—both the club and the American space agency—are dwindling, exploring space outside the atmosphere is becoming more and more difficult. For an artistic take on the concept of space, however, be sure to check out "Open; Wait", the newest show at gallery i8 featuring the sculptures of Margrét H. Blöndal and drawings of Silvia Bächli.

Minimalist aspects of both artists merge to express a distinct



TO INFINITY AND BEYOND Artists explore concepts of space in "Open; Wait."

visual canon which exists as more of a visceral meditation on space than a material installation. The combined effort confronts the space around us and personal polity in a manner all its own.

Native Icelander Margrét works for the first time with Silvia, who is based in Paris, France, and Basel, Switzerland. London-based critic and writer Chris Fite-Wassilak curates the event. **BW**

Cocktail pleasures and Visual stimulation

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

OPENINGS

Hafnarborg (Hafnarfjörður)

15:00 "The Last Abstraction"

The exhibition of abstract paintings celebrates the wide-ranging work of one of Iceland's earliest modernists, Eiríkur Smith.

Runs until August 19

Museum of Design – Hönnunarsafn Íslands

17:00: "Something To Write Home About"

The emerging changes in Icelandic design are on display to highlight how product designers are using more collaboration.

Runs until October 14

ONGOING

The Culture House

Medieval Manuscripts Eddas and Sagas

It includes principal medieval manuscripts, such as Codices Regii of the Poetic Edda and Prose Edda, and law codices and Christian works, not to forget the Sagas of Icelanders.

On permanent view

Child of Hope – Youth and Jón Sigurósson

Exploring the life of Icelandic national hero Jón Sigurósson, made especially accessible to children, families, and school groups.

On permanent view

Medieval Manuscripts – Eddas and Sagas

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

On permanent view

Millennium – phase one

Selection of pieces from the collection of the National Gallery displaying a variety of works by Icelandic artists in the last two centuries.

On permanent view

The Library Room

The old reading room of the National Library displays books of Icelandic cultural history dating from the 16th century to the present. Works include oldest published versions of the Sagas, Eddic Poems, and more.

On permanent view

The Einar Jónsson Museum

Einar Jónsson

The museum contains close to 300 art works spanning a 60 year career: carvings from the artist's youth, sculptures, paintings and drawings. A beautiful tree-clad garden adorned with 26 bronze casts of the artist's works is located behind the museum.

On permanent view

Film | Alcohol

Sunday Morning Coming Down

A different kind of alcohol rehab at Bíó Paradís

Ever had one of those Sundays when you feel wiped out and you're not sure whether to go to an AA meeting or take in a movie? Well, thanks to Bíó Paradís, which hosted a SÁÁ (kind of like AA, but without the religious connotations) film festival last week, you didn't have to choose. There was no need to get up and declare your name and preferred addiction; it was just about kicking back with some popcorn and letting the recovery begin.

You could take your pick of drunk Swedes (who turn out to be Finns) or a double dose of drunk Danes or Brits on the piss. As with all drunks, the films are full of worldly wisdom. To wit: never assault a telephone booth (might lead to loss of hand), never urinate on a sleeping girlfriend (might lead to loss of life) and if you intend to take a hatchet to your neighbour's dog, do it sooner rather than later (before the beast starts attacking local children).

ENGLISH ANGER, DANISH ROT

The films are of high quality, although one needs a strong stomach to take the incessant wife-beatings, wasted childhoods and general misery that comes with routine overconsumption of the nectar of the Gods. Perhaps the most acclaimed is the Danish 'Submarino' by 'Festen' Director Thomas Vinterberg, starring Jakob Cedergren (I got drunk with him once), which deals with the addictions of working class Copenhageners.

For those who prefer upscale alcoholics, there was 'Applause,' featuring the spicy Paprika Steen as a famous actress caught in a downward spiral. Even more depressing, predictably, was the British 'Tyrannosaur,' although it seems to deal more with anger management issues than alcoholism (everyone gets theirs in the end, both abusive spouses and annoying dogs).

MEN WHO HATE WOMEN EVEN MORE

Taking the cake was the Swedish 'Svinolångorna' ("Pigsty"), starring 'Män som hatar kvinnor's' Noomi Rapace, about Finns who moved to Stockholm in the 1960s to look for a better life, with some of them winding up beating their wives and drinking themselves to death instead. Incidentally, at the same time, large numbers of Icelanders went to Gothenburg to check out the famed Swedish welfare system, sometimes with similar results.

The SÁÁ festival might be over, but Bíó Paradís is still worth a visit. It is Reykjavík's only arthouse cinema and, incidentally, the only one with an alcohol license. Currently on offer are, among others, 'Tyrannosaur' (from the festival), Ralph Fiennes Shakespeare epic 'Coriolanus,' the Finnish space Nazi extravaganza 'Iron Sky' and Iceland's very own crime epic, 'Black's Game' (with English subtitles). Enjoy. ☺

✍ VALUR GUNNARSSON

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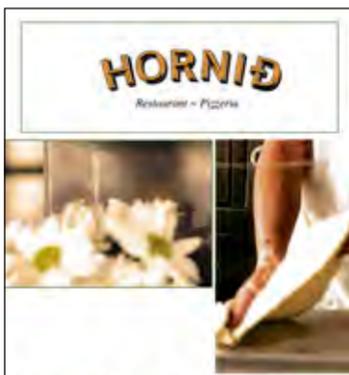
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A

MAP

Places We Like

1 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.

2 Laundromat Café

Austurstræti 9

At the Laundromat Cafe you can do laundry, drink a beer and have a grandma read to your children all under one roof. This kid-friendly restaurant opened last spring in Reykjavík and prides itself on its full menu, cool concept, 5,000 books (that you can buy or trade), board games, and up-to-date newspapers and magazines (including a WALL OF GRAPEVINES).

3 Sægreifinn

Geirsgötu 8

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

4 Tapas

Vesturgata 3B

For those with a bit of time on their hands, the evening is well spent at Tapas, where you can indulge yourself feasting on course after delicious course of miniature dishes served in true Spanish style. If you feel like hanging around, there's also a lounge.

5 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!

6 Reykjavík Backpackers

Laugavegur 28

Mingle with internationals and enjoy free wi-fi at this convenient hangout right in the middle of the action. Reykjavík Backpackers is an inexpensive hostel with a cool downtown vibe. They serve up sandwiches, cakes and coffee during the day, and offer live entertainment, beer and drink specials at night.

Useful numbers

Emergency number: **112**

Medical help: **1770**

Dental emergency: **575 0505**

Information: **118**

Taxi: Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir: **588 5522**

BSR: **561 0000**

Tax Free Refund

Iceland Refund, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 564 6400

Tourist information

Arctic Adventures, Laugavegur 11,

tel: 562 7000

City Centre, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 590 1550

Iceland Excursions - Grayline Iceland,



7 Dillon Rock Bar

Laugavegur 30

Led Zeppelin, Iron Maiden and Black Sabbath are what you'll often hear, along with more local and recent spin-offs as well as the odd live show. And if you have other requests, they are accepted and considered by resident DJ, Amma Rokksins, Iceland's grandmother of rock, still spinning her stuff on Saturday nights.

Hafnarstræti 20, tel: 540 1313

The Icelandic Travel Market, Bankastræti 2, tel: 522 4979

Trip, Laugavegur 54, tel: 433 8747

Pharmacies

Lyf og heilsa, Egilsgata 3, tel: 563 1020

Lyfja, Laugavegur 16, tel: 552 4045 and Lágmúla 5, tel: 533-2300

Coach terminal

BSÍ, Vatnsmyrarvegur 10,

tel: 562 1011, www.bsi.is

Domestic airlines

Air Iceland, Reykjavíkurbúgvöllur,

tel: 570 3030, www.bugfelag.is

Eagle Air, Hótel Loftleiðir, tel: 562-4200

8 Þingholt Bar

Þingholtsstræti 5

Located in CenterHotel Þingholt, Þingholt bar is tucked away just outside of the mayhem that is Laugavegur on a weekend night. For a quieter evening, Þingholt bar is definitely worth a closer look. Show up between 17-19 for the daily happy hour.

Public transport

The only public transport available in Reykjavík is the bus. Most buses run every 20-30 minutes (the wait may be longer on weekends) and the price per fare is 350 ISK for adults and children. Multiple day passes are available for purchase at select locations. Complete route map available at: www.bus.is. Tel: 540 2700. Buses run from 07:00-24:00 on weekdays and 10:00-24:00 on weekends. Main terminals are: Hlemmur and Lækjartorg

Opening Hours

Bars and clubs: According to regulations, bars can stay open until 01:00 on weekdays and 05:30 on weekends.

Shops: Mon.-Fri. 10:00-18:00, Sat.

9 Spúútnik

Laugavegur 28b

This super hip vintage shop in the heart of downtown is quintessential to Icelandic fashion trends. Ranging from classic, national pattern sweaters to some of the craziest throwback fashions from eras we thought we were glad to see gone, Spúútnik can make a pair of flowered, day-glow parachute pants seem like a smart buy.

10:00-16:00, Sun. closed. The shopping centres Kringlan and Smáralind as well as most supermarkets and tourist shops have longer opening hours.

Swimming pools: Weekdays 06:30-22:00 and weekends 09:00-17:00, although each pool varies plus or minus a few hours. **Banks** in the centre are open Mon.-Fri. 09:00-16:00.

Post Offices

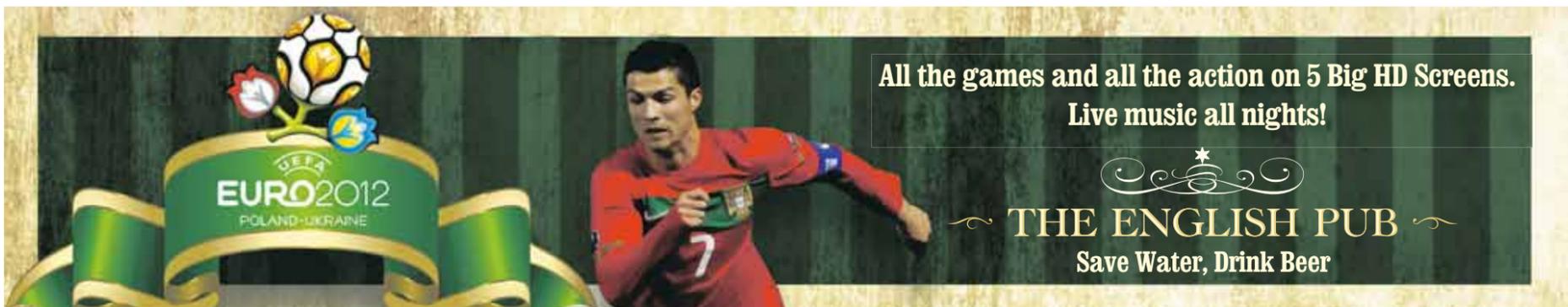
Post offices are located around the city. The downtown post office is at Pósthússtræti 3-5, open Mon.-Fri. 09:00-18:00. Stamps are also sold at bookstores, gas stations, tourist shops and some grocery stores.

Café Loki in front of Hallgrímskirkja



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

13 NEW IN TOWN



Hrímloka -
Laugavegur 25
A design shop worth its weight in sea salt! Hrímloka offers a refreshing selection of local design items with the distinction of not necessarily "looking" Icelandic – beautifully constructed wallets out of recycled materials, uniquely scented candles and solid perfumes, kitchen-wares and dining décor. To boot they are the official Lomography dealer in town now! They also recently opened the art gallery Poka (Fog) in their downstairs space featuring a first exhibit by Magnús Helgason. **RL**



10 66° North
Bankastræti 5
Highly fashionable and highly practical, 66° Norður is a classic outdoors store in Iceland for everybody. Nearly every Icelander has a 66° sweater or two. Their quality apparel is made to last and keeps the elements out. You may also find their products in high-end stores around the world.

11 ÁTVR (Liquor store)
Austurstræti 10a
In Iceland, alcohol isn't sold in the grocery shops (that stuff in the shops that looks like beer—it isn't beer. Trust us). You can buy alcohol in the state-owned liquor stores named ÁTVR, usually referred to as Ríkið ("The State"). One store is located in the city centre. Opening hours for the downtown one are: Mon.–Thu. 11:00–18:00, Fri. 11:00–19:00, Sat. 11:00–18:00.

12 Eymundsson Bookstore
Skólavörðustígur 11
Eymundsson is a chain with several outlets but the one on Skólavörðustígur is the best in town. The premises are equipped with a coffee shop, tables and sofas to lounge in and the all-glass exterior lets in a lot of light, which is good for reading real books, not Facebooks.

Public phones
There aren't many public payphones in the city centre. The tourist information centre at Aðalstræti 2, City Hall, Kolaportid, entrance at Landsbankinn and in Lækjargata. Prepaid international phone cards are recommended for int'l callers.

Internet Access
Most cafés offer free wireless internet access. Computers with internet connections are available to use at:
Ráðhúskafé City Hall, Tjarnargata 11
Ground Zero, Frakkastígur 8, near Laugavegur 45
The Reykjavík City Library, Tryggvagata 15

The National and University Library, Arngrímmsgata 3
Tourist Information Centre, Aðalstræti 2
Icelandic Travel Market, Bankastræti 2
Reykjavík Backpackers, Laugavegur 28

Swimming Pools
There are several swimming pools in Reykjavík. The one in 101 Reykjavík, Sundhöll Reykjavíkur, is an indoor one, located at Barónsstígur. That pool features a nice sunbathing area and some outdoor hot tubs. Opening hours: Monday to Thursday from 06:30–22:00, Friday from 06:30–20:00, Saturday from 08:00–16:00, and Sunday from 10:00–18:00.

Public Toilets
Public toilets in the centre can be found inside the green poster covered towers located, for example, at Hlemmur, Ingólfs-tortorg, by Hallgrímskirkja, by Reykjavík Art Museum, Lækjargata and by Eymundsson on Skólavörðustígur. Toilets can also be found inside the Reykjavík City Hall and the Reykjavík Library.



A Day In The Life
William Bateman

What's up, Henry?
It's a busy and exciting time for me right now, not only am I finally getting some vitamin D into my blood, but we've just launched the Reykjavík Film Academy (.com), a new film school for international students. This year we are offering three six-week workshops focused on screenwriting and directing where someone with little or no experience can come to Iceland and make a short film in some of the most dramatic and inspiring landscapes in the world. We've also just opened up a small studio, The Green Room (which is available to hire), and I'm writing a script.

EARLY MORNING >

Unless I'm out filming at the crack of dawn, early mornings are normally when I'm sleeping! I'm nocturnal by design so despite years of good intentions (fruit breakfast, going for a run or to the gym) my only real habits in the morning are a cup of proper English tea, with milk and sugar, and a slice of toast and jam.

LUNCH >

I work out of an office near the old harbour so my favourite lunchtime involves a stroll past the boats, a loving look across the bay at Esja and a double cheeseburger at Hamborgara Büllan or a sandwich from St. Paul's – the bacon, brie and cranberry is my favourite, they're certainly the best baguettes in Iceland. A cardiologist may disagree but I think this is the perfect lunchtime fuel for a creative brain!

MID-DAY >

My mornings are generally when I reply to emails, have meetings about meetings and plough through my computer work. As a cinematographer accustomed to being out and about with a camera, sitting in front of a computer all day still depresses the hell out of me so endless cups of tea are how I help ease the pain.

AFTERNOON >

It's after lunch when I really come alive and my afternoons are normally spent brainstorming, writing, editing or something like that. At the moment we're having a lot of fun creating the syllabus and making plans for the Reykjavík Film Academy.

HEAT OF THE NIGHT >

Late at night is when I'm at my most creative, so I'm either still at the office working on my next movie script or I'm out in town, creatively drinking. Although I like any bar with a happy hour, Kaffibarinn is my favourite place to network (drink). It reminds me of an English pub on a weeknight and at the weekend it's a microcosm of the superb Icelandic drinking madness that all visitors to this wonderful little island have to experience at least once!

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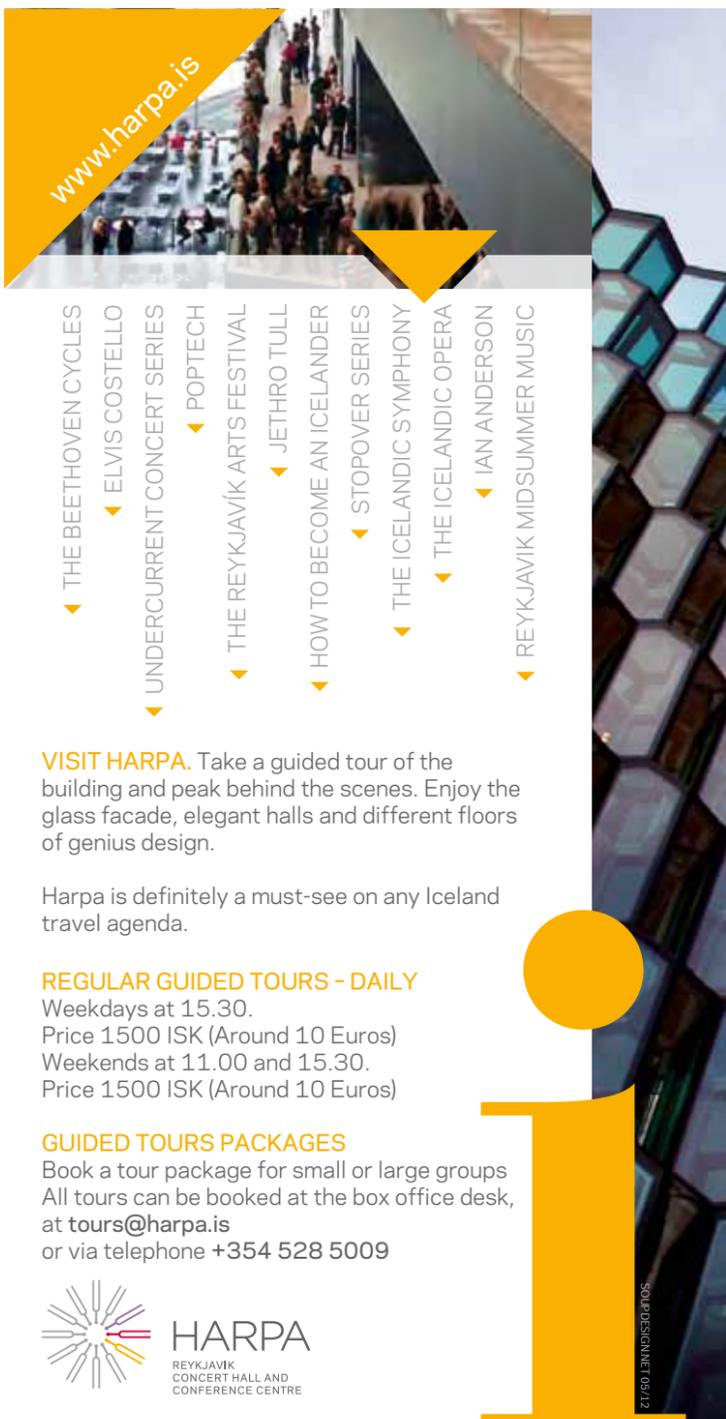
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| KRISTJÁN GUÐMUNDSSON | KARIN SANDER |
| SIGURÐUR GUÐMUNDSSON | HRAFNKELL SIGURÐSSON |
| ELÍN HANSDÓTTIR | IGNACIO URIARTE |
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ART in June

Gerðuberg

Stone, scissors, paper and the keys to heaven

The exhibition Steinn, skæri, pappír og lyklar að himnaríki features Icelandic stones, scissors of various shapes and sizes, paper (in the form of biblical pictures and bibles) and keys, some of which (who knows?) may unlock the doors of heaven itself.

Runs until June 22

Hafnarborg

House Project, Second House and Third House

This exhibition by Icelandic artist Hreinn Friðfinnsson compiles his older and his newer work. The focus is on the history of old house in the lava fields south of Hafnarfjörður.

Runs until August 19

Hafnarhús

Erró- Drawings from 1944-2012

The exhibition consists of over 200 drawings Erró has done since 1944 until the present day.

Runs until Aug 19

Harpa

How to Become Icelandic in 60 Minutes

Join for a comical theatre performance about all kinds of aspects of Icelandic culture. If you're sick of feeling like a tourist everywhere you go, this show is for you. Tickets are 2000 ISK and Harpa hosts two to three shows per week in the Kadalón or Norðurljós halls.

Runs until June 29

i8 Gallery

Silvia Baechli & Margrét H. Blöndal- Open; Wait

Open ; Wait is a multi-part conversation that begins between the sculptures of Margrét H. Blöndal and the drawings of Silvia Baechli. Minimal gestures accumulate to become an installation that gently manipulates the territory in front of us.

Runs until the June 30

Knitting Iceland

Come and knit at Laugavegur 25, 3rd floor, every Thursday, 14:00 - 18:00

On permanent view

Latin Dance Studio, Faxafen 12

Guided Practica - Argentine tango, Sundays from 17:30-19:30

Register by phone 821 6929 or email tangoadventure@gmail.com, 500 ISK for students, 800 ISK for others. Six week courses are also available.

On permanent view

Museum of Design - Hönnunarsafn Íslands

Loop Language

The National Museum



Care To Own A Dieter Roth?

Runs until June 3

Galleri Fold

Free

Modern artist Dieter Roth was a master of many media from an early age until his death. The Icelandic nationalist's discerning forays into new and innovative forms of expression remain some of the more inspired of the 20th century: the singularity of his life's work perpetuating it still today.

Famous for his deconstructive oeuvre and experimentations with biodegradable media (including chocolate), Roth became known for his unconventional installations and labor-intensive books later in his life. His roots in print, though, remain revolutionary.

Fortunately for those intrigued by Dieter's two-dimensional works, Galleri Fold will exhibit a selection of Dieter's prints until June 3. Even if the prices are too high for your liking, you can absorb the beauty of this Icelandic visionary. **BW**



VISIONARY This symposium will tell you everything you need to know about how art fairs are a gateway to the international art market.

MESSA Vision

June 1, 15:00-18:00

Nordic House

Free

Iceland is a large country with a vibrant culture. Its arts and music scene is dynamic, but perhaps because of its geography it's somewhat cloistered. In an attempt to open further Iceland's borders to the international art world, MESSA (a creative collaboration of Icelandic artists and some of the country's key movers and shakers on the visual art scene) will be hosting MESSA Vision at Nordic House June 1 from 15:00-18:00. The symposium—part of the Reykjavík Art Festival's (I)ndependent People Project—will explore the concept of the art fair in an attempt to enhance Icelandic cultural and artistic connections to the rest of the world. A reception will follow at the Nordic House restaurant, Dill.

Andreas Ribbung, founder and manager of Supermarket (an international art fair) is the key-note speaker, joined by Dorothee Kirsch (director of the Center of Icelandic Art) and artist Curver Thoroddsen, with Hanna Styrmisdóttir moderating. The event is free and in English, and guests will get to witness genuine Icelandic performance art. Fersteinn will perform as will Kartin Inga Jónsdóttir Hjórdísardóttir Hirt, who give a criticism on the Icelandic church's position in contemporary society. **BW**

The Making of a Nation - Heritage and History in Iceland

This exhibition is intended to provide insight into the history of the Icelandic nation from the Settlement to the present day.

On permanent view.

The Nordic House

The Library

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

On permanent view

Reykjavík City Museum -

Reykjavík 871 +/- 2

The Settlement Exhibition

Archaeological findings from ruins of one of the first houses in Iceland and other excavations in the city centre, open daily 10:00-17:00, 600 ISK per adult, 300 ISK for children (children under 12, free) and 450 ISK per person in groups (10+).

On permanent view

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

From Poverty to Abundance

Photos documenting Icelandic fishermen at the turn of the 20th century.

On permanent view

The History of Sailing

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

On permanent view

The Call of Sagas

An exhibition from Finland about an adventurous voyage in an open boat from Finland to Iceland, honoring the old viking shipping routes.

On permanent view

The Watercolours of Ólafur Thorlacius

Ólafur Þór worked with the Icelandic Coast Guard for many years as a map-maker. He is now retired and paints beautiful watercolors in his free time.

On permanent view

Reykjavík Museum of

Photography

Hörður Sveinsson: Music Flood

Hörður Sveinsson has in recent years become known for his photographs of Icelandic pop culture, both as press photographer for Grapevine and Monitor as well as an independent photographer. He has photographed many bands and artists e.g. Björk, Sigur rós, Mugison, Ham, Of Monsters and Men, Retro Stefson and Lay Low.

Runs until June 5

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

Milestones: Sigurjón Ólafsson's



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ART

in June



TRIPPY Eiríkur may have burned many of his early works, but thankfully he donated some to the Reykjavík Art Museum, or we wouldn't be able to see his lovely abstract work.

The Last Abstraction

June 2-August 19

Hafnarborg

Free

A sample of Eiríkur Smith's diverse career will be on show once more at the gallery Hafnarborg, where the Icelandic artist has donated hundreds of his works.

This exhibit focuses on Eiríkur's abstract paintings from the late 1960s.

Born in 1924, Eiríkur has become known for his abstract paintings, having dabbled in watercolour, pastel and charcoal works. Eiríkur studied in Paris at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière in the early '50s. Upon moving back to Iceland in 1957, he stopped producing so much work as he began building his home. Perhaps a type of purging for Eiríkur, he burned many of his early works and geometric paintings as fuel. Regardless, in 1990, he donated nearly 400 of his works to Hafnarborg, which make up a large part of the gallery's collection.

Go now to see Eiríkur's third exhibition at Hafnarborg. **BW**

Key Sculptures

Exhibition with some of Sigurjón Ólafsson's key works from different periods of his prolific career as a sculptor. The earliest work on the exhibition is a newly acquired relief of two sisters which he made at his first year at the Royal Academy of Art in Copenhagen. This relief has not been exhibited in Iceland before.

Runs until: Oct 1

Spark Design Space

A Salon show is being prepared at Spark containing selected projects from the past as well as a few new things we can not resist.

Spark is open during the transformation.

Skaftfell, Seyðisfjörður

Re-opening of The Collection Centre

In collaboration with the Icelandic Centre for Ethnology and Folklore, Skaftfell will be showing a collection of short videos. The purpose of this is to collect narratives from all the inhabitants of Seyðisfjörður in 2011 and 2012 to give a bigger picture of the community.

Slátturhúsið, Egilsstaðir

Check www.slaturhusid.is for latest shows



CH-CH-CH-CHANGES Icelandic design has evolved a lot over the last decade.

Finally, Something To Write Home About

June 7, 17:00, Runs through October 14

Museum of Design

500 ISK

The Reykjavík Museum of Design and Applied Art in Garðabær is opening its doors to a new exhibition entitled 'Something To Write Home About.' The exhibit aims to illustrate the many changes Icelandic design has seen in the last decade, while also giving a microphone to the newer voices emerging in design on the island. Around 25 designers will be exhibiting their latest works, including Katrín Ólína Pétursdóttir, Tinna Gunnarsdóttir and Hanna Jónsdóttir. Head to Garðabær for a multifaceted peek into Icelandic design of present, past and future. **SP**

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www.honnunarsafn.is

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www.hafnarborg.is

Eiríkur Smith
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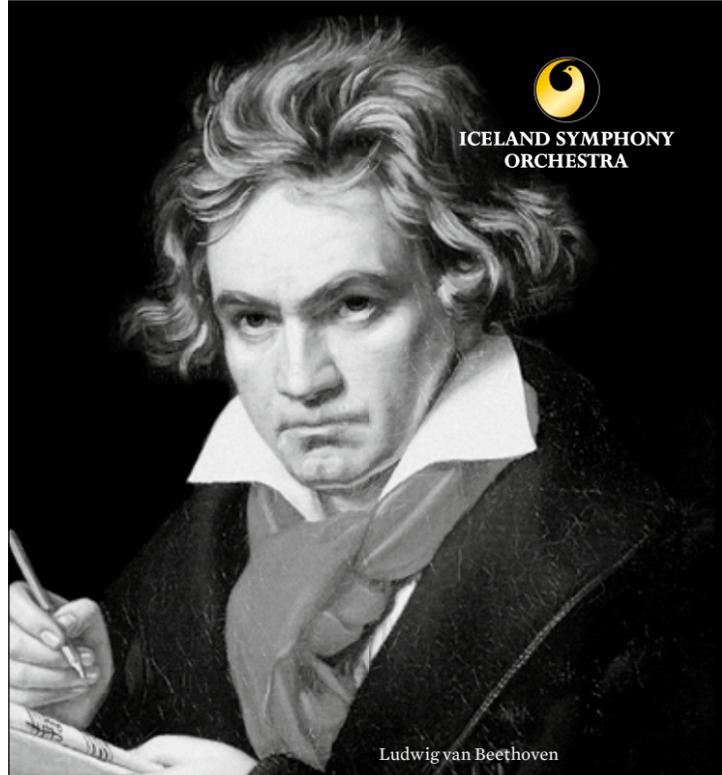
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THAI RESTAURANT

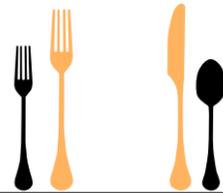
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No Quarter To The Seal-Eating Mussels!

Höfnin/The Harbour

Geirsgata 7c, 101 Reykjavík



What We Think: Romantic seaside restaurant with a focus on seafood. It has potential to be excellent but is brought down by an uneven menu. Some of it is top notch, some of it is below deck.

Flavour: Bretagne by way of Iceland. Heavy on the seafood and shellfish, but lamb, beef and chicken on offer. Could benefit from a simplified menu.

Ambiance: Wedged by the window between two groups of businessmen I can't say I loved the discussion of profit margins, but the set-up is in many ways ideally suited to a romantic night out.

Service: Two servers. One was anxious and looked like he was still finding his feet and stared at me in stark terror. The other was professional, friendly and knowledgeable.

Price: (2 people with drinks): 18–20,000 ISK (Children from 5–12 years old get 50% off all courses).

On a windy Reykjavík afternoon I entered the romantic harbour haunt Höfnin (The Harbour). Little did I know that 90 minutes later I would end up anchored at the marina by a restaurant slyly infusing me with butter and glaze.

There has been quite a lot of drama at Höfnin over the past year. After jettisoning the previous chefs—members of the Icelandic National Culinary Team—they have brought in a New Zealander to the helm. Finally, we seem to be experi-

encing a sense of stability by the deceptively still waters of the marina.

Höfnin is going for a Bretagne seaside flavour of mussels, beer and butter in the bucolic surroundings of dry docks and whale tour kiosks. The wine selection isn't anything to call home about (not that it matters—we ordered the white of the day and a Tuborg Classic), but at least you are provided with your own plate and butter knife for fresh bread, which is surprisingly uncommon in Icelandic restaurants.

For the first course we ordered the lamb prime in breadcrumbs with a mustard-pecan dressing (2,790 ISK) and the beef burger with a white mould cheese and mashed potatoes (2,390 ISK). The lamb was brilliant; it was fatty but juicy, tender and bleeding beautiful. They serve massive portions, so be aware that their small bistro courses are too generous to qualify as appetizers. The beef burger was a let down; it was a meatball with capers shipwrecked on a sea of buttery mashed potatoes that tasted suspiciously powdered. A few days later at the truck stop diner Múlakaffi I had a better beef burger with mashed potatoes at half the price. This dish needs to go.

For the main course my date had the karfi (redfish) in a lemon crust with an herb salad...and shrimp salad (2,950 ISK). I had the bucket of beer-boiled Breiðafjörður mussels with three types of sauces (dill, mustard and butter-garlic) and French fries (3,990 ISK).

The redfish, like the beef burger, didn't live up to my expectations. While not terrible, I was disappointed to see Icelandic redfish, which tastes wonderful when fresh, processed this aggressively. It's a fish that responds well to gentle touches, so this whole layout makes me suspicious. The shrimp salad was completely superfluous, though I should note that my date quite liked it.

The mussels, on the other hand, were completely brilliant. Not only were they perfectly coloured and packed with flavour, but also they must have been the largest damn mussels I have ever seen in my life. I'm serious; they were the size of bell peppers. They were comically huge. My suspicion is that these are bioengineered monsters that have been taught to hunt seals for sustenance to fatten them up. And here those death-shells lay suspended, boiled in beer and served with mustard, dill and French fries. And I could taste the screaming seals on their sexually suggestive lips.

We topped it off with a split dessert, the chocolate cake with raspberry sorbet, chocolate ganache and marshmallows (1,990 ISK). More interesting than it sounds, the sorbet was sweetly packed with raspberry flavour and the ganache was delicious, but closer to a fudge brownie. All of it was very dainty and carefully arranged, although the presentation was a little out of character with the rest of the menu.

So I ate. And I ate. And I ate until my belt gave out and my pork belly spilled out over my trousers like a mutated muffin top. I truly put the ton in gluttony that day. I had to cover my face in shame and watered the lemon wedges with tears of disgrace. Höfnin is variably good across the board, but I can't say I didn't leave any less than content, and I could see myself going there again.

Did I mention that those mussels were big?

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REVIEWS



PHO SIZZLE

Pho Vietnam Restaurant

Ármúli 21, 108 Reykjavík



What We Think: Pho may not be in the top 10, but it gets points for authenticity, very reasonable prices, quality ingredients and for adding variety to the Reykjavík restaurant scene.

Flavour: Pretty much standard Vietnamese food. Fresh. Lighter than you'd think if you're used to Chinese take-out.

Ambiance: When you look around and see that you're the only non-Vietnamese person in there then you know you're probably in the right place.

Service: The blonde girl working did a great job of imitating the stone-face somnambulist service I've come to expect at Vietnamese restaurants (no sarcasm intended, sycophant servers are worse than Stalin). But next time I want my coffee after the meal.

Price (for 1): 1,300-2,000 ISK

Globalisation works in mysterious ways. Iceland is not host to any great Italian, French or Mexican restaurants, but we have good Thai, good Ethiopian, solid Nepalese and scores of vaguely authentic Japanese food of varying quality... and now Reykjavík boasts its first proper Vietnamese restaurant.

Most of my experience with Vietnamese food boils down to hanging out in the kitchen of my former girlfriend's mother. She liked to feed chubby white boys and I liked to eat—we got along

great. She even dragged me along to a few hole-in-the-wall places in Vietnam Town in Paris, a city where I must have tried every hole-in-the wall, dodgy but tasty pho joint.

Having undergone the comparably gentle Frenchification process as a former colony, Vietnam retains the influences from the imposed lessons (lessons?) such as baguettes, pâtés, ridiculously strong coffee and carnage basted in political ideals. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the US has asserted a less significant influence on Vietnamese cuisine. Not that you would know by looking at the red vinyl diner seats, but we are mercifully in Iceland so there is no need to fret about sweaty summer dresses clinging to the polyvinyl chloride and sulling the reputation of Reykjavík's chaste maidens.

Pho serves fried meats with rice vermicelli noodles and pho soup... with fried meats and rice vermicelli noodles. I definitely recommend the Vietnamese spring rolls as a side dish, which comes fresh or fried... with meats and rice vermicelli noodles (I'm beginning to sense a pattern here). Pho also offers lovely shakes with ingredients like jackfruit, avocado, strawberries and rainbow (sic).

The beef noodle soup (1,290 ISK) is excellent and all the soups come with bean sprouts and salad on the side. The soups are not as aromatic and dense as what you get at The Noodle Station on Skólavörðustígur—the Pho broth is lighter, tangier and has more of a ginger-peanut flavour. The broth isn't spicy, but the tables come teeming with sauces, most of which are cut from the cloth of soy-garlic-chilli (don't expect soy sauce though) and you can flavour things to your heart's content. I recommend not being shy with the fish sauce.

The spring rolls come fried or fresh (summer rolls). I recommend the fresh

ones with prawns (990 ISK). The fresh spring rolls are decent; they contain bean sprouts, a bit of cilantro, lettuce and vermicelli. But they could have used more Thai basil and cilantro. The fried spring rolls are mostly made with minced pork as usual, but it seems that they can only be ordered as part of the grilled pork and noodle dishes.

The price is right. If you go all out on the menu then we are still not looking at much more than 2,000 ISK. Although the soups are mostly broth and noodles, the ratio of meat and veggies is no less than what you would see in a wrap purchased downtown (the bulk of which is the dirt cheap wrap itself). So you would pay less for a fresh-tasting dish of fried pork, spring rolls and noodles than you would for a lousy kebab wrap with French fries in most places. Oh and don't delude yourself into thinking the chicken, which has been rolled around in oil, sweetener and flour, is any lower in calories than the fried pork. So you might as well just go for the tasty pork.

One last thing: At the time of writing, Pho has no website, Facebook page or listing on restaurants.is and is only listed under "Vietnamese restaurant" in the phonebook. So don't lose this review.

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