

**1919 (Radisson)**

Pósthússtræti 2

★★★★★☆☆

This elegant hotel bar boasts classic black Chesterfield armchairs and a scattering of chic cowhide footstools, but the best reason to visit is the fact that they serve Stella Artois on tap. The staff are warm and welcoming and bring your drinks on a tray. For the first time in an Icelandic bar, I felt special.

1000 1200 1150

Oh-so-cool and aloof Bossa nova.

Older (40+).

Older tourists with money, men in their late 20s and 30s who buy their clothes at (new Icelandic designer label) JÖR.

Free peanuts and waiters who actually seem happy to have you.

**Come here if you want to be treated like you're rich and famous.** ☹ – PP

**Austur**

Austurstræti 7

★★★★★☆☆

Austur is the jock mecca of Reykjavík. You will find more sweaty muscles there than at the gym after Christmas. That said the place doesn't really try to be anything else and what it does it does fairly well. The atmosphere is trashy and slick like something you would find in a high production porno. The drink selection is great and for the right amount of money you can treat yourself to a private lounge filled with your heart's desires.

1000 1500 1250

Euro Trash.

Young (20-30s).

Buffed up dudes, women with lots of makeup.

One of the few bars that will provide you with a VIP lounge.

**It's sterile and shiny like a LA porn set.** ☹ – RJH

**B5**

Bankastræti 5

★★★☆☆☆☆

B5 is a modern/minimalistic lounge bar in a hall-like space lined with comfortable high benches and lit by two epic lampshades. It's quiet by day, but packed out the door by night with the dress code (smart-casual) creating a see-and-be-seen vibe. Add pumping pop music and a "magic carpet ride" energy-drink cocktail for 1000 ISK, and you've got yourself a haven for Reykjavík's yuppies and those who want to hang out with Reykjavík's yuppies.

900 800 900

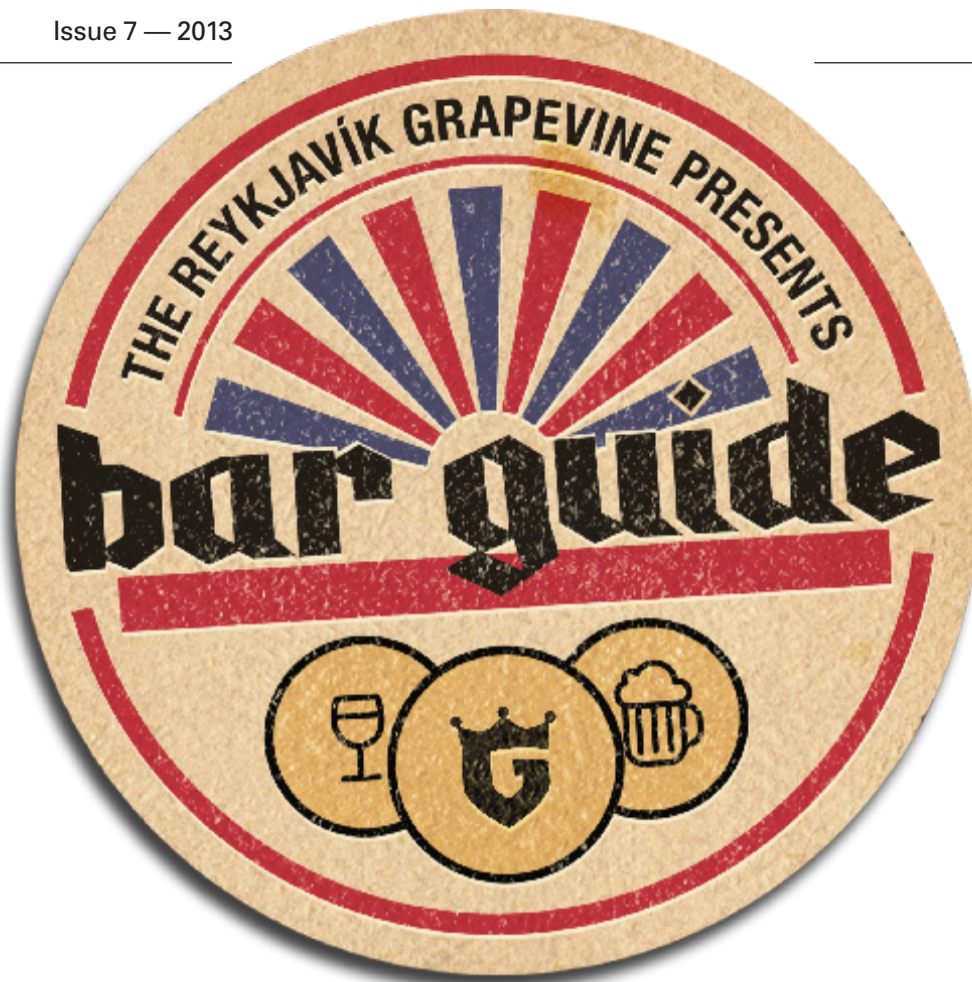
Commercial pop, R&B, house, chart music, disco.

Young (20s-30s).

Suits, body builders, dancing queens, orange girls, older business types, townies, startup guys.

B5 is a hangout for a species closely resembling regular Icelanders. The younger males often exhibit broader shoulders and thicker limbs than their human counterparts, almost bursting out of their shirts due to their swollen size. The older males are perhaps their overlords: finely dressed, and showing particular interest in the young females of the species, who must spend extended periods on sunbeds in order to survive, rendering them bright orange in colour. This also appears to make them invulnerable to the Northern climes, and they cavort freely in the arctic wind.

**This is a popular hangout for the city's young professionals.** ☹ – JR



**THE GRAPEVINE'S BIG-ASS BAR GUIDE 2013**

After having loads of fun making a Bar Guide for the past two years (we really love drinking), we decided once again to review and rate every single bar in 101 Reykjavík (yes, we really love drinking). And our research reveals that there are around sixty bars in town this year.

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 closed, and then opened under a new name, and then perhaps returned to their old name. A bar or two may even have opened or closed by the time this issue goes to print. That's the nature of the game. So we ganged together a bunch of fun-and-drink-loving writers, 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 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.

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:

**Prices**

The cheapest price of a beer, glass of wine, and 'single + mixer'.

**Music**

Type (DJ, playlist, live music) plus genre?

**Clientele**

Who hangs out there?

**Special features**

What does this bar have that separates it from the bunch, if anything?

**In a nutshell**

One brief sentence to sum up the bar.

**Rating**

On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest.

BEER

SINGLE + MIXER

WINE

Music / Genre

Age

Clientele

Special feature

☀ Troubadour Alert

**Our Review Team:**

Rebecca Louder, Parker Yamasaki, Ragnar Egilsson, Ragnar Jón Hrólfsson, Shea Sweeney, Alfrún Gísladóttir, Helgi Þór Harðarson, Patricia Þormar, John Rogers, Atli Bollason, Sigurður Kjartan Kristinsson, Óli Dóri, Tómas Gabríel Benjamins, Amy Silbergeld

**Bar 11**

Hverfisgata 18

★★★★☆☆

Bar 11 is one of the few places in Reykjavík where a rockabilly hipster can truly feel at home. It caters to the small percentage of people who do not like the standard club theme of electro and house and prefer a more rocked out haze fuelled by shots and beers. At the time of visit, the place was like a zoo filled with various young animals shaking their feathers at the watering hole to the beat of classic rock anthems. If you have at least one sailor tattoo, or just want an alternative to the more mainstream club music, this is the place for you.

800 1200 1150

Rockabilly and classic rock.

**Bar 7**

Frakkastígur 7

★★★★☆☆

Over the last year, Bar 7 has become a pretty solid place for people who just want to sit in a hole and drink. This is a dive, and that's not faux-dive for people who think it's charming. But it actually is charming too, and remarkably clean. Don't bother getting mixers or wine here though; you're safer sticking to basics (beer).

550 1000 1000

Usually the bartender's iPod playlist, which is often really great indie rock oriented music (Band of Horses, Interpol, The Antlers). Music is never too loud to hold a conversation and if asked nicely, they'll usually

change it if you hate the song, or crank it up.

Older (50+)

The tired, the poor, the huddled masses yearning to drink for (almost) free—every age group is found here, ranging from 18 to 80.

A gigantic collection of matchbooks from various bars, hotels, clubs, sports arenas and other places, all framed, covering every wall. It's actually kind of amazing, and it's really fun to look until you find one from some random place you've been to in another country.

**Come happy, leave depressed; come depressed, leave comforted.** ☹ – RL

Young (under 20).

Tattooed rockers, young kids

All their glasses are made of plastic.

**Booze and tattoos.** ☹ – RJH

**Bjarni Fel**

Austurstræti 20

★★★★☆☆

Named after one of Iceland's most famous sports commentators, Bjarni Fel is an adequately equipped sports bar conveniently located at the bottom of Austurstræti. The bar offers multiple strategically placed flat screen TVs that feature a wide variety of sports events daily. The bar itself though is lacking a bit in character and the selection of booze is mediocre. But if all other bars have filled up during important matches, Bjarni Fel is a sure bet for getting a nice seat with a good view.

890 1100 1090

Music is not a priority and during games and events you will hear live commentary.

Young (20s-30s).

Sports hungry Icelanders of all ages, the occasional lost tourist.

They have an excellent covered patio that makes for one of the best semi-indoor smoking areas in the city when the weather gets bad.

**The ball hits the net on a television set.** ☹ – RJH

**Boston**

Laugavegur 28b

★★★★☆☆

Boston is the heir to many of the late Sirkus regulars (that bar closed in 2008). The décor is more grown-up—sort of dark, trashy, gothic chic—and the guests aren't exactly kittens anymore. At times, the atmosphere can feel a bit sketchy due to overwhelming drunkenness and other sorts of intoxication.

900 1300 900

The music depends on the DJ. Most of them are of the electronic/house variety. They rock DJs like KGB and DJ Kári stops through every now and again on weekends.

Young (20s-30s).

Washed-up artists, friendly drug dealers, fashionistas, bohemians, writers, grungy rock types, party animals, aging party animals, people with drinking problems.

Boston has a really nice backdoor patio and an expensive homoerotic photograph framed in bulletproof glass and is allegedly owned by Björk.

**The right kind of sketchy.** ☹ – AB

**Bunk Bar**

Laugavegur 28

★★★★☆☆

It's like a cheap version of KEX with a more Patrick Bateman-y vibe. As it is attached to a hostel, the overtly patriotic touch is understandable. It's a bit cramped and noisy and it's hard to get to the bathrooms. The staff is nice though—friendly, efficient and courteous.

900 1000 900

Music is neither here nor there. There's nothing distinct and obtrusive about it. It's probably an iPod playlist with some mainstream '80s music and dickish saxophone music.

Young (20s-30s).

Yuppies with expensive beanie caps and fancy shirts, sporty looking tourists, general "cool" types.

It has a nice selection of bottled

beers and beautiful glass beer steins that make you want to slam them down on the solid wood tables.

**Forced yuppie-ism and old school patriotism.** ☹ – RL

**Café Amsterdam** ☀  
Hafnarstræti 5



★★★☆☆☆  
Amsterdam is a dive bar, pure and simple—neon lights, the smell of stale beer, worn wooden tables, high bar stools, slot machines, chipped paintwork, and the vague suspicion that anything you touch might be sticky or give you a splinter. On a drunken night out at Airwaves, this place can be raucous, ear-splitting fun. At 22:00 on the Saturday night Grapevine dropped by, the barman was chatting to his mate—the only other person in the bar—and the atmosphere would best be described as "funereal."

☺ 950 ☹ 1500 ☺ 1200

🎵 They play classic rock and americana (Bob Dylan, Steppenwolf, Rolling Stones). There's a stage and a sound system for live music.

🕒 20-30 Young (20s-30s).

👤 Rockers, punks, crimson-cheeked career drinkers and slightly less crimson-cheeked future career drinkers, stray tourists, rough lads/hardcases, and (apparently) bikers—although we didn't see any, or anyone else at all, for that matter.

★ The slot machines seemed interesting, but after we'd emptied our pockets of change and walked over, it became apparent that the slots in question were in fact credit-card slots, and instead of dispensing change, the machines spit out a receipt that is then swapped for the winnings at the bar. Way too much effort.

**On certain nights, Amsterdam can provide a decent party, but this visit was a grim experience.** ☹ – JR

**Café Paris**  
Austurstræti 14

★★★☆☆☆  
This place is better known as a daytime café than a bar although it offers an impressive choice of cocktails. It offers excellent outdoor seating, good service and an open kitchen till 23:00. People here seem extremely well mannered, (maybe it's the high percentage of tourists?) and the place is far from rowdy. It's not really the place for a crazy night out but can make for a good place to warm up.

☺ 950 ☹ 1100 ☺ 950

🎵 Café Paris have variable playlists consisting mainly of soft and easy pop music and oldies.

🕒 20-30 Older(40+).

👤 Tourists, poets, journalists, out-of-towners.

★ Café Paris has great outdoor seating in one of the best locations in town, offering a view in three directions in the heart of Reykjavík.

**A basic, cosy café that offers a good selection of beers and cocktails.** ☹ – HH

**Café Rosenberg**  
Klapparstígur 25



★★★★★☆☆

Rosenberg is a wooden haven for jazz and blues, sophistication and goodness. Instruments adorn the walls and bands are on every night. I feel like I should wear gloves and a bowler hat, or make some sort of statement of sophistication. I resort to saying "darling" every five seconds.

☺ 800 ☹ 1150 ☺ 900

🎵 Live jazz, blues, and other bands who play instruments generally made of wood. It often costs to get in, but it is more often than not worth it.

🕒 20-30 Older (40+).

👤 People over thirty, music lovers, Icelanders.

★ The toilets are always clean. There is always enough toilet paper. And there are lots of clean mirrors. There is a nice, sheltered smoking area in the front of the place, although it might be a bit annoying for non-smokers walking in (but you could hold your breath and run for it).

**A beacon of warmth and sophistication, peppered with the best of Icelandic music.** ☹ – AG

**Celtic Cross** ☀  
Hverfisgata 26



★★★☆☆☆☆

Maybe if I had come later, I wouldn't have to endure this troubadour. I can see why people around me are getting sloppy. It's the only thing to do when confronted by such painful caterwauling. It's still really early, but people aren't wasting any time to get as obnoxious as possible. When the first beer glass whizzes through the air, that's when it's time to go.

☺ 900 ☹ 1000 ☺ 1000

🎵 "I wanna knooooo have you ever seen the rain?"

🕒 20-30 Older(40+).

👤 Middle-aged people desperately clinging to their partying youth, drunken tourists who like Irish bars, British people, singers from local metal bands, sad dads, cougar moms, nondescript drinkers.

★ Tucked away to the right of the bar is a funeral parlour, which can be somewhat seen from Hverfisgata as "Finnegan's Funeral Home." It's like something out of a Tim Burton movie.

**In the words of Kent Brockman: "All this drinking, violence, destruction of property. Are these the things we think of when we think of the Irish?"** ☹ – RL

**Center Hotel - Plaza**  
Aðalstræti 4

★★★☆☆☆☆

The bar at Center Hotel Plaza is your typical hotel bar only without any characteristics. It seems to exist solely to fulfil a hotel's requirement to boast a bar.

☺ 900 ☹ 1200 ☺ 1100

🎵 A subtle set of Icelandic background music, Sigur Rós, Of Monsters and Men and Emiliana Torrini. You can expect something Icelandic that has made it onto the Billboard.

🕒 20-30 Young (20s-30s)

👤 Tourists.

★ It's a standard bar, nothing more, nothing less. As their demography is pretty wide, being a hotel and all, they seem to want to please everybody and it's that need that renders this bar dull.

**It's hard to deduce whether it's a lobby or a bar.** ☹ – SKK

**Den Danske Kro** ☀  
Ingólfsstræti 3



★★★★☆☆☆

The Danish bar is packed during happy hour all days of the week, not in small part due to a spacious patio out front. It's a great spot for afternoon drinking in the sun; however this also means that people get quite drunk quite early. It was pouring this Friday, which made it a bit more crowded inside and that may have amplified the feeling that somebody would be leaving soon in the back of a police car with a smashed guitar round their neck.

☺ 950 ☹ 1300 ☺ 1000

🎵 This is the prime venue to catch troubadours, acoustic renditions of Eurovision songs. College rock and Bowie and Beatles classics can be heard nearly every night—much to their neighbours' dismay.

🕒 20-30 Older (40+).

👤 People with drinking problems, journalists and media people, tourists, the odd poet, Danes, office workers on their way home.

★ You can play darts if space allows.

**Happy hour is great, but the evenings are harder to swallow.** ☹ – AB

**Dillon Whiskey Bar**  
Laugavegur 30



★★★★☆☆☆

Grubby and grungy, but harmless and friendly. Dillon is a shelter for

rockers and metalheads. It's kind of gross, but not to the point of the toilets in 'Trainspotting.' The staff give off a familial vibe and the patrons are seemingly all regulars.

☺ 900 ☹ 1000 ☺ 1000

🎵 Rock, metal, punk, "TNT" by ACDC.

🕒 20-30 Young (20s-30s).

👤 Metalheads, Krummi Björgvins, Atli Stones, Amma Rock, punks, nerds, dweebs, doofuses, sweethearts, lost souls.

★ There is a huge selection of whiskey on the bar and a long and detailed menu poster up on the wall. Also, the second floor smoking balconies usually get more crowded than indoors, even on rainy nights.

**Cause it's TNT! It's dy-no-mite!** ☹ – RL

**Dolly**  
Hafnarstræti 4

★★★★★☆☆

Dolly was in full blown party gear when we arrived at the scene. The place was packed with young people dancing around to insanely loud electronic music and the line outside stretched the length of the bar. The bar offers a very normal drinks selection but the beer tasted a little stale and off. I would definitely go for a bottled beer at this particular venue. But Dolly has recently gone through a change in atmosphere as the place has been filling up with large heavy set men and their makeup smeared girlfriends. This is a change we would not like to see taken further and hope that Dolly is returned to its original younger and slightly more innocent crowd.

☺ 850 ☹ 1200 ☺ 1000

🎵 Great electric music and good DJs on weekends.

🕒 20-30 Young (20s-30s).

👤 The young crowd, but recently the place has been filling up with beefy jock types.

★ They have great music during the weekends.

**Young, but rapidly losing its innocence.** ☹ – RJH

**Dubliner** ☀  
Hafnarstræti 1-3

★★★★☆☆☆

Dubliner is a classic Irish Pub. The atmosphere is laid back and easy going and the interior is actually pretty tasteful. The clientele usually comprised of older Icelandic drinkers of both genders and also foreign enthusiasts of Irish pub culture. They serve a nice selection of beers on tap, although they are quite pricey, and have an old dartboard that actually sees use. That said, the place kind of falls apart when you realize that every night, and I mean EVERY night, the place offers live music in the form of a troubadour. But if you like this kind of atmosphere and this kind of music, you will find the Dubliner to be a very agreeable bar.

☺ 1000 ☹ 1290 ☺ 1300

🎵 Troubadours

🕒 20-30 Older (40+)

👤 Older Icelanders and Irish pub enthusiasts

★ A man in a fedora singing "Wonderwall."

**I'll have another pint of plain and listen to the guitars as I gently weep.** ☹ – RJH

**English Pub** ☀  
Austurstræti 12A

★★★★☆☆☆

Spacious enough to get rowdy but clean and proper enough to stay

dignified, this is the kind of place people should go for after-work drinks with their mates, except people don't really do that here so much. It's super busy on this windy and rainy night with people ducking in for cover from both the front and back entrances.

☺ 950 ☹ 1400 ☺ 1100

🎵 A gaggle of troubadour gents crooning mainstream rock and pop tunes, heavy on the UK angle of course. Not just Oasis though! Sometimes they'll throw in a song by The Cure or Stone Roses.

🕒 20-30 Young (20s-50s).

👤 Professional drinkers, British expats, troubadour enthusiasts, early-bird tourists, out of work bankers, bros, hens.

★ There's a wheel of fortune where you can spin to win up to one metre of beer, a spacious back patio on Austurvöllur that fills up quickly on sunny days and nights, and complicated swinging bathroom doors.

**All in all it's just another bar on the crawl.** ☹ – RL

**Faktorý** ☀  
Smíðjústigur 6



★★★★★☆☆

Faktorý is exceptionally cool inside and out. Just off the main strip of Laugavegur, it's schmooze-y Manhattan-style lounge is tempered by a foosball table and very kind bartenders who smile sweetly when they take your empty glass. The eclectic musical line-up each weekend attracts a variety of people, which keeps the place interesting.

☺ 800 ☹ 1000 ☺ 1000

🎵 Faktorý is a jack of all trades when it comes to music - little of this, little of that - bodda bing bodda boom. There's a stage for live music, and the default playlist is interesting and dreamy. Plus, the free jazz show on Sunday evenings is a great way to end a weekend.

🕒 20-30 Young(20s-30s).

👤 Musicians (so basically any native Icelander), guys in sports coats and jeans, likeable hipsters, classy (or at least reasonable) folks, nicotine addicts.

★ One of Faktorý's best features is its spacious, graffiti-adorned front yard. It makes you feel like you are hanging out at a quirky, off-the-beaten-path house party.

**Mi Faktorý es su Faktorý.** ☹ – SS

**Gallery Bar (Hótel Holt)**  
Bergstaðastræti 37

★★★★★☆☆

This is an old school hotel with a '50s rat pack feel to it—dark decor, leather couches, dim panelling, cosy fireplaces and Iceland's finest art on the walls. We feel at home immediately although the bar is almost empty when we visit. The service is impeccable and the drinks are as good as they get. It doesn't need more than that to make it one of my favourite spots.

☺ 850 ☹ 1000 ☺ 1390

🎵 A mixture of gangster hip hop, samba and classical jazz.

🕒 20-30 Older (40+).

👤 Tourists, artsy fartsies, business



- Young (20s-30s)
- Bankers, tourists, pseudo-celebs, celebs, money-people, athletes.
- They market their ambitious cocktail lab, but nowadays their fancy bar only seems to play host to a youth club of uninterested, inadequate barkeeps who act like you're an intruder when you dare to interrupt their gossip-session and ASK for service.

**The ruins of Kolabrautin's former glory, an overpriced catastrophe of cocktails.** ☹ – SKK

**Laundromat Café**  
Austurstræti 9



★★★★★☆☆  
Laundromat is a seamless blend between bar and café. Where others furrow their brows if you order a coffee after their lights have dimmed, Laundromat smiles warmly and offers you milk and sugar. The result is a fun, bubbly pot of the drunk, happy, and caffeinated. The "DIY" aesthetic invites a lot of camera clicking, so prepare yourself for background cameos on a lot of hip couples' travel blogs.

- 850 1300 1000
- All the boom-tick-boom you could need without the hi-hat and the unce-unce-unce. Well known "post-dubbers" like James Blake, Flying Lotus, and Mount Kimbie made frequent stereo appearances.
- Young (20-30s)
- Travelling couples with oversized cameras, travelling couples with undersized cameras (iPhones), nice sweaters, good conversationalists.
- A functioning Laundromat! Go figure.

**A warm café latte with a shot of whiskey.** ☹ – PKY

**Le Chateaux des dix/ Tíu Dropar**  
Laugavegur 27



★★★★★☆☆  
Walking into this bar is probably how Owen Wilson's character feels in 'Midnight In Paris,' as he strolls through the streets and it suddenly becomes the 1920s with all its romance, mystery, coy intimacy and a touch of highbrow debauchery. It's the perfect place for private conversations in a public place.

- 900 1000 1000
- Francophone - lots of Edith Piaf, Charles Aznavour and Serge Gainsbourg, among others. On weekends, a pianist comes in to play all the French standards on

- the ivories.
- Young (20s-30s)
- Intellectual lushes, artsies and fartsies, understated glamorous types who appreciate candlelight over strobe lights, Francophones, Francophiles, poets, expats.
- Candlelight, live piano music (without vocals), extensive wine selection with special prices on different bottles every night, charcuterie plates of various meats, cheeses and olives on offer (3,000 ISK), actual French people.

**C'est merveilleux!** ☹ – RL

**Lebowski Bar** ☀  
Laugavegur 20a

★★★★☆☆  
This theme bar named for the iconic Coen Brothers movie greatly achieves their shtick without slapping you in the face with it or making you abide. There's no real type or style to it. It's kind of sloppy but still cosy, like a nice open bathrobe paired with Bermuda shorts and sandals. The place is split into sections though and they really could use something to tie the room together, man.

- 950 1400 1100
- Sad dad rock, bluesy tunes from the Bayou, Led Zepellin, CCR, Dire Straits.
- Young (20s-30s)
- Suburbanites, tourists, burger lovers, football fans, tattoo nerds, rockers.
- They offer 18 varieties of White Russian and have a Lebowski-themed diner in the back.

**It's a pretty cool place. But that's just, like, my opinion, man...** ☹ – RL

**Litla Gula Hænan**  
Laugavegur 22

★★★★★☆☆  
The newest occupant of the legendary location that some know permanently as 22, Litla Gula Hænan is an unofficial queer bar where you can go for a chat, bump into friends and quickly make some new ones! It's a one-man operation by manager-bartender-cleaner-booker-playlistmaker Ísar Logi who is arguably the nicest barman in town. He's always smiling!

- 900 1000 900
- Besides some themed DJ nights, mostly electronic and darkwave, the music comes off of Ísar Logi's iPod and is a fun combination of retro and more recent music that would be played ironically in other places (like Robert Palmer) but is 100% sincere here! Volume is never too loud so conversation isn't interrupted, but you'll never strain to hear when "Buffalo Stance" by Neneh Cherry comes on.
- Young (20s-30s)
- Single ladies, cute boys, cool queers, sporty gays, bears, Grapevine interns, Drag King champion Mobus, nice slobs, funny drunks, lonely hearts, elder-goths, foosball fascists, foosball anarchists.
- The bar features colourful decoration and a striking renovation on the bathrooms it inherited from its predecessors (Bakkus, Trúno, Karamba, etc.). Hand written announcements on the windows let passers-by know what is up that night. Ísar makes this crazy house cocktail with a secret recipe involving five different liqueurs called the Yellow Chicken (1,300 ISK). It will fuck you up.

**A fun, welcoming and relaxed bar for friends and loners alike, where jerks and bad behaviour are not tolerated.** ☹ – RL

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**Live Pub**  
Frakkastígur 8  
★★★★☆☆  
Early in the evening (21:00 is very early for Reykjavík), this place is desolate and depressing. Later in the evening, after some misguided drunk people trickle in for karaoke, it might as well be desolate and is deeply, terribly depressing. There is an unidentifiable suspicious smell. Perhaps this would be a good place to film a horror movie.

- 800 1000 1000
- Before karaoke starts, Live Pub plays the worst of whatever was playing ten years ago. The cheeriness of the music is rendered disturbing by the cheerless environment.
- Young (20s-30s)
- Would-be serial killers, tourists (by accident), the very drunk (by accident).
- There is a foosball table, and peanuts (eat at your own risk).

**Don't say you weren't warned.** ☹ – AS

**Loft Hostel**  
Bankastræti 7  
★★★★★☆☆

This new bar on the main drag of downtown is the heart that beats in the chest of Loft Hostel, with a space that is both open and communal but with quaint little nooks to tuck yourself into. The bar's design is really reminiscent of Micro Bar, but has a cool collection of those trendy filter coffee carafes as decoration. Super friendly staff but too few bathrooms make for long waits on busy nights!

- 850 1200 1100
- Playlists made by the staff, new Icelandic albums and frequent live shows by some of the coolest local bands right now.
- Young (20s-30s)
- 101 rats, artsy types, writers, cartoonists, band people, hostel residents, hip tourists, staff members' babies.
- A huge top floor balcony overlooking Bankastræti, with a crazy nice view of the city. Plus, an actual elevator!

**Damn now I kinda wanna stay here!** ☹ – RL

**Loftið**  
Austurstræti 9  
★★★★★☆☆

Loftið is a new addition to the Reykjavík nightlife and offers some of the best cocktails to be had in the city. On a typical weekend you will find this place filled with older Icelandic yuppies or older yuppie foreigners swallowing old and expensive alcohol dressed like the prosperity period of 2006 never ended. This vibe is achieved with a super strict entry policy and a dress code that makes no exceptions. This we found out in practice when the bar turned down our original reviewer who showed up wearing a hoodie, requiring that we send a substitute. But if you have the money and the clothes, this bar offers good service and excellent quality beverages.

- 1000 1500 1300
- Great electric music, but sadly no one is dancing.
- Older (40+)
- The older rich people of Iceland.
- They offer superb cocktails.

**Excellent drinks for the select few.** ☹ – RJH



**Mánabar**  
Hverfisgata 20  
★★★★☆☆  
Mánabar seems to be having an identity crisis: The décor is all cosy couches and old chairs and low lamplight under cosmic ceilings and wallpaper, but there's nobody there on weekdays and on the weekends it's (apparently) half-full of trashy teenagers dancing to even trashier music. All of which is a shame because the place is actually quite inviting, reasonably priced, and could serve as both a great café and bar if someone just took charge and gave this business direction.

- 800 1100 1000
- The occasional live jazz group or an impromptu piano singer-songwriter rehearsal on weekdays. Top 40 and 'EDM' on the weekends.
- Too Young (under 20)
- Invisible people, tanning machines, top 40 lovers, off-duty troubadours, people who like to play the piano but don't have one at home
- There's A GRAND PIANO that anyone is free to play. Beat that!

**Nothing but potential.** ☹ – AB

**Micro Bar**  
Austurstræti 6  
★★★★★☆☆

Located behind the lobby of Center Hotel, Micro Bar's atmosphere is tasteful. It's an easy-going place with a knowledgeable, polite staff. There's a light chatter and a general satisfaction in the air. The walls are adorned with demure mountains and what look like tiny Bigfoots painted by Huggleikur Dagsson, Iceland's most famous vulgar/controversial/political cartoonist. We're smugly NOT drinking Viking beer with big bubbles in it, which by the way means the pipes never get cleaned. We're supporting Icelandic microbreweries without having to sit in a bar that looks like it was decorated by the children of Korn listening to Coldplay.

- 900 1200 1100
- I never really notice it. It's probably death-metal.
- Young (20s-30s)
- Artsy fartsies, business people/bankers, journos, musicians, tourists.
- They offer a train of eight draught beer tasters that comes with explanations of where it's from, how it's brewed, how it's meant to taste and the history of beer culture in Iceland. An enjoyable experience, even if you are sitting with a German who knows the difference between an IPA and a Pilsner. The toilet, unlike in any other bar in Reykjavík, is clean. That's probably because it belongs to the hotel. On the downside, it's not really in the bar, but down a load of stairs. That's okay if you don't think that the toilet makes the bar.

**A bar for people who like the taste of beer.** ☹ – AG

**Næsti Bar**  
Ingólfsstræti 1a  
★★★★☆☆

Næsti Bar used to be an actor's hangout where philosophy and the arts were discussed, vino was consumed and not a single musical tone was ever heard. It's different nowadays and their crowd is more

or less under or around 20, and far from being of the artsy kind. The service is however outstanding and the drinks are both decent and cheap, albeit their promotional laminated A4 looks like a Bónus ad.

- 900 1100 1100
- The DJ is usually an iPod behind the bar boasting playlists with the top charts.
- Too Young (under 20)
- Younglings, young-politicians, liberals, media people, high-schoolers.
- Offers, offers, offers! Nice, cheap drinks, and the mood can be both laidback and rowdy.

**A great place to get cheap, good drinks—if you don't mind suited-up youngsters.** ☹ – SKK

**Obladi Oblada** ☀  
Frakkastígur 10

- 750 110 800
- N/A
- N/A
- N/A
- N/A

**Due to a mistake in the review process, we have taken our review of Obladi Oblada out of the Bar Guide in the online versions of this issue.** ☹

**Prikið**  
Bankastræti 12



★★★★★☆☆  
One of the oldest cafés in Reykjavík, Prikið morphs into a carnival at night where young wildcats clash together with old hip hop strong-houses. When we pop in, that change is about to take place—we're in the twilight zone. The steady beat coming out of the PAs is slowly but surely taking over the atmosphere and what was a buzz is becoming a full-on drunkenness.

- 750 1090 N/A
- Everything with a steady beat and rhymes from Nicki Minaj to Slick Rick.
- Young (20s-30s)
- Hipsters, hip-hoppers, artsy fartsies, youngsters, bimpos, tomcats, drinkers.
- It's a good mixture of everything. Crowded dance floor, table area if you wanna take it easy and chat the night away, and 101 Reykjavík's biggest smoking patio. Plus, if you have anthropological interests, you can see a mixed demography in Prikið like nowhere else—suburbans mix in with downtown hipsters and 16-year-olds try their luck at seducing rappers in their 40s.

**Whether you want to get some sweaty breakfast and a cup of joe or get completely hammered and hook up—this is the place.** ☹ – SKK

Reykjavik Beats
Hverfisgata 46

During its lifespan, this bar has been a pool lounge, a gay bar, an art gallery, a bum bar and now a techno club. It always seems to attract a similar crowd though with the bro share of the clientele coming from the pool tables.

- Icons for drinks and prices: 850, 1300, 850. Music icon, age icon (20-30), and star icon with text: 'Techno! Well, on the weekends at least. Also host concerts on some occasions. Young (20s-30s) Poolsharks, gays, drinkers, students, lost souls, recreational drug-users. They have a great indoor smoking area, decent pool tables and a huge dance floor, which few dancers seem to have found as of yet.'

A pool hall that wants to be a hardcore techno club on weekends. ☹ - HH

SKY Bar & Lounge
Ingólfsstræti 1

This clean, nicely decorated, and comfortable lounge is on the top floor of the Centre Hotel overlooking Harpa and the water. The view is exceptional and there is only the slightest suggestion of calming music coming through hidden speakers.

- Icons for drinks and prices: 650, 1500, 1100. Music icon, age icon (20-30), and star icon with text: 'What music? Older (40+) Middle aged tourists, business executives, people on a date with their iPad, Pina Colada drinkers, more middle aged tourists. Features a stunning view of the bay, and an outdoor seating area and balcony for the few days when Reykjavik warms up.'

Half the cost is the view. ☹ - SS

Slippbarinn
Mýrargata 2

This is not your typical hotel bar. Fancy cocktails are the place's claim to fame, but they also offer a good selection of beers. The place treats a thin line between being a fancy and cool hotel bar.

- Icons for drinks and prices: 900, 1200, 1000. Music icon, age icon (20-30), and star icon with text: 'The music is almost always in the background here although we hear they have occasional live gigs. Easy listening. Older (40+) Quasi-hipsters, bankers, Icelandair staff, tourists, media and marketing people. Offers interesting design details, and good booths for chatting. Sausages hang from the bar.'

A hotel bar with the benefits of a fancy-yet-kind-of-cool bar. ☹ - HH

Stofan
Aðalstræti 7

I'm particularly partial to drinking at home (mine or a friend's). Just sitting on the sofa with some nice tunes in the background and maybe some funny memorabilia to trade stories or make in jokes about, then sifting through LPs and quickly switching records on the hi-fi dancing in socks on the rug.

- Icons for drinks and prices: 950, 1450, 1100. Music icon, age icon (20-30), and star icon with text: 'A nice mix of whatever suits the mood, usually picked by whoever's on staff. Rainy day blues to sunny day jams with a strong lean towards guitar/piano driven music rather than electro. Young (20s-30s) Bookworms, freelancers, artists working on collaborations, journalists, cool parents, low-key rockstars, solo tourists Skyping with their families. Antique furniture, rugs, knick-knacks and old-timey books to give it that Funky Grandma charm.'

Meet me in our living room on main street. ☹ - HH

Strawberries
Lækjargata 6a

N/A

"Not for women, not for women." ☹ - PKY

Stúdentakjallarin
Sæmundargata 4

About a fifteen minute walk from the heat of Austurstræti, Studentakjallarin ("The Student's basement" at The University of Iceland) takes pride in being the little island of the bar scene.

- Icons for drinks and prices: 750, 990, 690. Music icon, age icon (20-30), and star icon with text: 'A hotlist of guilty pleasures and top 40s. The kind that one despises by day, until they're caught singing along to "lyrics they didn't even know they knew!" Young (20s-30s) A STUDENT pub located on the UNIVERSITY campus. Take a wild, wild guess. There's a colourful lounge area with exceptionally comfortable chairs for watching Will Smith. A projector that projects Will Smith onto the wall. Will Smith.'

A hub of students cheersing cheap beer by day, a hub of students cheersing cheap beer by night. ☹ - PKY

Thorvaldsen
Austurstræti 8

This is a club meets cocktail bar more than your average Icelandic dive bar. The place looks like a hole-in-a-wall when you peek in

through the door but it's actually surprisingly spacious. There are two entrances—one from Austurvöllur and one from Austurstræti. Both lead to a curving lounge bar and from there into a horse-shoe shaped dance floor that gets nice and toasty when people actually cut loose.

- Icons for drinks and prices: 900, 1400, 1000. Music icon, age icon (20-30), and star icon with text: 'Disco, hip-hop, samba, house music - seldom rock music. Young (20s-30s) Clubbers, tourists, business types, people who like Capoeira Night, Samba Night, and Angolan National Day celebrations. The semi-circular shape is quite distinctive, and they have an actual dance floor set aside for dancing (although it's quite small). Also, the bathrooms are clean.'

A scrappy lounge bar with an ethnic sheen. ☹ - RE

Snaps
Pórsgrata 1

Although primarily a restaurant or bistro, Snaps offers a great environment for a pre-"djamm" drink. This place has great service, the interior is cosy and the atmosphere friendly.

- Icons for drinks and prices: 950, 1350, 950. Music icon, age icon (20-30), and star icon with text: 'They play a mix of jazz and Icelandic classics. There's no live music. Young (20s-30s) 101 rats, Artsy fartsy, business people, journalists, tourists, musicians, hipsters. The place has really cool design and a great bar. You can watch the cooks sweat in an open kitchen while you chug an ice-cold Bríó from the tap.'

A cosy bistro/bar recommended for warm-up drinks with snacks. ☹ - HH

Vegamót
Vegamótastígur 4

Unlike the loud, neon Lebowksi Bar sign or the cosmic tape-work that marks Hemmi og Valdi, Vegamót's exterior gives passers-by little hint as to what's inside. This may be why walking into its throbbing hip-hop is such a pleasant surprise.

- Icons for drinks and prices: 1000, 1200, 900. Music icon, age icon (20-30), and star icon with text: 'The DJ at Vegamót was on fire, spinning, scratching and flipping all the hottest...mp3's. He really hit those MacBook keys with some heat. As for the tunes, (think: "When the pimp's in the crib ma, drop it like it's hooot). I haven't heard that much Snoop Dogg since the early 2000s. Young (20s-30s) People that travel in packs, people that order food while they drink. Vegamót's floor plan encourages exploration, with its labyrinth of sitting rooms. Also, the bathroom doors are beautiful.'

Loosen up! Woah, not that much. Save that for Prikið. ☹ - PKY

Vitabar
Bergþórugata 21



Vitabar feels more like a diner than a bar. At almost midnight, the crowd is more interested in greasy food than pints, but the pints are too cheap to skip.

- Icons for drinks and prices: 700, 1200, 950. Music icon, age icon (20-30), and star icon with text: 'The servers keep top forty radio and inoffensive American oldies at such an unobtrusive volume that you can hear yourself chew. Young (20s-30s) Miscellaneous drunk people in their twenties, stoners, lads, a few regulars in their 30s. The (CHEAP!) burgers are more of a draw than the (CHEAP!) beer.'

This isn't a hotspot, but it is the place to grab a cheeseburger and cheap pint with friends before the night really begins. ☹ - AS

Vínbarinn
Kirkjutorg 4

This is the perfect lair if you want to get a glass of really good wine or try a beer you've never seen before. The atmosphere is laid back but sophisticated at the same time. It's one of the hallmarks of Icelandic bar culture.

- Icons for drinks and prices: 900, 1200, 1100. Music icon, age icon (20-30), and star icon with text: 'The music is mellow and easy on the ear in the background. Jazz and alike. Older (40+) Business people; bankers; artists, academics. It offers Reykjavik's greatest selection of wine by the glass. A must-visit for every wine connoisseur and lover of quality beer. ☹ - SKK'

Ölsmiðjan
Lækjargata 10

Ölsmiðjan is laid back. A single attempt at a chandelier hangs dimly over the main area, but thanks to the street-view windows lighting is more than sufficient this time of year.

- Icons for drinks and prices: 490, 1150, 950. Music icon, age icon (20-30), and star icon with text: 'The music plays so low you have to try to hear it. A fun game to play to endure the awkward silences while your date texts his mom or your business partner calls his wife. The tunes are all sing-along love ballads from the 50s and 60s. The kind that have overstayed their welcome, but are too charming to kick out. Young (20s-30s) Lots of pairs, lots of men, lots of pairs of men, travellers on business that want a reason to leave their suits on for a while after the conference, students attracted to the cheap beer while pretending to be attracted to each

An unusually large "round table" upstairs, if you're not used to such quiet music and prefer to scream conversation at your date.

Safe, comfortable, and enjoyable. Like oatmeal. ☹ - PKY

Ölstofa Kormáks & Skjaldar
Vegamótastígur 4

This place is said to give you "the smell of the town" and it certainly will. It's normally full of large, bearded Icelandic males discussing all sorts of matters at '80 decibels minimum. While the music here offers more of a background buzz to the choir of tweed-clad grunts, the place is surprisingly cosy.

- Icons for drinks and prices: 800, N/A, N/A. Music icon, age icon (20-30), and star icon with text: 'You don't visit this place for the music. Young (20s-30s) 101 rats, artists, actors, writers, directors, entire whole movie crews, really, smokers. This place has a great smoking area and its own brew on tap. The Bríó!

A Vikings-gone-English-gentlemen bar. ☹ - HH

Pingholtsbar
Pingholtsstræti 3-5

Hidden away in a basement on a side street off of Laugavegur, you'd never stumble upon this place unless you knew what you were looking for. The sleek black interiors are somewhat austere but offer patrons so much space there's no danger of being overheard at all.

- Icons for drinks and prices: 900, 1300, 1100. Music icon, age icon (20-30), and star icon with text: 'In the short space of time that it took to finish one beer, I heard everything from Beyoncé to Leonard Cohen to Bill Withers' "Lean on Me." Fortunately the music was turned down very low so it was not a defining part of the experience. Older (40+) Older tourists, most likely hotel guests. The huge, luxurious black leather couches look great for lounging around in; you almost want to take your shoes off and make yourself at home.'

This is a sleek hotel bar which is typically empty. ☹ - PP