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Inside Guide - Experience the City Like a Local • The Grapevine Predicts the Euro 2008 Finals
Summer Releases - What are you Going to Listen to This Summer? • Why is Reykjavík so Expensive?

Opinion

Forget the Foot Massager

An opinion by Marie-Alexandra Hertell

08

The Little Country Leading The Way

An opinion by Iris Goemans

08

The Road to Oblivion

An opinion by Ben Frost

10

Articles

Everything Is Ridiculously Expensive in Iceland

Interview with blogger and consumer rights crusader Gunnar Hjalmarsson

06

Rock n' Roll Noise Pollution

Shooting the breeze with Kerrang!'s Paul Brannigan

12

Concert Reviews

Dornah / Mike Monday / Super Mama Djombo

18

CD Reviews

Dísa / Bang Gang / Benni Hemm Hemm / Múgsefjun / Grjóthrun í Fellshreppi / Sigurður Guðmundsson

19

The View from the Top

Exploring Mýrdalsjökull

24

City Slicker Rides Again

Horseback riding in Laxness

26

Features

Reykjavík – the Insiders Guide

How to feel like a real Reykjavíkian

16

Destinations

The View From the Top

Riding snowmobiles in Mýrdalsjökull

24

City Slicker Rides Again

Horseback riding in Mosfellssveit

26

Reykjavík Summer Spots

Where to embrace summer in the city

28

info.

Listings

B2

Food Reviews

B10

Office Skills for Foreigners

B12

Your Guide to This Summer's Releases

B13

The Grapevine's Euro 2008 Pool

B14

The Most Expensive Icelandic Film

B15

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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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From the Editor's Chair

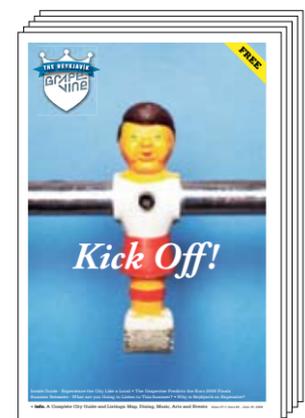
This issue marks the beginning of a transitional phase for the Reykjavík Grapevine. Next week (June 13) marks the five-year anniversary of this publication. Next week, we will put out a celebratory issue, which will be guest edited by an exiting group of young people: Barði Jóhannesson of Bang Gang, Bergur Ebbe Benediktsson of Sprengjuhöllin, Pétur Blöndal journalist from Morgunblaðið, artist Sara Riel and photographer Silja Magg. This special anniversary edition of the Grapevine will also signify a change for the look

of the paper. A new logo is coming your way and the whole paper has been redesigned for the pleasure of you readers. June 13 we will also launch a new website, filled with new features to enhance your interactive experience and help you enjoy Iceland, and the Grapevine even more.

So there are exciting times ahead. But this is an exciting issue as well. We did some investigative journalism to find out what artists will be releasing an album this summer. The list is long. We examined some destinations for you. We teach

you how to behave like a Reykjavíkian and Dr. Gunni tells you why Iceland is so expensive.

I look forward to presenting a new Grapevine to you readers with the next issue. In the meantime, I'd like to congratulate myself and the rest of the Grapevine staffers on the birthday. Enjoy the last issue of the 4 year old Grapevine.



Cover photo by:

GAS

On Cover:

FC Grapevine's captain

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Sour Grapes

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

Hæ Hæ
I'd really like to hear about your opinion on the whole Sigmund cartoon in Morgunblaðid. Or someone's opinion at the Grapevine.
Thanks for reading,
Jasmine

Dear Jasmine,
Let me begin by explaining your request to other readers. Sigmund is a cartoonist who has drawn political caricatures for the daily newspaper Morgunblaðið for more than 30 years. Recently the paper ran one of his strips, which showed presidential hopeful Barack Obama as a tribal cannibal wearing a straw skirt, brining firewood to a large pot containing one Hillary Clinton, saying that his people would like her well done.
Frankly, I thought the caricature was tasteless and ill-conceived. I realize Sigmund is an old man by now (b. 1931) and was probably raised with a different world view and so forth, but I can't see how historical relativism can be an excuse for a blatant racist stereotyping.
So yeah, that's my opinion more or less.

Editor

Dear Grapevine,

I have just finished reading the final installment of the Lonesome Traveller's trans-Iceland hike. (Incidentally, this late because the penultimate issue, number 3, was not available to download until well after issue 4 for some reason, and I didn't want to skip ahead.)

I just had to write to express my appreciation of his articles. I've long been an avid reader of the Grapevine and enjoy each issue thoroughly. However, Fabrizio's articles are by far my favorite feature of the magazine when they are run. Not only do I find his accounts of exploring obscure regions of the country on foot and alone keenly interesting, but his writing and skill with language is simply beyond compare! My god. I am continually awed and humiliated by his articulation, particularly considering the fact that English is my first language and his second.
Sigh.

While all his articles are of the highest standard, I found this last series to have raised the bar, much like how this particular trip was a high water mark in his own personal history of hiking accomplishments.

In summary, BRAVO Mr. Frascaroli. I eagerly await being regaled by your tales of this year's treks out in that incomparably beautiful and unique Icelandic wilderness. It is, in fact, the next best thing to being there myself. Sniff.

-John Evicci
Dracut, MA, USA

Dear John,
I can only echo your own feelings. Of course, I believe Fabrizio Frascaroli to be insane, going solo on a 40 hike across the Icelandic highlands, but he deserves all credit for finishing this massive undertaking, and obviously, for writing about it in the Grapevine. However, I think a word of appreciation should have been reserved for the editor here, but maybe that's just me.

Editor

Respected editor,
Given below is the scientific proof that god exists.
Albert Einstein stated "1 gram of any substance consists of 931 mega electron volt of energy". Another science law states that energy cannot be created or destroyed. It can only be converted from one form to another. Any substance you burn on this planet earth, it radiates energy. After death, first thing to leave a person is his breath. After death, Christians and Muslims bury the dead body, Hindus burn it. So, the dead body either decays or reduces to ashes slowly. In the process, it radiates energy and mingles with the atmosphere. From there, where it goes is a mystery. In my opinion, it goes to god's secret abode where each person's soul has to individually answer questions regarding actions (both good and controversial) he has performed in his life. Sorry, you can't play the blame game there. So, friends beware of your present and everyday actions every second and apply discretion in whatever you do.

A WORD OF ADVICE

Close your eyes and think for a minute how your daily life would be if your vision was not there for one week. Thank god for giving you eyesight and avoid misusing it, that is don't watch vulgar stuff or read vulgar literature. Also, think of those people who don't have eyesight since birth.

Everybody (including you and me) is responsible to god after death for his present actions. Everybody has to die sooner or later. So, please be careful of your everyday and present actions and apply discretion in whatever you do.

BIGGEST SHAME FOR WE PEOPLE

Its quite evident from holy bible that Jesus had great spiritual powers. Yet, he died on the holy cross just to relieve us of our sins and the harsh truth is we are still shamelessly sinning in many ways.
name:ramesh kumar
place:mumbai,india.

Dear Ramesh,
Maybe you should take this up with a scientist. If your theory holds up, you'd win the Nobel Prize for sure. In the meantime, I'll continue to embrace my long-standing atheism.

Editor

HELLO CUSTOMER SERVICE,
HOW ARE YOU DOING TODAY? I HOPE ALL ITS WELL WITH YOU... WELL MY NAME IS REV. BILL HUFFMAN FROM THE BILL AND SONS COMPANY AND I EMAILED TO FIND OUT IF YOU SELL OVERHEARD GARAGE DOORS AND IF YES... DO YOU HAVE THE SIZE 16 BY 7 NON-INSOLATED AND NON-INSTALLATION WITH A WHITE COLOUR WITHOUT AN OPENER? SO I WILL LIKE YOU TO GET BACK TO ME WITH THE COST OF 3 PCS SO THAT I CAN AND PROVIDE YOU WITH MY CREDIT CARD TO BILL FOR THE WHOLE AMOUNT. AND AFTER PAYMENT WHEN EVER ITS READY FOR PICK UP IT WILL BE PICKED UP AT YOUR LOCATION... WISH YOU ALL THE BEST AND HOPE TO HEAR FROM YOU SOON.
BEST REGARDS. REV BILL HUFFMAN

Dear Rev. Huffman
This is an interesting request for sure, but I am afraid that this is not the customer service, but the editorial department, and we are not in the overheard (sic) garage doors business at all. However, I'd be happy to accept you credit card. It seems there is salvation to be had from the church after all.

Editor



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Mosfellsbæ

Nóatún, Selfossi

Dr. Gunni – the Dr. J. of the consumer watchdogs.
Photo by GAS



Everything is Expensive in Iceland

“When being overcharged, most Icelanders would rather reach for their credit cards and look the other way, before signing on to three additional months of overtime at work.”

Gunnar Hjálmarsson (AKA Dr. Gunni) is a musician, author, journalist and blogger who, until recently, was probably best known for the DIY punk (and later pop) he churned out in the eighties and nineties, and as the conductor of a TV music quiz show. After devoting a section of his blog to keeping track of stores that blatantly overcharge their customers, however, he is gaining fame as a sort of consumer watchdog. This culminated last month when Hjálmarsson received the first annual consumer award from the Ministry of Business Affairs for his work on the behalf of Icelandic consumers. He told the Grapevine about Icelandic pricing policies.

What's the story behind your overprice-watch?

I was inspired to start it after sharing lunch with a friend at a restaurant called The Great Wall. The food was fine, but we were flabbergasted when we realised we were being charged 350 ISK for a small bottle of Coke. Instead of just mumbling complaints into my chest, which is the Icelandic reaction to being overcharged, I decided to do something about it and made a slot on my website devoted to exposing overchargers. Pretty soon people started sending in their own examples of unreasonable pricing around the country. After being on-line for seven months, the site now lists nearly a thousand examples of varyingly brutal overcharging.

Did you expect it to grow so popular as a venting place for the over-charged, under-paid Icelandic public?

Not really. But it got a lot of media attention from the outset, and then when the so-called depression hit us after Easter it really started growing. Everything went up by 30–40% in an instant; the head of the biggest grocery retail chain pretty much declared open season on the Icelandic consumer and newspaper headlines literally screamed “Awful price hikes coming!” Everybody jumped at the opportunity to raise their prices dramatically, whether it was a barbershop, grocery store or electronics outlet. They all jumped the overpricing bandwagon, citing the drop of the Icelandic króna, imminent recession, etc.

Then it got more exposure when I was awarded the newfangled “Consumer award” last month, by the Minister of Business Affairs, Björgvin G. Sigurðsson. I got sent over fifty examples in the following hours. So basically whenever the site gets a mention in the media I get a barrage of new examples to put on there.

Could you explain the concept of the site?

It's basically just a list of examples of overpricing that I've encountered myself or that people have e-mailed me. It doesn't have an elaborate layout, although several people have approached me offering to make one. Perhaps it'll be all fancy some day, but for now I merely copy-paste whatever

people send me, weeding out what's obviously misleading or false.

The Icelandic form of competition allows for a lot of overpricing, so I get a lot of examples. The same supplier will ship detergent to three different stores – all owned by the same corporation – where it'll be sold for 2,000 ISK at the first store, 1,100 at the second and 700 at the last one. 10-11, Hagkaup and Bónus, for example. Of course you'll shop at Bónus, that's simple economics. Take 10-11, their prices are so steep that you should only really shop there in an emergency. If you need milk at seven AM on a Saturday morning, when everything else is closed. I guess in those cases it's OK to pay 20% more.

So your site is an example of what happens when DIY punks start running families? They become self-empowered consumer watchdogs?

It's pretty DIY. There are of course all sorts of agencies and institutions that are supposed to serve the average consumer and ensure they're being treated fairly. However, people are confused as to their purpose and the services they provide. They're also maybe too established to print allegations like the ones I have on my page. So I guess it's a little punk, this whole thing, but it's also pretty much in tune with the Icelandic discourse syndrome. It's customary to write off consumer complaints as mere nagging, something that's painfully un-cool. When being overcharged, most Icelanders would rather reach for their credit cards and look the other way before signing on to three additional months of overtime at work.

Have you seen any results since you started the page?

The best result would be that people start thinking with their wallets more, note the examples on the page and make sure to not shop at places that are guilty of blatant overcharging. I think the site can in some ways be said to have added to consumer consciousness, so maybe those are results.

It's also necessary to call attention to what's being done well, and this is why I also list examples of good service and eh... non-overpricing. If people have examples of stores or corporations acting from a community perspective instead of simply reaching for their customers' savings every chance they get, they should definitely send them over.

In your experience, is Iceland more expensive than other countries around the world?

Yes. Many surveys have shown that everything is ridiculously expensive in Iceland. I guess lack of competition doubled with our lack of consumer consciousness goes a long way to explain it. Overpricing has been a fact in Iceland for a long time. A few years ago all the Icelandic oil companies were discovered to have illegally conspired on pricing policies; it was basically proved that they had been cheating their customers for years by

deliberate overpricing. When the story broke, nobody cared. In fact the Icelandic nation celebrated by collectively going to the gas station to buy hot dogs and cokes while their cars were filled up with overpriced gas. Any country that responds in that manner is of course prime ground for overchargers.

What's changed in Iceland since the 1980s?

What's mainly changed is that we now have members of society that are so incredibly rich that they might as well be a different species than the rest of us. Twenty years ago we had guys that maybe earned five times what an average worker would, and you could understand why. They owned fishing factories or fancy hotels. In the last decade, however, we've welcomed a breed of people, guys younger than me that make 150 times the average salary each day and ride around in private jets. And nobody knows what they do, or why they deserve all that money. I've pretty much stopped understanding how our society works.

Are you more aware of these consumer matters since you started the site?

Of course. But you don't really want to dwell too much on these things when summer's here and all. It gets tiring after a while, listening to people complain, even if the complaints are warranted. You just want to get out to the sunlight and get a tan. And that's what always happens. Summer comes and the rage passes; the fight goes out of people and while they're looking the other way everyone raises their prices. I hope people stay alert. You can make a lot of money out of it too; salaries in this country aren't so high that you can afford not going to the store that's going to save you 3,000 ISK on each shopping basket. That's two hours of overtime you don't have to work, time you could spend with your family.

So do you have any advice for the Icelandic consumer, or visiting consumers?

Just try and shop at the nice places that don't overcharge you, and shun the expensive stores. Of course, both stores are owned by the same guy, so it's hard to punish him by shunning one of them... I don't know. I put some hope into our business minister, he has shown a certain interest in the affairs of the working class and hopefully he'll stay on that track.

Speaking of politics, have you thought about running for office? Being man of the people and all.

No. None of the parties are cool enough for me. They're all trash. I don't really see the purpose in running for any of those parties. Things are pretty shitty here... But at least we're not going through civil war or anything, yet. And summer's here now, so we'll get a tan.

Text by Haukur S. Magnússon



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EXPO



Reykjavik Excursions
KYNNISFERÐIR

The Little Country Leading the Way



Iris Goemans recently moved from Australia to Iceland. She found love.

We know that Iceland has one of the highest fertility rates in the European Union, one of the highest divorce rates, and the highest percentage of women working outside the home. So when you add those factors together, it equals lots of children, broken homes and absent parents. And if you add the cold and dark winters into the mix, and the cost of living, one would imagine this to be a cocktail for misery and suffering. Yet according to the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index rankings, Iceland is the best country to live in. Icelanders are also ranked among the happiest people in the world. So how do these things go together?

Well I'm not really sure to be honest, but I do know this: Levels of social capital and community networks in Iceland are extremely strong, and this is one of the most powerful drivers of life satisfaction in wealthy countries. Families and communities seem to support each other, regardless of family structure.

According to the Legatum Prosperity Index (2007), tests on data from the world's richest countries (those with an average income per person greater than US \$15,000) found that the relationship between life satisfaction and factors such as strength of social communities, unemployment, and leisure time, were much stronger than the relationship between life satisfaction and income. And when one considers that Iceland has such strong community networks, one of the lowest unemployment rates, and that Icelanders see outdoor recreation as an important part of their lives, it is no wonder then that they are quite content overall.

Another important factor in determining how satisfied people are with their lives is their sense of freedom of choice. Iceland possesses one of the most politically free societies in the world. Iceland grants its citizens an exceptionally high level of political rights and civil liberties. Opportunities for political and social mobility are also significant, with women being particular beneficiaries – as discussed in more detail below.

Iceland has come a long way from being one of the poorest nations in Europe 100 years ago. Today, Iceland has one of the highest GDP per capita in the world; they have the highest life expectancy for men in the world, and are not far behind for women; they are the only country in NATO with no armed forces; they have the highest literacy rate in the world; they have one of the highest employment rates; they have the highest ratio of mobile telephones to population; one of the highest rates of connectivity to the internet; the fastest-expanding banking system in the world; booming export business; clean unpolluted air; and they are the leaders in the sustainable power movement.

Not bad for a small country of about 310,000 people. As a foreigner, I am in awe that such a small country is so successful and at the forefront in so many areas. But it's the social phenomena that are most impressive – peace, democracy, renewable energy, equality, women's rights and gay rights.

Iceland has become the leader in new fuel technologies and geothermal energy. With 70 percent of its energy renewable, derived mostly from geothermal sources, Iceland is at the forefront of the sustainable power movement. The country aims to be a predominantly hydrogen-powered economy by 2050 and many world leaders are watching with intense curiosity.

Another notable social phenomenon, as highlighted above, is gender equality and women's rights in Iceland. Compared to a lot of countries, Iceland is really spearheading women's rights, with the world's first elected female head of state (Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, elected in 1980 and retiring in 1996), and with about one third of parliamentary seats held by women. Equally significant too, is the fact that women in sport get just as much media coverage as men in sport. As a foreigner coming from Australia, where hardly anyone even knows that the world champions in women's cricket and netball are the Aussies, or that the Australian women's hockey and basket-

ball teams are ranked within the top five countries in the world, it has been refreshing to see Iceland recognize and respect women for their sporting talents.

And whilst women's rights are recognized and upheld, so too are gay rights. Iceland is a very liberal country when it comes to gay rights and the majority of the public are supportive of homosexuality. Homosexuals have many more rights in Iceland than they do in many other western countries such as Australia and America. Homosexual couples in Iceland are on equal footing with heterosexual couples – they are allowed to register their partnership, and have the same rights as anybody else when it comes to adoption and artificial reproduction procedures. This eliminates almost all discrimination against homosexuals in the system (with the exception of being allowed to register as a couple in religious organizations).

So if you can overlook the weather aspect and the cost of living here, Iceland really is a remarkable place. Icelanders are determined, industrious and resilient people. They work and play hard. Because of the harsh environment and isolated location, I guess it's a case of "survival of the fittest" and maybe that's why they are successful. I thought that Iceland being such a small place would equal a "small mentality" but Iceland proves me wrong here. Hmmm, I'm liking this place more and more... and I think I might stay here a little longer...

Forget the Foot Massager



Marie-Alexandra Hertell hails from Puerto Rico. She sometimes volunteers.

Working for no money sucks. Gaining experience and insight into things you didn't know you could do and learning more about yourself and the world in which you live in is priceless. When you decide to be a volunteer you tend to forget the first observation and concentrate on the latter. Unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be much of the spirit of volunteering in Iceland. In a land where people start working as teenagers to earn their cold harsh cash so they can fulfil their consumer-driven dreams, working for free doesn't seem like a desirable summer job.

I was talking to a friend of mine who helped fund an organisation whose main purpose is to set up young people with different towns in Iceland and give them a helping hand in anything imaginable, from managing pony rides at a fish festival in Dalvík, to marking the Landmannalaugar to Þórsmörk trail, to growing organically delicious tomatoes in Sólheimar. He told me the biggest challenge for him so far has been convincing Icelanders to volunteer, even if for just two weeks. Most volunteer groups are actually made up of foreigners.

In my country there is a long history of volunteering. We aren't in the best socio-economic position so we are used to helping each other out. I find it curious that such a wealthy and well-educated country as this proud hákarl-loving nation isn't more inclined to enrich their lives through

volunteer work. Maybe when things are so good it is hard to understand the plight of others. Either way, let me tell you, you are missing out.

The experiences I am most proud of and that have further developed my character as a global human being are related to my volunteer work. Whether making a terminally ill child smile or him (at the sophisticated age of eight) teaching me the value of life, to going to a small town in my native Puerto Rico with heaps of food, water, and clothing after a hurricane and seeing people fighting over a can of beans only to resolve the problem by cooking it together to working along people with learning difficulties in an eco-community and seeing the resilient fire that burns within a person who sees no limits to their abilities. This is the stuff that I will think about when I become a wrinkled reflection of myself. Being a coffee barista and eavesdropping on your customers' conversations is enjoyable but lending a helping hand gives a much better high.

Cash can get you that state of the art foot massager but volunteering can open your eyes. I write this the day after feeling the trembling below my feet. Can't help to think how lucky the people of Selfoss were. And how devastatingly catastrophic Mother Nature can be. If you have never volunteered make this your summer to take the plunge. All one has to do is put on the news to see the devastation in Myanmar and China to put

things into perspective. Regardless of my opinion about the brutalities of their governments, these are people whose survival right now is based on aid and volunteers.

If you are interested in volunteering for the first time, the world is yours. Every country has some type of program that facilitates your help going to where it is needed, from Namibia to Portugal. You can even think about it as a working vacation. It is a great way to immerse yourself in a country and create bonds with people who you might have otherwise never met. I think its time for the Icelandic youth to get out of their comfort zone and Kringlan-obsessed mentality to prove what I know to be true: that their generation really does give a shit.



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The Road To Oblivion

“The best kind of government is the one that fears its citizens, and by that measure I place both the state of the highway and the continuing betrayal of the Icelandic fishing industry and its consumers solely and squarely on the shoulders of Icelandic people because quite simply, there is NOTHING to fear from any of you.”

Many years ago upon having just finished Art School in my home town of Melbourne I spent 2 months travelling around Vietnam. At one very memorable point on that trip I made a trek to the far north-western corner of the country to the highlands very close to the Chinese border – a place called Sapa, an amazing community in the clouds where the people identify themselves with one of maybe 5 or so tribes, wearing tribal colours, and speak distinct dialects that in some instances bear little or often no resemblance to Vietnamese in spite of being part of that country. To get to Sapa one takes an overnight 13 hour train journey from Hanoi to the base of the highest mountains from which point the final 4 hour bus journey to Sapa winds up and over some of the most breathtaking and awe inspiring mountain scenery I have ever encountered in my life.

In spite of its beauty, that bus journey was also until last week the only time I have truly ever feared for my life in a vehicle. See, the road to Sapa winds around the mountains not unlike the way they do in Looney Tunes cartoons, mostly only one lane wide, carved crudely into the earth the way a child’s finger scrapes through the icing of a birthday cake, unsealed, with no guard rails and the constant, extreme and very real possibility of death at every turn. We slid, we swayed and on several occasions, peering out of my seat over the edge of 500m cliffs, I truly believed I was going to die.

To my initial bemusement, which later developed in to disbelief and finally into anger, the emotional rollercoaster that was my trip to Sapa all those years ago revisited me in this last week whilst travelling around Iceland on unsealed, un-railed one-lane mud tracks bordered by cliffs that dropped straight into the highly uncompromising North Atlantic. The difference is that the road I travelled to Sapa is barely detectable on any over the counter map of Vietnam as it leads to a village of 200 people in the middle of a highly remote mountain area in a developing country in South East Asia. However, the road I travelled last week that bought all those memories flooding back in Iceland was none other than Highway 1.

Yes. That is right. Just so everyone is clear on this point, The national highway of Iceland that connects north to south and everywhere in between consists of several very lengthy stretches of unsealed, un-railed single lane dirt tracks.

At the time of writing I have just paid my monthly tax bill and frankly in light of that experience I am quietly fucking pissed about it. Because, like most of you, nearly 40% of my income is paid to a government that evidently doesn’t see a priority in sealing the main arterial road of the nation. I am pissed about this and I live in Reykjavik, hundreds of kilometres away, so my real question is how is it that the people who live and work in these areas, who drive their children to school

on these roads, in winter no less, whose lifeline to the rest of the world are these roads... How is it that they are not utterly furious? How is it that they are not in front of Alþingi hurling tomatoes at every politician that walks out the door? Where is the rage?

Australia, where I was born, is a terribly flawed democracy where the socially oriented medical system, education and financial sectors have been reduced to all but nothing long ago and its a very much a dog eat dog world following in the footsteps of a Bush-esque USA. The Aboriginal people who had their land stolen from them have all but been eradicated, the stench of faux-nationalism reeks throughout the land and for the most part I am blatantly ashamed to call myself an Australian. Yet here nestled in the bosom of the famed “Scandinavian welfare model” I’ve been under the impression that the people of this country whose ancestors fought long and hard to establish a social fabric that supported and prioritized the needs of its people first was still the underlying and guiding principal of its current citizens. However, it seems to me more and more that this is simply not the case and that people are so malleable in the hands of their governing officials and corporate powers that they no longer question and subsequently no longer act upon the actions and inactions of their government.

So let’s discuss inaction. Let’s for example also discuss my experience of the quota system whose bland and ludicrous reality hit me smack in the face on my recent trip. Some readers of this paper will know a little about the fishing quota, the tourists reading this will not know a single thing about it, but then the majority of you, the citizens, should know a whole lot and yet apparently really don’t give a shit about any of it in spite of the fact that it affects your personal liberties on a daily basis, as I will now demonstrate:

The first stop on my trip around the country last week landed me in the tiny fishing town of Höfn, about half way up the east coast of Iceland. Now, let’s say I want to eat some fish for dinner in Höfn – after all it’s a fishing town. I would in fact have to go into the Netto Supermarket, go to the frozen foods section and buy a bag of diced cuts of Cod or Haddock, which were in all likelihood caught from the sea in the west fjords 3 months ago some 500km away. Meanwhile, 150m from my door fishing boats unload untold tonnes of fresh fish on a daily basis that under the Icelandic quota system I am simply not allowed to buy.

I’m sorry but that is just fucked. You all know it’s fucked and it apparently makes you all very mad and yet none of you do a single thing about it, not the consumers or the producers... nothing. You allow your fishing industry to be controlled by an obscenely wealthy Mafia of corporate interests – with the full support of your government and demand nothing more than the leftovers. They make

you eat frozen offcuts from the other side of the country while they sell your fish to other people for ludicrous profit. If it was up to me they would all be tarred and feathered in the city square but I can’t even vote... Yet nobody with that singularly sacred democratic right seems to question this situation let alone act out against it. I can’t vote because I am not a citizen, in fact I have to pay your government for the privilege of staying here and yet I seem to care about this more than you do. It’s not like the Icelandic government is somehow oppressing you. There is no Burmese-style army and its not like President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson is going to have you water-boarded and beheaded in Austurvöllur for acting out collectively on a mass scale, so I would like someone, anyone in fact to explain to me for what reason other than sheer ignorance, obliviousness and nonchalance on behalf of the Icelandic people this is allowed to occur?

The best kind of government is the one that fears its citizens, and by that measure I place both the state of the highway and the continuing betrayal of the Icelandic fishing industry and its consumers solely and squarely on the shoulders of Icelandic people because quite simply, there is NOTHING to fear from any of you.

With all this in mind I can’t help but occasionally think its very fitting that the shape of Iceland resembles a sheep.

You allow all of this to happen to you. Your government tells you it’s no longer allowed to buy fresh fish from the boat outside your door but to instead buy it frozen, from Bonus and you just do it. Your government tells you to drive your children to school in a blizzard on an unsealed road on the side of a mountain with no side guardrails and you just do it. Your government tells you that you can’t buy a bottle of wine on a Sunday because it makes baby Jesus cry and you just say OK. BAH...

Is this what is wrong with Iceland? Is this where it all goes wrong? Is the imagination of people so limited and you demand so little of your government that these atrocities are not only accepted but embraced then you are just working for your government when it is supposed to be working for you?

Text by Ben Frost



Aubur, Gljúfrasteinn. Photo: Halldór Laxness, 1955. © Halldór Laxness' Family

THE LATE VIEW

Photographs from the legacy of Nobel Laureate in Literature and cosmopolitan Halldór Laxness (1902 – 1998)

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Hvallfjörður. Photo: Halldór Laxness, 1957. © Halldór Laxness' Family



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Paul Brannigan has taken Kerrang! a hard rock magazine that used to sell 40,000 copies and propelled it to sales in the excess of 85,000 copies. He must be doing something right, right?

Photo by GAS



Rock n' Roll Noise Pollution

“If these bands sounded more obviously alike, it would probably be a lot easier for them to break internationally. If you had a couple of mini Sigur Róses coming from here, they would probably see great success. Obviously labels are stupid...”

You may ask yourself: who is this Paul Brannigan person and why am I reading about him. This bout of self-interrogation will be entirely warranted. However, if you are (or were at some point during the last three years) a spotty, emo-haired British teenager, you will know all too well who Paul Brannigan is, and why people would interview him. For Paul Brannigan is none other than the editor of Kerrang! – “The world’s biggest selling weekly rock magazine!” – an institution in rock if there ever was one.

The almost thirty year-old magazine started off as a “hard rock” supplement to now defunct brit music mag Sounds, with the sole purpose of covering the then-fresh New Wave of British Heavy Metal. Kerrang! quickly found an audience of its own and spent the eighties covering hard rock and heavy metal, the early nineties covering hard rock and grunge and the late nineties covering hard rock and nü-metal before progressing to its current preference of hard rock and emo. The magazine frequently outsells the NME and wields enormous trendsetting powers in the UK, often breaking hopeful rock acts with the sheer strength of their readership.

So, Paul Brannigan is the editor of one of the most influential music publications in the world, and he was recently in Iceland. He was here researching a story on beloved Hafnarfjörður glam-rockers Sign, who’ve built an impressive following in the UK over the last few years. No stranger to Iceland, Brannigan has attended the last few Iceland Airwaves festivals, overseeing special Kerrang! stages and taking in as many concerts as possible. The Grapevine met up with Brannigan during his recent visit and got the expert opinion on the state of Icelandic rock, and the state of rock in general.

No One Interferes, Ever

“I think our circulation is around 75,000 copies per issue these days. It was 85,000 a year ago, the highest it’s ever been. All the way through the eighties and nineties we were only selling 40,000 per week.” Brannigan is telling me how Kerrang!’s readership has nearly doubled in the space of a decade that’s mostly known for ushering in the deaths of both print media and retail music. I then ask him if he personally likes all of the music he covers, and the need for compromise.

“It’s not my personal fanzine. If it were, it would sell about four copies. I do like a lot of the bands that are in there, I feel we feature a healthy mix of bands that probably no one has never heard, but we adore, of and bands that our readers demand to read about every issue. Usually, with every band we do there’s at least one person in the office that loves them. Are we under pressure from our sponsors as to what we cover? Absolutely not. Otherwise it’d be painful. No, we basically just do whatever we want. No one inter-

feres, ever.

“If someone in the office likes an album, we’ll want to cover it in some way, say with the way we’ve been featuring Mínus or Sign. However, we do have to take into account that those bands belong to a certain niche, even within the Kerrang! quarters, and won’t appeal to everyone, unlike bands like My Chemical Romance or Fallout Boy. So we need to put enough big bands in to be able to sell copies, but enough of the niche bands we believe in to keep it interesting.”

Mínus were Ridiculously Loud

Brannigan says that Kerrang!’s first exposure to Iceland came at the behest of hard rock legends Mínus. “One of the freelancers scored a copy of Jesus Christ Bobby and gave it a 5K review, calling them one of the best post-hardcore bands since Refused. Then they played London and we all went and saw them... it was the loudest gig I’ve ever been to. Ridiculously loud. So we got interested in the Icelandic scene and then had the chance to do something with Airwaves. That was a great introduction. It’s easy to get jaded about scenes, and they easily get formulaic. The rock scene here seems to possess a freshness and purity about it that seemed lacking in the British and American scenes we spend so much time covering.

“Over there, it’s all about commercial possibilities and marketing – here it seems more organic. People seem to play music because they want to play music, not because they want to be rock stars or make a living out of it. You get none of the hard sell with the Icelandic bands, like “you’ve got to hear our band, it’s the best thing since sliced bread! Put us on your cover!” No one here has that kind of arrogance, it’s more like “Oh, you like our band? Really? That’s cool.” They seem surprised and taken aback that anyone should care. And there’s a lot of good music being made here. Bands like Gavin Portland, We Made God, Vicky Pollard are all favourites, along with Sign and Mínus, of course.”

A Couple of Mini-Sigur Róses

I ask if the Icelandic rock bands get lumped together as one scene, or one sound, like what happened with Seattle, etc.? When a Brit hears Mínus, does he lump them in a category with Sigur Rós, for instance?

“No, I don’t think people would ever think about them in those terms, or as Icelandic bands. There’s no real connection between Gavin Portland and Sign, for instance. I don’t think people think about an “Icelandic rock scene” in those terms. Our readers have pretty much heard one or two of those bands; it’s not like the Seattle scene where everyone wanted to sound the same. If your fondness for Sign prompts you to buy a Gavin Portland album, you’re in for a surprise. I think it’s one of the Icelandic music scene’s strengths, that ev-

eryone can do their own thing. There seems to be a big individualistic streak in terms of sound and sonic approach, even though the musicians seem quite helpful to one another in other respects. In Seattle, Nirvana desperately wanted to sound like the Melvins, and Soundgarden desperately wanted to sound like whoever... I don’t see that happening here, and that’s one of the scenes biggest strengths, but it might also be a weakness in certain regard.

If these bands sounded more obviously alike, it would probably be a lot easier for them to break internationally. If you had a couple of mini Sigur Róses coming from here, they would probably see great success. Obviously labels are stupid, and when they get one band that works they sign anyone who sounds remotely similar. It happened with Seattle and it happened with Detroit. But there don’t seem to be fifteen Sigur Róses kicking around here as far as I can tell. I love Sigur Rós, but that’s probably a good thing.”

Finally, do Brannigan see any of the Icelandic rock bands breaking internationally soon?

“Well we have the bands we like and we try and help them out. We brought Gavin Portland over for a Kerrang! tour recently and hope to do the same with We Made God once their album’s out. We’ve been covering Mínus, and obviously Sign has the biggest profile of any of the Icelandic bands with Kerrang’s readers, like Sigur Rós. Hopefully things will continue to develop for them and they will do well. They’ve got quite a loyal set of fans here, a tight knit little crowd that’s into them. The Sign Army. Their only problem is that they don’t fall into any specific pigeonhole, which makes the metal kids think they’re emo and the emo kids think they’re metal. It happens with a lot of rock ‘n’ roll bands, but those bands usually get the most devoted following. But we’ll see.”

Text by Haukur S. Magnússon



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The Politics of Archaeology

“As if to complete the role reversal, in Raiders of the Lost Ark, Indiana Jones falls asleep just as Marion is kissing him. In The Mummy, Evelyn falls asleep just as she is about to be kissed by Rick. In both cases, it is a sign of strength to need love less than the other party.”

There seems little doubt, give or take Batman's imminent return, that Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull will be the biggest movie of the summer. The success of the original series inspired copycat franchises, such as Romancing the Stone/Jewel of the Nile, set in modern day (the 80's) Columbia and the Middle East, and the Mummy series, starring Brendan Fraser. This year, Fraser seems more determined than ever to grab a hold of Jones' man bag and hope to be pulled on by him to fortune and glory. For as almost as soon as Indy IV ends its theatrical run, The Mummy will return again on August 1st.

King Tut

Both series are inspired by action heroes of the 20's and 30's, from real life as well as the movies. A craze for Egyptian archaeology (called Egyptomania) originally started in 1922, following Howard Carter's discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb. Not only did he discover previously unheard of treasures, but adding to the sense of mystery was the fact that several of the members of his party soon died during mysterious circumstances, prompting rumours of a "Curse of the Pharaoh." Carter himself died of cancer in 1939 at the age of 64. Indiana Jones' debt to him was paid in 1992, when he appears as a character in the first TV episode about the adventurer, called "Young Indiana Jones and the Curse of the Jackal."

Interest in Ancient Egypt was renewed when the exhibition "Treasures of Tutankhamen" toured the United States in the years 1976-79, prompting Steve Martin to write the song "King Tut." Perhaps not quite coincidentally, in 1977 George Lucas and Steven Spielberg met on a beach in Hawaii and started discussing Egyptian archaeology and a fictional adventurer by the name of Indiana Smith. Renamed Indiana Jones, this character first appeared on the big screen in Raiders of the Lost Ark in 1981. The film is set in 1936, and here Indy must travel to an excavation site in Egypt to find the Lost Ark of Moses.

Spielberg vs. Europe

It sometimes seems that, apart from Oscar Schindler, Spielberg doesn't really like Europeans very much. In Raiders, the all-American hero is confronted by an unholy alliance of French and Germans, in the form of evil archaeologist Belloq and his Nazi friends. Indy, however, prefers to ally himself with the locals in the form of the burly Egyptian Sallah. The point seems clear, the Americans and the third world form a united front against European Imperialism.

What the film lacks in subtlety regarding foreign affairs, it makes up for in feminism. Marion Ravenwood is a new breed of heroine, even more macho than the Blaster wielding princess Leia. In her first scene, we see Marion out drinking a big Tibetan, and she greets Indy with a punch in the face. However, as the film progresses, it is still Indy

who has to repeatedly save her, be it from a snake pit, a burning plane and even the Wrath of God.

Indy vs. the Indians

The next instalment, Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, came out in 1984. Here there is a complete role reversal, so much so that the film is set the year before Raiders, in 1935. This time, Indy has no luck with the natives. In Shanghai, everyone (apart from the waiter) is against him, and the barely survives being killed by hordes of locals. Once over in India, it is up to him to save the locals. However, he is not about to join Gandhi and march on the British. Instead, he helps to crush a revolt against Imperial rule by a resistance group called "The Thugees." Their intent is not only to liberate India but take over the world. Sankara Stones notwithstanding, it is not quite clear how they are going to do this. Once out in the open the Thugee archers are easy prey to the firearms of His Majesty's forces, and the closing sequence seems to be more at home in the film Zulu, which came out 20 years earlier.

Nightclub Singers vs. Ballbreakers

As if this wasn't enough, the female character is also a far cry from Marion. Willie Scott is a nightclub singer who does little besides scream her way through the entire movie, and whose biggest concern is breaking a nail. It seems to have worked for Spielberg, though, who wound up marrying actress Kate Capshaw. She has not acted since, instead concentrating on raising their six children.

When Indiana Jones finally returned in 1989, things were back to normal. He beds a European broad who, as in most American films, turns out to be "easy," having also previously bedded his father. Inevitably, she also turns out to be a Nazi. The bad Europeans are back as the Nazis but this time they are aided by an American millionaire, while Indy is helped by a Turkish secret society as well as by the Egyptian Sallah.

In Kingdom of the Crystal Skull, there is yet another unholy alliance, this time consisting of the Russians and the British, the latter in the form of the treacherous Mac. Indy, however, does not bed the Russian babe Spalko played by Cate Blanchett, but is instead reunited with Marion Ravenwood. Spalko is probably the most capable woman in the series and is represented as a ballbreaker, even crushing a giant ant between her thighs. Her perhaps unfeminine thirst for knowledge, however, proves her undoing.

Men vs. Women

The Mummy's Rick O'Connell is everything that Indiana Jones is not. Whereas Indy relies on his whip and wits, and rarely uses firearms (except, of course, to get out of swordfights,) Rick is armed with four pistols and a shotgun. And his problem solving technique usually consists of shooting at things, even things such as resurrected mummies that are obviously impervious to gunfire. Even

though the connection to the Jones films is obvious, the film is a semi-remake of a 1932 horror classic starring Boris Karloff, and came out in 1999.

By this time the women had taken over. Instead of Indiana and Dr. Jones being two sides of the same person, here the wits are provided by Evelyn Carnahan, played by Rachel Weisz. Evelyn is a librarian who of course solves the puzzle, as well as falling for the tall, handsome and dim-witted adventurer. As if to ram home the point, a bad guy says: "They're led by a woman. What does a woman know?" Cut to: Rachel waxing philosophical about ancient Egypt in front of a statue.

Americans vs. Brits

As if to complete the role reversal, in Raiders of the Lost Ark, Indiana Jones falls asleep just as Marion is kissing him. In The Mummy, Evelyn falls asleep just as she is about to be kissed by Rick. In both cases, it is a sign of strength to need love less than the other party.

Fun is had with the nationalities too. The story starts in 1923 with Rick and his French foreign legion being overrun by Arabs. The American Rick later teams up with the English Evelyn and her brother. It seems almost like a story Blair and Bush (remember them?) could cuddle up to. But this is before 9/11 and care is taken to insult no one, or at least everyone equally. A group of swashbuckling American cowboys are found to be greedy and killed off one by one, the evil Mummy is Egyptian but so is the secret society that fights it. Surprisingly for an American film, and one set in colonial times at that, it's actually the Brits that come out best.

The Mummy vs. Indiana Jones

The Mummy spawned a sequel two years later, a spin off sequel in The Scorpion King, a sequel to which is in turn in production. The next film is called The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor, and is set in China.

But for all its political correctness, The Mummy series is not as engaging as the Jones' films. The Spielberg movies have sometimes been accused of being roller coaster rides (literally in Temple of Doom), but The Mummy takes that to another level. The archaeology provides the flimsiest pretext for a shoot-'em-up, while the mystery is more or less done away with by the voice-over in the beginning, just in case someone in the audience doesn't get it. Perhaps movie goers were more discerning in the early 80's than in the late 90's after all.

Text by Valur Gunnarsson

Illustration by Baldur Helgason



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*From the Hávamál, 1300 AD



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Reykjavík – The Insiders Guide

10 Things That Will Make You Feel Like a Reykjavík Resident

Summer is on – again, which means the streets of Reykjavík are crowded with tourists – again. Like an invading army, they more or less take over the city, making it difficult for us ordinary folks to find a seat at a restaurant. Not that I am complaining, my livelihood more or less depends on you nice folks from... well, wherever you may come from.

Nonetheless, I want to offer you tourists a rare glimpse at the real Reykjavík. Tourist guide books will only get you so far, and most will only direct you to the most popular tourist attractions. We locals tend to stay away from those places. Here's what we do instead, that is, when we are not working or doing mundane stuff, like the dishes and the laundry. Basically then, this is how we burn the weekend. Try out our insider tips. Any combination of these is acceptable. This is your opportunity to experience the city like us. Not like them.

1 WEAR NORMAL CLOTHES

This is the most important step you can take to gain access to the real Reykjavík experience. 99% of the time it is possible to spot tourists in Reykjavík from miles away. I even play a game with my friends where we guess people's nationality based on their attire. Americans are usually easiest to spot. Followed by Germans and the French. Here is a little hint: you don't need a bright orange parka or hiking boots to traverse Reykjavík. Dress like a tourist and you are automatically excluded. Just dress like normal folks.

2 VISIT THE FLEA MARKET

The best flea market in Reykjavík is Kolaportið by the Reykjavík harbour. We tend to go there on weekends to stock up on second hand books, wholesale candy, dried fish and used DVDs. There is a lot of crap available there, but the food corner is excellent. Many small producers, both fish, meat and pastry, sell their products in Kolaportið, and there is no better place for a taste of traditional local cuisine. If you find yourself craving bovine colostrum, this is absolutely the place to go.

3 GO FOR A SWIM

We consider swimming pools to be a birthright. Vesturbæjarlaug swimming pool is an ideal destination for a sunny afternoon. It is the second oldest swimming pool in Reykjavík, and the oldest one outdoors. There are two very good reasons to visit. The sauna, and the hot tub conversation, where the locals discuss current affairs and exchange gossip. If you have any questions, and I mean any questions, the know-it-alls in the hot tub have the answer. They might not agree on one specific answer, but you'll get answers nonetheless.

4 HANG OUT AT A CAFÉ ALL-DAY

One of our favourite pastimes is all-day café hang-out. Saturdays are really the best days for this activity. Here's what you do. Start with a brunch around 11, drink some coffee, read some magazines and newspapers. Early afternoon, start out with beers, but move slowly. If you are lucky there might be a match on TV. Steadily increase the level of alcohol consumption as the day goes on. Dance on the tables around midnight. Failsafe fun.

5 ENJOY THE SUN IN AUSTURVÖLLUR

If the sun is out, which admittedly does not happen all that often around these parts, we head for Austurvöllur, a small patch of grass outside of the Parliamentary building. On a nice day you won't be able to see the grass, just people enjoying the sun. It is customary bring a six-pack, and conveniently the alcohol store is right next to Austurvöllur. Not a bad way to spend the day.

6 BARS AFTER MIDNIGHT

In most of the civilized world, bar patrons start to plan their departure around midnight. We choose to do it differently. Around midnight, we start to plan our departure – from home and to the bar. Many visitors make the mistake of going out for a nice dinner, hitting a few bars and returning home around or after midnight, just when things are starting to heat up. Here's a better idea, go out for a nice dinner, go back for a nap, go out around midnight and stay as long as it takes. You cannot say you have truly experienced Iceland until you have seen us stumbling out of a bar at 7 a.m., looking for an after-party.

7 SPEND AN EVENING AT THE PARK

The park known as Miklatún just off Reykjavík centre is where we go for some light exercise in the evening. Usually you'll be able to crash a football game (always pick the losing side, that way you can't be blamed for anything), get in on the volley ball action or lace up the hightops for some streetball action. If you prefer a less active mode of exercise, try your hand with the old-timers who practice their skills with the fly-rods fishing poles, or try the frisbee-golf.

8 SEE A CONCERT

Although the literature might suggest otherwise, there is more to Icelandic music than Björk and Sigur Rós. Some of it is even pretty good. Scour the Grapevine music listings and check out the usual suspects when it comes to live music, Organ, Nasa or Café Amsterdam to name a few. Catch one of the local acts, who knows, you just might be listening to the next big thing.

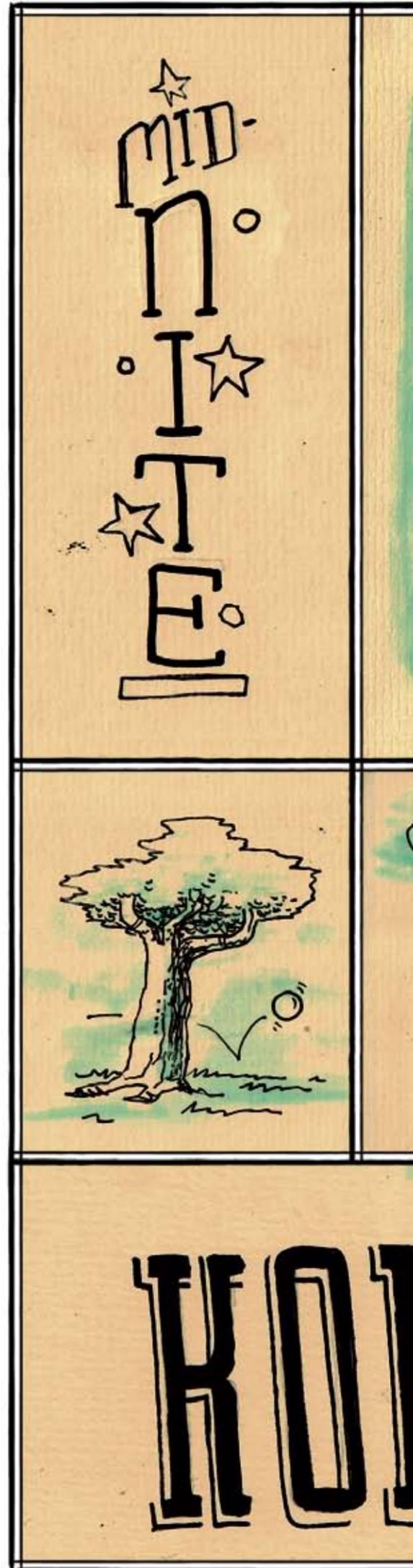
9 GALLERY OPENINGS

We love to attend gallery and exhibition openings. Mostly because there is usually free white wine involved. Just find one and step right in, no one ever bothers with the invite. Make sure you audibly make a few vague comments about the artist or his work, but don't buy the artwork. As a rule, we never buy the artwork.

10 CATCH A GAME

It is quite possible that you have seen better football played in your home country, or at least on TV. But you have never witnessed 22 men who so heroically battle the forces of nature on a football pitch. Icelandic football is very often a game where the team that attacks with the wind to its back for a longer period comes out on top. Every player knows how to bend it like Beckham. Aim 45° off-target and let the wind take care of the rest.

Text by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson
Illustration by Bobby Breiðholt





CONCERT



Photo by SBB

Dormah

Where: Bar 11 When: May 30, 2008

Youngsters Muck were already in full swing by the time I arrived at the tiny room on the second level of Bar 11, which somebody had sadly mistaken as a suitable venue for a live rock show. Although I only caught two songs from their set, Muck impressed me with a youthful take on metal-core with a bit of atmospheric Isis and generous distortion thrown in for good measure. Promising stuff and I'll be sure to make a point of seeing them play a full set in the near future. They also had the nights biggest following obviously. About half the audience left the room when they finished.

There was none of the usual wait-30-minutes-while-the-guitar-player-tunes-his-delicate-instrument-and-the-drummer-realigns-the-kit intermission between sets. Gordon Riots plugged in and off they went. By now an established act in Icelandic metal, the band used the occasion to try out some new material, most of it heavy as... a four-letter word not fit for print...and a little less up the beat-en-core path they have hitherto trodden. They played a short set, but seemed hellbent on destruction.

This was my virgin experience with the night's headliners, Dormah, and I must confess, as deflowerings come, this one was a violation. This fistful of veteran rockers is fronted by the ex-Changer frontman Egill, who is the voice to beat in this business. Despite some line-up changes in recent months, Dormah's sludge metal sounds brutal, but still oddly melodic, while manifesting the all the evil sounds of slow doom metal. Filling in on bass guitar was Þórir of My Summer as a Salvation Soldier and Gavin Portland. He was right at home with this bunch, so here's hoping he makes this a permanent post.

Reviewed by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

CONCERT



Photo by GAS

Mike Monday

Where: Tunglið When: May 30, 2008

Everybody makes mistakes and I guess that really applies to everyone, even the Icelandic music-moguls of Jón Jónsson. But what was it that made this concert so gut-wrenchingly, heart-turningly, face-smashingly horrible? The DJ's were good, the venue looked alright so, what went wrong? I've narrowed my conclusion down to a mixture of two things:

1. Way too many heinous substances. Techno and mind altering chemicals go together like peas and carrots but this gig took that cocktail to the extreme. From the guy sitting at the table next to you screaming: "Why are you calling me on this phone?! Don't you know we're being monitored?!", to the angry young men threatening each other at the bar, to the three people on the dance floor with pupils the size of saucers strengthening the eternal stereotype that white people can't dance.

2. Bad timing. The incredible surge of interest in all electronic and dance music following the "Nu-Rave" explosion in early-mid 2007 has temporarily receded. Techno has had too much coverage and now all but the most hardcore of fans are drifting away in a search for the next big thing. Hardcore Techno is moving back to the underground which in turn meant that the large Tunglið dance floor never quite filled up the way it should have.

These two points really go hand in hand, seeing as how the less popular the parties, the more noticeable the drugs, which in turn makes the parties less popular until after a few months when people have forgotten how uncomfortable being surrounded by pill-poppers is. Conclusion: Although Mike himself was very good at what he did, all he did was give this straight out of Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas scene a good soundtrack.

Reviewed by Oddur Sturluson

CONCERT



Photo by Björn Árnason

Super Mama Djombo

Where: NASA When: May 31, 2008

A week prior to the concert I received the Super Mama Djombo CD Ar Puro, and as soon as the notes hit my ear drums I was hooked. The positive vibe, the beautiful vocals and instruments and the way the album seems to transport you to someplace warm and vibrant – preferably somewhere with palm trees. Super Mama Djombo is much more than just feel good music however. The beautiful Creole lyrics are mostly about the hardships and political strife that have plagued their homeland of Guinea-Bissau. This is the music of people who have seen how ugly the world can get and know that although problems are inevitable, moping and complaining won't help but rather give people something to be happy about.

The second I walked through the door at Nasa I knew I was in for a treat. Other than the obvious fact that the band started on time, which is practically unheard of in Reykjavik, they are one of those rare bands that sound even better live than on their records. The energy and way they riled the crowd was breathtaking and I doubt if I've been as swept up by any band in a long time. I was slightly disappointed by what I felt was the lack of young people (not that there's anything wrong with being middle-aged), because the audience seemed rather more subdued than a band like this deserves. Although somewhat closed and rigid at first, the Icelandic crowd soon melted and swayed, danced and sang along incoherently.

All in all I would have to say that this might be the best performance I've seen since DJ Mehdi blessed us with his presence a year ago. So my advice is, pour yourself some rum, smoke a cigar, wear a fedora, put Super Mama Djombo on and let them take you away from the cold and isolation of the north to the tropical paradise which is Ar Puro.

Reviewed by Oddur Sturluson

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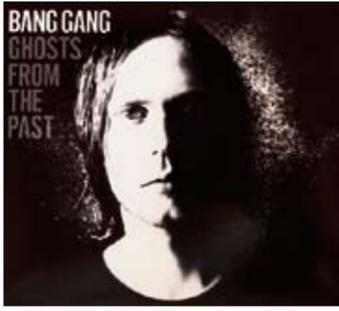
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CD

Ghosts From the Past *Bang Gang*

This is a beautiful record: Simple as that. Barði Johannsson has taken simplistic, synth infused melodies, wrapped each around blankets of warm, comforting reverberated vocals and soft-spoken rhythmic textures to create, what is quite possibly, the best Icelandic pop record to emerge this year. But this is a quiet triumph, a record that unravels more of itself with frequent listens, careful not to move too quickly to pit mood over melody. It's dark, painfully dark at times, but with Bang Gang, it's the ghosts that bellow, not the light that makes them visible. From the beginning verse of 'The World Is Grey' through the dark corridors of 'I Know You Sleep' and Postal Service-esque 'You Won't Get Out', a tune co-penned with Gonzales, this is a weighty, incisive listen, one showcasing a heavyweight in Icelandic pop. Watch out Mugison.

Reviewed by Shain Shapiro

CD

Dísá *Dísá*

So who exactly is Dísá? Well, after several listens to the chanteuse's long-player, I cannot offer much to properly answer that question. Still, in this case, it does not matter. Dísá experiments with haunting Icelandic pop, Chamber folk, electronic blips and bleeps, cabaret and off-kilter percussive textures while attempting to hold the fort down with intelligent production techniques and childlike, suggestive vocal work. At times it is glorious, especially in the first half of the album from 'Alien Symphony' through 'Final Call'. The last bit, however, including the questionable nu-soul romp of 'Equations' and too-ethereal exercise of 'Heyr Mina Ben' does not succeed, moving too far from the singer's pop-sopped comfort zone. Regardless, it is an ambitious, multi-layered set built upon a voice that holds one's own. More focus may produce a gem next time around.

Reviewed by Shain Shapiro

CD

Murta St. Caluga *Benni Hemm Hemm*

This is Benni Hemm Hemm's third studio album in as many years, which puts him among the most productive contemporary recording artists in Iceland. After a successful collaboration with Jens Lekman, Benni Hemm Hemm returns with Murta St. Caluga, by no means a giant step from 2007 release, Kajak. It contains all the innocence and sweetness that is possible to muster from a horn-section and acoustic guitars, much like Kajak. In chess terms, this could be labelled as a waiting-move; it is not an offensive move but forcefully defends the status quo, which in Benni's case is no small feat. There is a hint of country and western to be detected in some of the arrangements, and Benni's newfound humour towards political issues is refreshing. Other than that, these could easily be outtakes from the Kajak sessions.

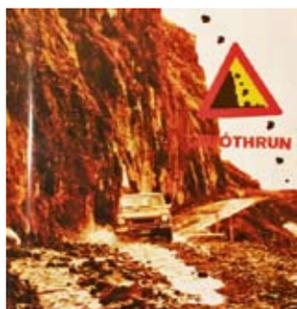
Reviewed by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

CD

Oft spurði ég mömmu *Sigurður Guðmundsson og Memfismafían*

This is the first solo album by Sigurður Guðmundsson of Hjalmar and Senuþjófarnir fame. The album is an original soundtrack to an upcoming documentary called Teipið gengur. Here, Sigurður covers classic Icelandic pop/jazz dance melodies from various artists of yore. This is an excellent compilation, really. The performance is solid, and it is difficult to argue with the selection of songs. This is the kind of CD you could slip in for a romantic evening with a loved one, and you'd already be halfway towards the goal. This might not be breaking any new ground, but sometimes a solid delivery of classics is just what you need. Sigurður has a nice delivery for this kind of songs, and pulls it off without ever sounding cheesy.

Reviewed by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

CD

Grjóthrun *Grjóthrun í Hólshreppi*

I guess this qualifies as authentic Icelandic folk-rock, which is not really something that inspires me with pride in my cultural heritage. Let's focus on the positive: 1) I enjoyed the song Jónas, not least because the lyric was written by the bass player when he was 11-years old, which I would rather have expected from the other lyrics actually. 2) The guitar sound is good, almost as good as the drum sound is flat and horrible. I can't think of anything else positive to say, really. Fans of Pursaflokkurinn will undoubtedly enjoy this, but again, Pursaflokkurinn has never inspired much pride in me either. I see this band playing staff parties and the occasional political rally in the future. The political rallies will undoubtedly be organized by themselves.

Reviewed by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

CD

Skiptar skoðanir *Múgsefjun*

Debut release from the alt-pop darlings Múgsefjun. Their sound is built around the interaction between the accordion player and a more regular bass, drums and guitar pop instrumentation and the occasional organ. Somewhat unusual, but quite loveable all the same. The songwriting is solid, blending influences from alt-country, jazz and progressive rock to form well crafted pop tunes, nicely delivered by singer Hjalti Þorkelsson. 12 songs in all, this is a solid first recording of radio-friendly tunes from Múgsefjun, which should firmly establish them among the forefront of the Icelandic pop scene.

Reviewed by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

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The 12th Man - Diary of a Soccer Fan

WOMEN'S DIVISION

Team	W	D	L	Points
1 Valur	3	0	0	9
2 KR	3	0	0	9
3 Stjarnan	2	1	0	7
4 Keflavík	1	1	1	4
5 Breiðablik	1	1	1	4
6 Fylkir	1	0	2	3
7 Afturelding	1	0	2	3
8 Þór/KA	1	0	2	3
9 HK/Víkingur	0	1	2	1
10 Fjölnir	0	0	3	0

Since the last issue of Reykjavík Grapevine, both the men's and women's national soccer teams have played matches. The men met up with the boys of Wales in a friendly match, with no special significance attached. In short the match was dull, with neither team showing anything special. Wales managed a goal at the end of the first half and the not so interested Icelandic team didn't use the second half to equalise. A loss to Wales does not bode well for the upcoming qualifying games for the 2010 World Cup finals. But then again this was to be expected from the Icelandic team which seem to be going through a longer than usual slump.

The women went to Serbia for a game in the European Cup qualifying round. The Icelandic team is in a heat with France, Slovenia, Greece and Serbia. The match went exceptionally well for the Icelanders, ending with a 0-4 win. After 5 games, Iceland is in second place with 12 points, trailing France by 6 points, but the French have played 2 more games. Slovenia is third with 9 points after 6 games. With the top team securing a place for the finals in Finland 2009, and the second place earning a chance in a qualifying tournament played in October, the future for the women's team looks promising, at least a lot more promising than for the men.

Women's Premier League

On the local level the women's premier league is off to a predictable start. On the top Valur and KR share the first and second place. Valur being slightly in front, having scored an amazing 15 goals in three games, with only 2 goals conceded. The rest of the teams, in the ten-team division, are mostly around the middle, with the exception of HK/Víkingur and Fjölnir at the bottom. Although 3 games is a small sample size, it looks as if these 2 teams will be relegated. Also, as was predicted on the pages of this fine publication, the top battle looks to be between Valur and KR, as has often been the case in previous years.

Valur and KR square off on June 11th at Valur's home field, the Vodafone pitch at 19:15 for a match that will surely both be exciting and fun to watch. Prior to that KR welcomes third place team Stjarnan on June 7th at 14:00 and Valur ventures to Reykjavík to meet fourth place team Keflavík at the same time.

Men's Premier League

In the men's league, newcomers Fjölnir are showing some wear, losing their last two games, first to the current champions Valur, in an electrifying match 1-2, and then to the Kópavogur team Breiðablik. Out of towners Keflavík, sitting

at the top after four rounds, also seem to be losing their momentum, suffering a loss to Þróttur in the fifth round.

Valur, last year's champions, are off to a shaky start earning only six points in five games with a devastating loss against then bottom team HK, 2-4 in the fifth round, and many supporters are getting antsy, to say the least. The last years haven't really been fruitful for Valur, alternating between premier league relegation and first division promotion every other year. A very welcome premier league championship last year saw their supporters in high spirits. But if things will not turn around soon, the fans will demand the manager's resignation.

Check www.soccerway.com for a full schedule of both the men's and women's leagues.

Text by Páll Hilmarrsson, sports commentator

Living Museum by the Sea

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

The Maritime Museum has a unique location at the west end of the old fishing harbour. There are exhibitions on the evolution of Icelanders' fishing and coastal culture.

The Coast Guard vessel Ódinn is a part of the museum. It took part in the Cod Wars of the last century and went on numerous search and rescue missions.



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By **JONATHAN FINER**
THE WASHINGTON POST

Check it out

Hamborgarabullan, Geirsgata
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As we left, we asked the women seated near us whether there was anywhere else around that could rival Saegreifinn for value. "Right next door," one told us, "is the best hamburger in Reykjavik."

That was all we needed to hear. The next day we went back to the waterfront for a late lunch.

*Hamborgarabullan (Ham-

burger Joint) was a stark contrast to the Old World authenticity of the night before. The walls were plastered with pictures of the Blues Brothers and John Mellencamp. Large windows framed panoramic views of the wharf. At 3 p.m. the place was jammed with locals.

We ordered a cheeseburger, a veggie burger and fries from the counter, along with a milkshake. ("If I only have one more milkshake the rest of my life, it should be vanilla," the co-owner, Orn Hreinnsson, told us. We took his advice.) Wrapped in wax paper and nestled in wicker baskets, the food was as good as the price, less than \$30.

Hreinnsson, who also helps cook and run the register, said he opened Hamborgarabullan soon after a trip to New York City four years ago during which he ate every night at a Midtown place called Burger Joint.

Iceland, of course, is about far more than the food. We spent most of our time exploring its otherworldly geology of geysers, crater lakes and hot springs. Still, it's hard to beat a good meal at a good price. With a bit of work, we found two of them.

**An excerpt from the article: "Bargain meals can be elusive in Iceland's capital"*

A

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Reykjavík Then & Now

In 1979...

Hairdressers had the good sense to wear a tie.



In 2008...

Hairdressers dress down. Photo by GAS



THE WILD ICELAND

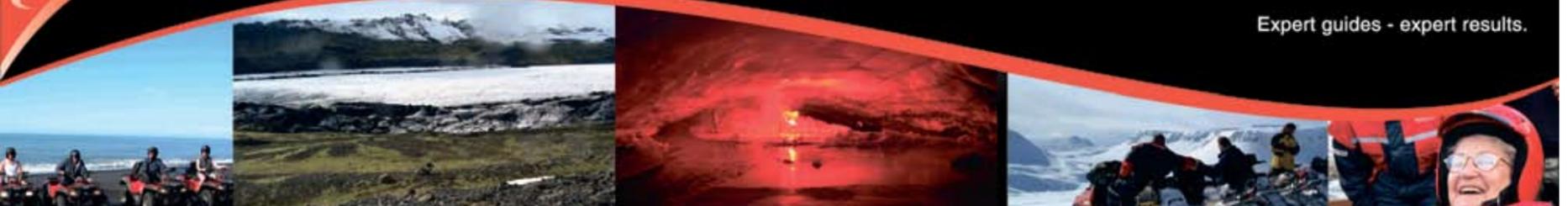
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Despite its name, Iceland is not all that icy. In fact, you'll have to go through some trouble for a first hand experience of ice here in the summer time – like making the two-hour drive up to Mýrdalsjökull glacier. We arrived at the foot of the glacier at noon, just in time to meet up with a group of tourists taking a snowmobile trip up to the top. It is a sunny day, half-clear sky and the view from the base camp is already pretty impressive. We join the group, hoping for an even better lookout post up top.

Mýrdalsjökull is 1515 m high and roughly 600 km² and rests on a very active volcano called Katla, considered one of the most powerful volcanoes in the world. It last erupted in 1918, but the regular eruption cycle is between 50 and 80 years, so we are a bit overdue. Katla is carefully monitored at all times, and in the case of an eruption it would take an hour for the lava to melt through the ice cap. This, however, is only a slightly comforting thought to keep in mind at the beginning of the trip.

Things start out slowly. Our guide, a small Frenchman called Anthony, gives us basic lessons on how to operate the snowmobile, and stresses the importance of everyone following in a single line behind him on the trip, especially this time of

year when the glacier is warming and the snow on top melting away. The landscape changes fast on a glacier in springtime, and unknown crevasses are known to appear where there was none before.

We take off for the top, in a single line as ordered. I notice one crack in the snow, which we bypass. The group consists of an English family, two American couples and us Grapeviners. Apart from the guide and me, everyone is taking their first step on a snowmobile, so we ascend slowly while the group learns to operate the vehicle.

The hell raiser in me is having a hard time adjusting to the slow pace, so I make sure I am at the back of the line. Every now and then I fall back, even stop and admire the view, while the group gains a little advantage before I open up to catch them again. I make sure that Anthony and the rest of the group don't notice, and I never break the single line. That would be bad form, obviously.

There is nothing in this world as unreliable as the Icelandic weather. Near the top, at 1400 metres altitude, we hit fog. This is an unfortunate result of the warm weather. The melting snow on the glacier evaporates and forms clouds of fog as it cools down in the higher altitude. Although this

seriously hampers our view of the surroundings, Anthony the guide improvises a great 3-d model of the glacier and its surroundings from snow to explain what we would be looking at, if weather permitted.

We head down again, towards the southwest tongue of the glacier. We quickly descend from the fog and into the sunlight. The visibility is greatly improved. We stop and take it in. On our right we can see the outlet glacier Sólheimajökull and its crevassed icefall, and a little further, Eyjafjallajökull glacier, sitting atop another active volcano. Between the two lies the popular Fimmvörðuháls hiking trail to Þórsmörk. In front of us we see Vestmannaeyjar Islands, and to our left, Pétursey and Mýrdalssandur. Quite impressive really. After a short stop, we head back to base camp. An hour later, we learn of a massive 6.2 Richter earthquake near Hveragerði, roughly 100 km away. Although the earthquake had nothing to do with activity in Katla, I still felt better being off the volcano when it hit.

Text by Sveinn Birgir Björnsson
Photo by GAS

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City Slicker Rides Again

It's Friday morning, around quarter past nine and me, the photographer, and an older Danish man and his wife are being driven to Laxnes in Mosfellsveit by Þórarinn "Þóri" Jónasson. He and his wife Ragnheiður founded Laxnes Hestaferðir exactly 40 years ago last May. He tells me that he and Ragnheiður started off with only twelve horses but today own more than a hundred and get approximately 10,000 visitors a year. He also tells me that he originally moved to Laxnes with the intention of opening some sort of country club, but that people from Reykjavík had considered Mosfellsveit so ridiculously far away that they couldn't be bothered to go all that way to get out of town, which is ironic given that the city has expanded so fast that Laxnes is now pretty much as close as you can get without still being in town.

When we get there we meet Ragnheiður for the first time, as well as two Danish girls working for them. We quickly suit up, ready our horses and head off with one of the Danes acting as a tour guide. Unfortunately her horse stumbles soon after we start and hurts itself, so she has to walk back and the other Danish girl takes her place. I'm a born and bred city kid and more likely to see beauty in a drain-pipe than a waterfall but in all fairness the valley is absolutely amazing and I'm quite surprised by how far from civilisation it feels.

Simply put, Laxnes is the ideal place to go if you want to ride but can't or don't want to go too far. The riding tour is fantastic for beginners although I can imagine that more seasoned riders would get a bit bored after a while. Given how much the immediate countryside around the Reykjavík area has changed in recent decades, I find it nothing short of amazing that this place is still as unspoiled as it is and it is definitely worth visiting. After all, who can say what it will look like after another 40 years at the rate we're expanding?

Text by Oddur Sturluson
Photos by GAS

TRIP PROVIDED BY:
Laxnes Horse Rental
Tel.: 566 6179. www.laxnes.is



An advertisement for Air Iceland. The top left features the Air Iceland logo (a stylized bird) and the text "AIR ICELAND". Below this is the slogan "Fly and discover" in large white letters. A map of Iceland shows various destinations with lines connecting them to Reykjavik: NUUK Greenland, ISAFJÖRDUR, GRIMSEY, VOPNAFJÖRDUR, AKUREYRI, EGILSSTADIR, FAROE ISLANDS, WESTMAN ISLANDS, NARSARSSUAQ Greenland, KULLUSUK Greenland, and NERLERIT IMAAT Greenland. At the bottom left of the map area, the website "airiceland.is" and phone number "/ tel. 570 3030" are listed. The background of the advertisement is a scenic image of a glacier lagoon with blue icebergs floating in the water under a cloudy sky.



Overpriced Bargaining Ahoy!

Hundreds of Icelanders convened in an empty warehouse on the outskirts of Reykjavik last weekend. While the levels of excitement displayed by the hefty crowd are usually reserved for car-dealership BBQs or reality TV auditions, this particular Saturday was different, for neither instant-fame nor hot dogs were up for grabs. What was on offer, however, were hundreds of old bikes in all shapes and sizes that the Reykjavik police department was auctioning off from its Lost-and-Found, along with a bunch of power tools.

The auction went in a typically Icelandic fashion, with the first ten bikes going for cheap, for no one wanted to seem too eager. The next hundred were overpriced, because no one wanted to miss out on a good deal, while the remaining hundred (a total of 250 bikes was up for grabs) went for an overtly reasonable price as all the high bidders had left for home with their fancy new second-hand bikes. One bidder remarked to the Grapevine: "This is a good place to get a bargain, sure. However, it seems that some people are so eager to bargain that they constantly overbid in their zany attempts to save money, usually for stuff they neither want nor need. It may be Icelandic short-sightedness in a nutshell."

Text by Haukur S. Magnússon
Photos by GAS



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

Summer Spots in Reykjavík



Austurvöllur Field

The small field in front of the parliamentary building is buzzing with life at the first sight of sun during the summer. Located in the heart of the city centre (and only a few meters from a state alcohol store), it becomes the meeting place for people of all ages as they gather to enjoy a beer in the grass, take in the sun and chat with friends. If you know anyone in Reykjavík, chances are you will run into them on Austurvöllur on a sunny day. For those more fond of chairs than grass, cafés around Austurvöllur serve hot and cold drinks outside in the afternoon sun.



Miklatún Park

Reykjavík's biggest park offers a wide array of possibilities for outdoor activities in the summer. There are football fields, outdoor basketball courts, as well as a beach volley ball court, a frisbee course, a playground for kids and a long asphalted path that is perfect for in-line skating or teaching kids to ride bikes. The grassy fields are also ideal for sunbathing on warm summer days with trees all around supplying shelter from every wind direction. The park is also occasionally used to host large outdoor music concerts, such as last summer's Sigur Rós concert which drew 20,000 people.



Nauthólsvík Beach

When you think of beaches, you are likely to be thinking of Southern California or possibly Ibiza or Mallorca, but probably not Reykjavík, the Northern-most capital in the world. Oh, but for the wonders of geo-thermal energy, Reykjavíkians can enjoy their very own sandy beach on hot summer days. With the average summer sea temperature around 10-11°C, the sea is mixed with geothermal hot water bringing it up to 18-20°C, a perfect temperature for bathing on a sunny afternoon. A warmer pool is also located off the shore, perfect for the young ones. Now, if we could only geo-thermally induce more sunny days...



Viðey Island

A few hundred meters off the shore of Reykjavík is the island Viðey. At 1.7 km², it is the largest island on Kollafjörður bay. It is a beautiful place to spend a sunny afternoon. The house Viðeyjarstofa, a former Governor's mansion and which was built in 1755, is the oldest construction made of stone and cement in Iceland. It was recently restored and now houses a small restaurant. Bicycles are readily available for those who wish to ride a bike around the island, but horse rental is also on location for the more adventurous ones. The ferry to Viðey leaves from Sundahöfn every hour between 13:00 – 19:00.



Old Harbour

The old harbour in Reykjavík is best enjoyed on a still summer night when the gentle sea breeze has let down. The colourful small fishing boats create beautiful reflections in the still water while the evening sun lights up the skies. In the daytime, you can sit down at the nearby Kaffivagninn and enjoy the atmosphere when the local fishermen gather for coffee and to discuss world affairs. Stop by one of the shops nearby and pick up a nylon thread and a hook and try to angle for a fish from the pier. It is surely cheaper than one of those expensive fish restaurants.



Ægissíða Shore

Close by Vesturbæjarlaug lies Ægissíða, a long shoreline on the Southwest side of Reykjavík with an asphalted walking path, ideal for romantic walks, inline skating or bike trips along the shore. The Southwest location offers the best possible viewpoint for enjoying the midnight sun and the occasional sunset during the early and late weeks of summer. The shoreline is full of diverse birdlife and there is a beautiful view over the sea and the mountain circle on Reykjanes. The walking path on Ægissíða stretches on through Nauthólsvík and all the way up to the pristine nature reserve in Þórsmörk.

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Miss Iceland 2008 was elected recently. Our photographer was invited there to watch it on TV.

Photo by GAS

Classifieds

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

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gulavillan@net.is
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Car for sale. Honda HRV 2000, 1.6L, 5 speed manual, automatic 4WD version. 123,000Km. Excellent condition. Serviced until June 2009. All season tyres. Selling before i return home to the UK. Price: 475,000 ISK / negotiable. Please call: 8579902 or E-mail: simon.fayers@googlemail.com

Stuff for sale:
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All things are in top condition, if interested Please call 8476602.

The monastic shop "Klausturvörur" is a store specializing in cosmetics, delicatessen and artifacts made by nuns and monks in monasteries across Europe. Herb teas, honeys, jams, chocolate, creams, perfumes, shampoo, soaps - unique in Iceland! Garðastræti 17 101 Reykjavík tel. 551 5445 Opening hours: monday-friday 12-7, saturday 12-6

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My name is tory and i am a 30 year old Australian who loves Iceland, (almost more than the font helvetica.) i am looking to work in Iceland for the summer. i work in the festival + music realm, but before that I have worked in publishing and arts. i love to bake and sew, and make homemade cordial. Please let me know if you would like to adopt me for the summer - torybauer1@mac.com

Job openings:
As part of our expansion program, our company is looking for part time Work from home Account Manager and sales representatives, it pays \$500 per week plus benefits and takes only little of your time. Please contact us for more details. Requirements - Should be a computer literate. 2-3 hours access to the internet weekly. Must be over 19yrs of age. Must be Efficient and Dedicated. If you are interested and need more information, Contact ALEX COLE Email: calexco08@yahoo.com

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Personals:
Looking for a penfriend, preferably an Icelandic woman between the age of 45 and 60. I live in north Queensland, Australia, and I am a family person. I would prefer the old fashioned method of correspondence. My address: 18 Cedarbrook Terrace, IDALIA, TOWNSVILLE 4811, North Queensland, Australia.
Thanks.
Denise Moore
denise@townsvilleofficefurniture.com.au

Other:
I am a native British speaker and qualified PA with more than 10 years experience across a variety of business sectors, working at senior manager and director level. I am currently learning Icelandic and would be willing to consider working in exchange for help building my verbal and written skills. Please contact Linda Barton at email: reykjavik@btinternet.com

Services

Useful Numbers

- **Emergency number:** 112
- **Police:** 444 1000
- **Medical help:** 1770
- **Dental emergency:** 575 0505
- **AA:** 551 2010
- **Information:** 118
- **Telegrams:** 146

Tax Free Refund

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

Post Office

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

Embassies and Consulates

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

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

Internet Access

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

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

Opening Hours

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

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

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

Laundry Service

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

Getting Around

Public Transport

The only public transport system in Reykjavík is the bus. Most busses run every 20 minutes and price per fare is 280 ISK for adults and 100 ISK for children. Complete route map at: www.bus.is. Tel: 540 2700
Busses run from 07:00-24:00 on weekdays and 10:00-24:00 on weekends

Rent a Bike

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

Taxi

- **Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir,** Tel: 553 3500 or 588 5522
- **BSR,** Tel: 561 0000
- **For disabled travellers:** Reykjavík Group Travel Service, Brunastaðir 3, Tel: 587 8030, www.randburg.com/is/reykjavik_group_travel_service/

Car Rentals

- **Átak Car Rental,** Smiðjuvegur 1, Tel: 554 6040
- **ALP,** Dugguvogur 10, Tel: 562 6060
- **Avis,** Knarravogi 2, Tel: 591 4000
- **Eurocar,** Hjallahraun 9, Tel: 565 3800
- **A.G Car Rental,** Tangarhöfði 8-12, Tel: 587 5544
- **Atlas Car Rental,** Dalshraun 9, Tel: 565 3800
- **Berg Car Rental,** Tangarhöfða 8, Tel: 577 6050
- **Hertz,** Flugvallavegur, Tel: 522 4400

Airlines

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

Bus Terminal

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

Flybus

Busses run daily from the BSÍ Bus Terminal to Keflavík International Airport in connection with all departing flights. Departures daily from 04:45 to 15:00/16:30 (every 15 - 60 minutes). For Flybus time schedule see: www.flybus.is

Samferda.net

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

Cultural Centres and Tourist Offices

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

Icelandic Travel Market

Bankastræti 2, Tel: 510 5700, www.kleif.is
Information on day tours, accommodations, car rental and everything else you need to know when travelling in Iceland.

Iceland Visitor

Austurstræti 17, Tel: 511 2442, www.icelandvisitor.com
A travel agency offering travelling package trips and custom-made tours as well as car rental, day tours and accommodations for visitors.

Tourist Information Centre

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

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

The Icelandic Tourist Board

Lækjargata 3, Tel: 535 5500, www.visiticeland.com
All information needed before travelling in Iceland.

Nordic House

Sturlugata 5, Tel: 551 7030, www.nordice.is
The Nordic cultural centre organises various cultural events, conferences and exhibitions.

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

Useful Information

Where to Learn Icelandic as a Foreign Language

- **Icelandic on the Internet,** www.vefskoli.is
- **Mímir Continuing Education,** Skeifán 8, Tel: 580 1800, www.mimir.is
- **Námsflokkar Reykjavíkur,** Fríkirkjuvegur 1, Tel: 551 2992
- **Fjölmenning,** Laugavegur 59, Tel: 511 1319, www.fjolmenning.is
- **The Icelandic College of Engineering and Technology,** Höfðabakki 9, Tel: 577 1400, www.thi.is
- **Iðnskólinn í Reykjavík,** Skólavörðuholti, Tel: 552 6240, www.ir.is
- **The University of Iceland – Department of Continuing Education,** Dunhagi 7, Tel: 525 4924, www.endurmenntun.is
- **Language School Lingva,** The University of Iceland, at Sturlugata. Tel.: 561 0351, www.lingva.is

Religious Movements

The national church in Iceland is the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Masses are generally held on Sundays at 11:00. Service in English is at Hallgrímskirkja every last Saturday each month, starting at 14:00. The Roman Catholic Church also has masses in English and Polish.

Other religious movements in Reykjavík are for example:

- **The Muslim Association of Iceland,** Ármúli 38
- **Ásatrú Association,** Grandagarði 8
- **Bahá'í,** Álfabakka 12
- **The Church of Evangelism,** Hlíðasmári 9
- **The Icelandic Buddhist Movement,** Vighólástígur 21
- **Reykjavík Free Lutheran Church,** Fríkirkjuvegur 5
- **Pentecostal Assembly,** Hátún 2
- **Roman Catholic Church,** Hávallagata 14
- **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,** Ásabraut 2
- **Jehovah's Witnesses,** Sogavegur 71
- **Seventh-Day Adventists,** Suðurhlíð 36
- **Zen Buddhism in Iceland,** Reykjavíkurvegur 31
- **Independent Church,** Háteigsvegur 101
- **The Russian Orthodox Church in Iceland,** Sólvallagata 10
- **The Cross,** Hlíðasmári 5-7

Trade Unions

- **The Icelandic Federation of Labour,** Sættún 1, Tel: 535 5600, www.asi.is
- **The Federation of State and Municipal employees,** Grettisgata 89, Tel: 525 8300, www.bsrb.is
- **The Association of Academics,** Borgartún 6, Tel: 581 2090, www.bhm.is
- **Efling,** Sættún 1, Tel: 510 7500, www.efling.is
- **The Commercial Workers' Union,** Kringlan 7, Tel: 510 1700, www.vr.is
- **Union of Public Servants,** Grettisgata 89, Tel: 525 8340, www.sfr.is

Useful Websites

- **www.visitreykjavik.is** (The official tourist website of Reykjavík)
- **www.gayice.is** (Information about the gay scene in Iceland)
- **www.fjolmenningarsetur.is** (The Multicultural Centre)
- **www.hostel.is** (Hostel International in Iceland)
- **www.vinnumalastofnun.is** (Public employment services)
- **www.gulalinan.is** (The yellow pages)
- **www.leigulistinn.is** (Rent a flat)
- **www.ja.is** (Icelandic telephone directory)

Where to Get ...

- **Work and residence permit:** The Directorate of Immigration, Skógarhlíð 6, Tel: 510 5400, www.utl.is
- **Insurance and benefits:** The State Social Security Institute, Laugavegur 114-116, Tel: 560 4400, www.tr.is
- **Icelandic citizenship:** Unless you come from a Nordic country, foreign citizens have to have had an unrestricted residence permit in Iceland for at least seven years in order to get an Icelandic citizenship although some exceptions exist to that general rule. Applications are at the Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs, Skuggasund, Tel: 545 9000, www.domsmalaraduneyti.is
- **Unemployment benefits:** Directorate of Labour, Public Employment Service, Tryggvagata 17, Tel: 515 4800, www.vinnumalastofnun.is
- **Icelandic social security number (kennitala):** National Register, Borgartún 24, Tel: 569 2900, www.thjodskra.is
- **Driver's license:** Applications at police stations. (Those who have a foreign license don't need an Icelandic one for the first six months.)
- **Tax card:** Tax office, Laugavegur 166, Tel: 563 1100, www.rsk.is
- **Social Service:** Information and service is provided by district service centres in Reykjavík. To locate the service centre in your neighbourhood see: www.reykjavik.is



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Norræna húsið / The Nordic House
 Saemundargata (in the Iceland University quarters of the city)
 Tel: +354 551 7030
www.nordice.is





Stuffed with stuff

The Icelandic form of competition allows for a lot of overpricing, so I get a lot of examples. The same supplier will ship detergent to three different stores – all owned by the same corporation – where it'll be sold for 2.000 ISK at the first store, 1.100 at the second and 700 at the last one.

Dr. Gunnar explains the Icelandic business model.

Page 6

At the time of writing I have just paid my monthly tax bill and frankly in light of that experience I am quietly fucking pissed about it.

Ben Frost travelled route one around Iceland and now he is fucking pissed.

Page 10

The Grapevine's art director, Gunnar, is picking Portugal, for aesthetic reasons obviously.

The Grapevine Euro 2008 office pool is underway.

Page b14

Here is a little hint: you don't need a bright orange parka or hiking boots to traverse Reykjavík. Dress like a tourist and you are automatically excluded. Just dress like normal folks.

Tourist season is in session. The Grapevine presents your guide to experiencing the city like the locals.

Page 16

The Mummy's Rick O'Connel is everything that Indiana Jones is not.

Indiana Jones is coming to town, followed by The Mummy.

Page 20

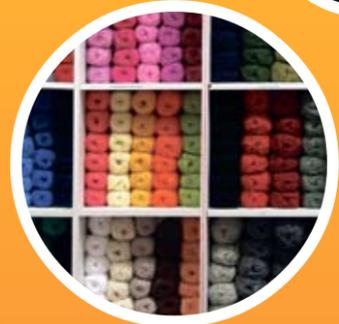
Take the warmth with you!

One of the major tourist attractions in Mosfellsbær, a small town about twenty minutes driving distance from Reykjavík center, is the Álafoss gully where Iceland's woollens industry was launched. The old wool factory has been renovated into one of Iceland's biggest wool and souvenir shops.

There you can find wool, yarn and a huge selection of woollen sweaters ranging from traditional styles to high fashion on reasonable prices. Also souvenirs, ceramics and other handicrafts by local artists.

Characteristics of Icelandic Wool

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plus Upcoming Releases · Dagur Kári's New Movie · June 17 Celebration



above Embrace your inner Viking at The Viking Village in Hafnarfjörður (B5)



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THE VIKING : INFO

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101 Reykjavík | 600 Akureyri
tel: 551 1250 | tel: 461 5551

email: theviking@simnet.is



Music

Björk and Sigur Rós, Together at Last!

Say what you will about the aluminum-smelting, dam-building, unspoiled nature-crushing environmental policy of Iceland's past few governments, at least it's given us a lot of fun debate and musical happenings by some of Iceland's most excellent musicians. Since Iceland still has plenty of unspoiled nature that could be drowned in the name of

venture capitalism, the fight goes on and that's where Björk, Sigur Rós and their friends come in with their awesome outdoor concert that's just a few weeks away! While the exact location of the show has yet to be announced at the time of print, we can tell you the following with certainty: The show will take place

on June 28th, it is meant to promote environmental awareness in Iceland, it will feature performances by Björk, Sigur Rós, Ghostigital, Ólöf Arnalds and others TBA and, contrary to recent rumours, the TBA band is not Radiohead.

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HÚSAVÍK

www.gamlibaukur.is

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

Music

- **12 Tónar**
Skólavörðustígur
Fri Jun 6: Performance by Monnípeningaglás. Starts at 5 PM.
- **Bar 11**
Laugavegur 11
Djs Performing in June are:
Matti X-FM
Gulli Ósóma
Óli dóri
and Biggi Maus
- **Brons**
Pósthússtræti 9
Every Thursday: DJ Lucky
Every Friday: History Sound System
Every Saturday: DJ Gauti
- **Café Amsterdam**
Hafnarstræti 5
Mon Jun 16: Release concert - Dimma celebrates the release of their newest album "Stigmata". Also performing will be Dennis Dunaway, formerly of Alice Cooper.
- **Dillon**
Laugavegur 30
Fri Jun 6: Performance by Mood
Mon Jun 16: Brain Police concert.
- **Gljúfrasteinn - Laxness Museum Mosfellssveit**
Sun Jun 8: This Sunday's "Sitting room concert" will feature flautist Áshildur Haraldsdóttir and harpist Katie Buckley. Gljúfrasteinn will host "Sitting room concerts" every Sunday this summer.
- **Glætan Library/Café**
Aðalstræti 9
Fri Jun 13: Concert featuring For a Minor Reflection and Northern Valentine (USA)
- **Háskólabíó**
At Hagatorg

- Fri Jun 20: 21 soloists - Icelandic Symphony Orchestra concert.
- **Hljómaland**
Laugavegur 23
Wed Jun 11: Concert featuring For a Minor Reflection and Northern Valentine (USA).
Fri Jun 13: Friday the 13th hardcore-grind show in Hljómaland - A Benefit show for Saving Iceland featuring Forgarður Helvítis and Muck. Entrance fee is 500 kr. (unless you're broke, in which case you only donate what you can). Starts at 8 PM.
- **Hressó**
Austurstræti 20
Thu Jun 5: Performance by troubadour Jude
Fri Jun 6: Dalton followed by DJ Bjarni
Sat Jun 7: Mamas Handbag followed by DJ Bjarni
Thu Jun 12: Performance by troubadour Tryggvi Vilmondar
Fri Jun 13: Tepokinn followed by DJ Maggi
Sat Jun 14: Galaxí followed by DJ Maggi
Mon Jun 16: Dalton followed by DJ Maggi
Tue Jun 17: At 4 PM.: Jazz performance at 6 PM.: Performance by Hvar er Mjallhvít
At 10 PM.: Performance by troubadour Tryggvi Vilmondar
Thu Jun 19: Performance by Heiður
- **Iðnó**
Vonarstræti 3
Thu Jun 19: Benni Hemm Hemm and Ungfónia will perform live and Paul Lydon will warm up. Tickets available at: www.midi.is
- **Kaffibarinn**
Bergstaðastræti 1
Fri Jun 6: Terrordisco
Sat Jun 7: Johnny Sexual
Sat Jun 14: Sumar Humar (TBC) at 6 PM and at 12 PM.
Mon Jun 16: Gullfoss og Geysir
Fri Jun 20: DJ Lazer
- **Laugardalshöllin**
Laugardalur
Tue Jun 10: Whitesnake concert.

- Thu Jun 12: James Blunt concert.
- Mon Jun 16: David Guetta Concert. Also performing will be infamous Icelandic band GusGus.
- **Miklatún**
Miklatún
Fri Jun 13: Noon concert. Show up, if you're brave enough.
- **Nasa**
by Austurvöllur
Fri Jun 6: Techno.is concert featuring Mickey Slim
Sat Jun 7: Sálin Hans Jóns Míns Concert
Fri Jun 13: To be announced.
Sat Jun 14: Concert featuring Nýdönsk
- **Organ**
Hafnarstræti 1-3
Fri Jun 6: Pop-Quiz at 6 PM followed by Alaska In Winter (USA) + Kira Kira
Tue Jun 10: Performance by For a Minor Reflection and Northern Valentine (USA).
Wed Jun 11: Gæðablóð, Birna, Margrét Guðrúnardóttir and Bandið hans Pabba
Fri Jun 13: Pop-Quiz at 6 PM followed by Friday the 13th Horror concert featuring Malneirophreniu and Ask the Slave
Sat Jun 14: 90's night with Kitty Von Sometime
Wed Jun 18: South Coast Killing Company: Release concert
Thu Jun 19: Hoodangers (AUS)
Fri Jun 20: Pop-Quiz at 6 PM followed by a release concert: Singapore Sling, Baconlivesupportunit and Evil Madness perform to celebrate the release of Singapore Slings new album Godman.
- **Prikið**
Bankastræti 12
Fri Jun 6: Troubadour Jude followed by Danni Deluxe
Sat Jun 7: DJ Andri followed by DJ Jónas
Mon Jun 9: House DJ
Tue Jun 10: Reimar performs at Prikið each Tuesday this summer.
Wed Jun 11: DJ Sara
Thu Jun 12: DJ Gauti



Event

June 17 Celebration

June 17th marks Iceland's National Day, a celebration of the country's liberation out from under the grip of Denmark's Imperial claw, the birthday of the 19th century saga scholar and revolutionary leader Jón Sigurðsson, and the only day out of the year where you are expected to hold a hot dog, your child's hand, and wave a little Icelandic flag

all at once. Festivities begin at five minutes to ten with the rousing timbre of church bells throughout central Reykjavík, succeeded by the emergence of the traditionally garbed "Woman of the Mountains" to give the opening speech at Austurvöllur. After a brief church service, there commences a lively parade of euphoric, face-painted children and

dutifully attending parents down Laugavegur, followed by food and street performances at midday and finally concluded with outdoor concerts into the evening. Iceland's National Day is a great cultural experience for tourists and a traditional necessity for Icelanders - either way, a ritual that demands attendance.

Fri Jun 13: Ramses in collaboration with Hiphop.is throw a release party followed by DJ's Gísli Galdur and Addi

Sat Jun 14: Búðabandið followed by Danni Deluxe

Mon Jun 16: DJ Danni Deluxe

Tue Jun 17: Hooker Swing, Númer núll and more.

Wed Jun 18: DJ Kvikindi

Thu Jun 19: Jón tryggvi and DJ Gauti

Fri Jun 20: Búðabandið followed by DJ Danni Deluxe

■ Rúbín

Óskjuhlíð

Mon Jun 16: Release Concert: Hraun will perform in celebration of the release of their newest album "Silent Treatment". The concert starts at 9 PM.

■ Salurinn

Hamraborg 6

Fri Jun 6: Kópavogur Blues and Jazz Festival. Form more information see www.salurinn.is.

Sat Jun 7: Kópavogur Blues and Jazz Festival. Form more information see www.salurinn.is.

■ Tunglið

Tryggvagata 22

Fri Jun 6: Mercedes Club "VIP-Party"

Sat Jun 7: BPM

Fri Jun 13: To be announced

Sat Jun 14: Sean Danke

Mon Jun 16: Loop Troop + XXX Rotweiler

Fri Jun 20: Jack Schidt & President Bongo

■ Viðeyjarkirkja

Viðey

Sun Jun 8: Concert Featuring For a Minor Reflection and Northern Valentine (USA).

There are only a handful of tickets available so be quick to order at foraminorreflection@gmail.com.

AIM Music Festival

International Music Festival in Akureyri

Thursday June 12th:

Marína: Akureyri Jazzband, Sebastian

Studnitzky and Iceland's Jazzists, Hoodangers, Park Projekt with Hrund Ósk

Friday June 13th:

The Green Hat: Múgsefjun + guests

Marína: Mannakorn with Sebastian

Studnitzky

The House: Garagerock

Sjallinn: Splash Party

Vélsmiðjan: The band Von

Saturday June 14th

The Green Hat: Kimi Records night -

Mugison, Retro Stefson and Helgi and

The Instrumentalists

Marína: Hoodangers

Allinn: Bráðavaktin

Sjallinn: N3

Sunday June 15th

Ketilhúsið: Víkingur Heiðar Ólafsson

Akureyrarkirkja: The Motetchoir

(choirmaster is Hörður Áskelsson)

Solo singers are Vladimir Miller, basso

profundo, Nebojsa Colic, tenor and

Auður Guðjohnsen, alto.

Monday June 16th

Græni hatturinn: Hvanndalsbrothers

Sjallinn: DJ Oliver Huntemman and DJ

Sveinar

Allinn: Helgi and the Instrumentalists

Art

■ 101 Gallery

Hverfisgata 18

Thu.-Sat. 14-17 and by appointment

www.101hotel.is/101hotel/101gallery/

May 16-June 27

Tenebrae

Exhibition by Jóhannes Atli

Hinkriksson

■ Artótek

Tryggvagata 15

Mon 10-21, Tue-Thu 10-19, Fri 11-19,

Sat and Sun 13-17

www.sim.is/Index/Islenska/Artotek

■ ASÍ Art Museum

Freyjugata 41

Tue-Sun 13-17

Free Entrance

May 16 - June 15

What Volcanos?: An exhibition by Halldór Ásgeirsson and Paul Armand Gette

■ The Einar Jónsson Museum

Eiríksgata

Tue-Sun 14-17

www.skulptur.is

Permanent exhibition:

The work of sculptor Einar Jónsson.

■ The Culture House

Hverfisgata 15

Open daily 11-17

www.thjodmenning.is

17 June - The National Holiday:

Entrance will be free of charge and

at 1 PM. the exhibition The Late

View-Photographs from the legacy

of Nobel Laureate in Literature and

Cosmopolitan Halldór Laxness will be

Opened.

Permanent exhibitions:

Medieval Manuscripts; The Library

Room.

Current exhibitions:

Surtsey - Genesis

The exhibition traces the emergence

and evolution of the island Surtsey

until the present day and predicts

its geographical and ecological

development over the next 120 years.

From Beyond the Oceans -

Translations and original writings by

Helgi Hálfðanarson

The thematic exhibition currently on

view in the Library Room is dedicated

to Helgi Hálfðanarson's translations

and original writings.

Exhibition Series

Ásta Ólafsdóttir displays her artwork

at the Culture Shop.

■ Dwarf Gallery

Grundarstígur 21

Opening Hours: Fri and Sat 18-20

www.this.is/birta

June 7

Last day of Helga Óskarsdóttir's

Exhibition.

■ Fotografi

Skólavörðustígur 4a

www.fotografi.is

June 7 -

Skæni: Photographic exhibition by

Kayak tour in Stokkseyri

Amazing experience

Robinson Crusoe

Appr. 1-3 hour without guide.

Particularly interesting possibility for families and individuals, where participants can explore by themselves the amazing labyrinth of the swamp. Map of the area is in the reception. Notice that the area is absolutely safe.



Tours begin at the Stokkseyri swimming pool.



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Music

**THE REYKJAVÍK
GRAPEVINE**

Singapore Sling Album Release Party

On June 20th, the "Dark and Dirty" Rock-and-Roll band Singapore Sling performs live at Organ to celebrate the release of their newest album, Godman. The album features two original tracks and two others by friends Evil Madness and Bacon Life Support Unit

– both remixes of the main song for which the album is named. Though having undergone several major shifts in line-up since their inception in 2005, the quality of their music has consistently pleased us here at the Grapevine and there is sure-fire aural satisfaction

to be found here, albeit bundled in layers of heavy feedback.

Organ
Hafnarstræti 1-3
June 20, 10:00 PM

The Forget-Me-Not Burger – Simply Magical!

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Rafn Hafnfjörð
■ **Gallery 100°**
Bæjarháls 1
www.or.is/Forsida/Gallery100/
Open weekdays from 08:30 – 16:00

Current Exhibition:
Contemporary Art from Croatia
■ **Gallery Auga Fyrir Auga**
Hverfisgata 35
June 14 – July 5
Current Exhibition: Candyshop
Plus a special opening on the June 17.

■ **Gallery StartArt**
Laugavegur 12b
Tue-Sat 13 – 17
Free entrance
www.startart.is
May 16 – June 30
Rúri
April 16 – July 30
Heima: Exhibition by Anna Eyjólfsdóttir, Ása Ólafsdóttir, Magdalena Margrét Kjartansdóttir, Ragnhildur Stefánsdóttir, Þórdís Alda Sigurðardóttir and Þuríður Sigurðardóttir.

■ **Gallery Ágúst**
Baldursgata 12
Wed–Sat 12–17
www.galleriagust.is
May 16 – June 28
S M A R T: Solo Exhibition by Andrea Maack. Part of the Reykjavík Art Festival.

■ **Gallery Fold**
Rauðarárstígur 14–16
Mon–Fri 10–18
Sat 11–16
Sun 14–16
www.myndlist.is

■ **Gallery Kling & Bang**
Hverfisgata 42
Thursday - Sunday from 14-18
Free admission
this.is/klingogbang/
May 16 – June 22

■ **Gallery Turpentine**
Ingólfsstræti 5
Tue–Fri 12–18
Sat 11–16
www.turpentine.is
Current Exhibition:
Hildur Ásgeirsdóttir – Jónsson

■ **Gel Gallery**
Hverfisgata 37
Mon–Fri 13–18
Sat 11–16
Sun 14–16
www.myspace.com/gallerigel

■ **Gerðuberg Cultural Centre**
Gerðuberg 3–5
Mon–Thu 11–17
Wed 11–21
Thu–Fri 11–17
Sat–Sun 13–16
www.gerduberg.is
May 3 – Sep 7

Between Mountain and Shore
Exhibition of Landscape paintings from popular-artist couple Michael Guðvarðarson and Ósk Guðmundsdóttir
May 3 – Sep 7
Magical Beings From the Folk Tales of Iceland
Drawings from Jón Baldur Hlíðberg
4 March – 7 September

A Date with Collectors III: All of the exhibition pieces are connected with music in one way or another!
■ **Hitt Húsið - Gallery Tukt**
Pósthússtræti 3-5
www.hitthusid.is
Starting on Friday, June thirteenth, every Friday this summer will be a "Fantastic Friday" where Hitt Húsið's Creative Summer Groups storm the streets in an attack of art between 12 AM and 2 PM.

■ **i8 Gallery**
Klapparstígur 33
Tue–Fri 11–17
Sat 13–17 and by appointment
www.i8.is
May 16 – June 21
Ernesto Neto

■ **Iðnó**
Vonarstræti 3
www.idno.is

■ **Living Art Museum**
Laugavegur 26
Wed, Fri–Sun 13–17
Thu 13–22
www.nylo.is
May 16 – June 21
Karl Holmqvist and the Performance Archive

■ **The Lost Horse Gallery**
Skólastræti 1
Open on weekends from 13- 19 and by appointment on weekdays.
www.this.is/subaqua/losthorse.html
Jun 17 -

Independence day Painting Exhibition (Curated by Davíð Örn Halldórsson and Alexander Zaklynsky): features works by a group of Icelandic Painters
■ **The National Film Archive of Iceland**

Hvaleyrarbraut 13
www.kvikmyndasafn.is
The National Film Archive of Iceland screens old movie classics and masterpieces twice a week for 500 ISK per ticket.

■ **The National Gallery of Iceland**
Frikirkjuvegur
Tue–Sun 11–17
Free Entrance
www listasafn.is
May 16 – June 29

List Mót Byggingarlist
Elín Hansdóttir, Franz West, Finnogi Pétursson, Monica Bonvicini, Steina
■ **The National Museum**
Suðurgata 41
Open daily 10–17
natmus.is/

Permanent exhibition:
The Making of a Nation
June 6 – January 21
Yfir Hafid og Heim: Icelandic artefacts from Sweden.
May 16 – Sept 14
Endurkast (Rebound): Cooperative photography exhibition between 8 Icelandic photographers.
May 16 – Sept 14

Í Þokunni (In the Mist): Exhibition by French photographer Thomas Humery.
May 15 – Sept 1
Lífshlaup: Cooperative project between The University of Iceland and the National Museum.

■ **The Nordic House**
Sturlugata 5
Tue–Sun 12–17
www.nordice.is/

■ **The Numismatic Museum**
Kalkofnsvegur 1
Open Mon–Fri 13:30–15:30.
Free admission.
Permanent exhibition:
The Central Bank of Iceland and the National Museum of Iceland jointly operate a numismatic collection consisting of Icelandic notes and coins.

■ **Reykjavík 871 +/- 2**
Aðalstræti 16
Open daily 10–17



Event

Viking Village

As it has done every solstice since 1995, the Viking Village in Hafnarfjörður is putting on its annual Viking Festival: a wild celebration of Icelandic pagan culture and heritage. Not to leave any stone unturned, the wide array of events includes Viking storytelling,

pagan ritual, dancing, music, games, nightly feasting and, in the true spirit of the Berserker, the intermittent brawl. No time machine necessary, only a ten-minute drive from downtown Reykjavík to this meticulously authentic extravaganza of yore.

Viking Village Fjörúkráin,
Strandgata 55, 220 Hafnarfjörður
June 12–18

Permanent exhibition:

The Settlement Exhibition

■ Reykjavík Art Gallery

Skúlagata 28

Open from Tuesday through Sunday 14–18

Current exhibition:

Magnús Tómasson, Pétur Már Pétursson and Tolli

■ Reykjavík Art Museum

– Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum

Sigtún

Open daily 10–16

Free entrance.

www listasafnreykjavikur.is

May 20 2004 – August 10 2008:

The Shape of Line

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

■ Reykjavík Art Museum

– Hafnarhús

Tryggvagata 17

Open daily 10–17 and on Thursdays from 10–22

Free Entrance.

May 15 – August 24

Hafnarhús - Experimental Marathon Reykjavík: Hafnarhús turns into a major laboratory where leading artists, architects, film-makers, and scientists will create an environment of invention through various experiments and performances (in English). Curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Ólafur Elíasson.

■ Reykjavík Art Museum

– Kjarvalsstaðir

Flókagata

Open Daily 10–17

Free entrance.

18 May – 31 August

Dreams of the Sublime and Nowhere in Contemporary Icelandic Art: This exhibition includes many new works of photography and video art by Iceland's most outstanding artists, building on their disparate ideas about nature as a phenomenon.

18 May – 20 July

Martha Schwartz - I Hate Nature/Aluminati

18 May – 31 August

Where Am I?: An exhibition in which children and adults can contemplate their planet, their country, and the

landmarks of their environment.

18 May – 31 December

Jóhannes S. Kjarval – Key Works: The current exhibition in Kjarvalsstaðir's east gallery features key works from the museum's collection along with works on loan from the Labor Unions' Art Gallery and from the collection of Ingibjörg Guðmundsdóttir and Þorvaldur Guðmundsson.

■ Reykjavík Maritime Museum

Grandagarður 8

www.sjominasafn.is

Current Exhibitions:

Living Museum by the Sea; Arterial for Country and City; From Poverty to Abundance; The Shark – Light and Life Energy; Hidden Craftsman.

■ Reykjavík Museum

(Árbæjarsafn)

Kistuhylur 4

Open daily from 10–17

www.arbaejarsafn.is

Current exhibitions:

Building Techniques in Reykjavík 1840-1940; Disco and Punk – Different cultures?; Christmas is Coming; History of Reykjavík – from farm to city; Memories of a House; Living and Playing

■ The Reykjavík Museum of

Photography

Grófarhús, Tryggvagata 15, 6th floor

Weekdays 12–19

Sat–Sun 13–17

Free entrance

www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is

May 31 – Aug 31

Skovbo – Exhibition by Viggo Mortensen

■ Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

Laugarnestangi 70

Open Tue–Sun 14–17

Permanent exhibition:

Works of sculptor Sigurjón Ólafsson.

Outside Reykjavík

■ Hafnarborg

Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður

Mon–Sun 11–17

www.hafnarborg.is

May 29 – July 21

Hundrað (Hundred) – Photographic exhibition featuring photographs spanning over Hafnarfjörðurs 100 year history

June 1 – July 21

Hafnirfirdingar – Photographic exhibition by Árni Gunnlaugsson focusing on long time inhabitants of Hafnarfjörður

■ Kópavogur Art Museum

– Gerðarsafn

Hamraborg, Kópavogur

Open daily 11–17 except Mondays

www.gerdarsafn.is

May 17 – June 8

Tværogein (Twoandone): Exhibition by Kristín Geirsdóttir, Ólöf Einarsdóttir and Kristín Garðarsdóttir

■ The Icelandic Museum of Design and Applied Art

Lyngás 7–9, 121 Garðabær

Opening hours: Tues.–Fri 14–18; Sat and Sun 16–18.

www.mudesa.org

Exhibitions devoted to Icelandic design.

■ Gljúfrasteinn

– Halldór Laxness museum

270 Mosfellsbær

Open daily except Mondays from 10–17.

■ The Icelandic Settlement Centre

Brákarbraut 1–15, Borgarnes

Opening hours: May to Sep 10–20; Sep to May 11–17.

www.landnam.is

Permanent exhibitions:

The Settlement of Iceland; The Saga of Egill Skalla-Grímsson

Current theatre productions:

Brák – a monologue by Brynhildur Gudjonsdóttir

Mr. Skallagrímsson – a monologue by Benedikt Erlingsson

■ Suðsuðvestur

Hafnargata 22, Keflavík

Sat–Sun 13–17:30

www.sudsudvestur.is

■ Vatnasafn / Library of Water

Bókhöðustígur 17, 340 Stykkishólmur

www.libraryofwater.is

Open daily from 11–17.

Permanent exhibition:

Roni Horn installation. She has replaced stacks of books with glass columns containing water gathered from Iceland's glaciers and glacial rivers.

■ Jónas Viðar Gallery

Kaupvangsstræti 12, Akureyri

Fri–Sat 13–18

www.jvs.is/jvgallery.htm

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31 May – 31 August 2008



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Reykjavík Museum of Photography



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Opening hours 12–19 mon–fri, 13–17 weekends · ADMISSION FREE

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Grilled Halibut baked in garlic butter with salad and corn of the cob

Oven baked Bacalao in a tomato-basil sauce with capers and olive's

Hashed fish (Icelandic specialty) in mild curry sauce with rye bread

Fish and chips with sauce and salad

Life music Icelandic lunch Menu
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Music

Benni Hemm Hemm

The 10-man ensemble Benni Hemm Hemm will perform two gigs at Iðnó on June 19th, one seated at 7:00 for 3.000 ISK, and the second standing (and dancing, presumably) at 10:00 for 2.000 ISK. Benni Hemm Hemm has been busy these days, touring the US with Swedish Indie Pop singer Jens Lekman and planning to release their newest album, Murta St. Calunga, on Friday, June 13th. Accompanied by the Young People's Symphony Orchestra, a crowd of 30 musicians will be crammed on-

stage, guaranteeing their trademark melodic depth, if despite some bumping elbows. Expect a cheerful feeling on your way out. Tickets are available both on Midi.is and in Skifan Records at Laugavegur 26.

Iðno, Vonarstræti 3, June 19th at 7:00 and 10:00 PM

Reykjavík 871 ±2 Landnámssýningin The Settlement Exhibition

Step into the Viking Age

The exhibition and museum shop are open daily 10-17

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

Reykjavík City Museum

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

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



Akureyri Art Museum
Kaupvangsstræti 12, Akureyri
Tue-Sun 12-17
www.listasafn.akureyri.is

Current exhibitions:
Bye Bye Iceland
A project involving 23 artists working with the concept: "outdated 19th and 20th-century ideology on Iceland". Artists include Ásmundur Ásmundsson, Erling P. V. Klingenberg, Hallgrímur Helgason, Hlynur Hallsson, Inga Svala Þórðardóttir & Wu Shan Zhuan, Kolbeinn Hugi Höskuldsson, Ólöf Nordal, Rúrí, Steingrímur Eyfjörð, Unnar Örn Auðarson & Huginn Þór Arason and Þórdís Alda Sigurðardóttir.

DaLí Gallery
Brekkgata 9, Akureyri
Mon-Sat 14-18
www.daligallery.blogspot.com

GalleriBOX
Kaupvangstræti 10, Akureyri
www.galleribox.blogspot.com

Kunstraum Wohnraum (Home gallery)
Ásabyggð 2, Akureyri
Open by appointment. Tel.: 462 3744
Mar 16 - Jun 22

Ragnar Kjartansson exhibition
Skaftfell
Austurvegur 42, Seyðisfjörður
www.skaftfell.is

Current Exhibition:
Journey - a collaboration between 3 art centres, realized especially for the Reykjavík Art Festival. Skaftfells contribution to Journey is an exhibition by SkeyrLeeBob now on display in the gallery.
June 7- June 24

Hilmar Bjarnason and Gunnhildur Una Jónsdóttir will be the artists featured on the west wall this month as part of the Sjonheyrn project.

Sláturhúsið
Kaupvangur, Egilsstaðir
www.slaturhusid.is
Open by appointment; karen@egilsstadir.is

Current Exhibition:
Sara Björnsdóttir sýnir í Frystiklefanum, í Sláturhúsinu á Egilsstöðum.

LÁ Art Museum
Austurmörk 21, Hveragerði

www.listasafnarnesinga.is
Open daily from 12 - 18

Current Exhibition:
Exhibition on the works of visual artist Magnús Kjartansson.

June 7
A short lecture and discussion on Magnús' works will be held from 12:30 AM to 3:30 PM. Jón Proppé will be supervising the lecture.

Films

- **88 minutes**
Regnboginn
- **Brúðguminn**
Regnboginn
- **Bubbi Byggir í Villta Vestrinu (Bob the Builder: Built to be Wild)**
Smárabíó
- **Harold and Kumar: Escape from Guantanamo Bay**
Laugarásbíó, Regnboginn, Sambíóin Selfoss
- **Horton (Hears a Who!)**
Smárabíó
- **In the Valley of Elah**
Sambíóin Álfabakki
- **Indiana Jones IV**
Smárabíó, Sambíóin Álfabakki, Háskólabíó, Sambíóin Kringlan, Laugarásbíó Borgarbíó, Sambíóin Keflavík, Sambíóin Selfoss
- **Iron Man**
Sambíóin Álfabakki, Sambíóin Kringlan
- **Kickin' it Old Skool**
Regnboginn
- **Love in the Time of Cholera**
Sambíóin Álfabakki
- **Made of Honor**
Regnboginn
- **Never Back Down**
Sambíóin Álfabakki, Sambíóin Kringlan, Sambíóin Selfoss
- **Nim's Island**
Sambíóin Álfabakki, Sambíóin Akureyri
- **Prom Night**
Smárabíó, Háskólabíó, Sambíóin Selfoss
- **Sex and the City**
Smárabíó, Háskólabíó, Sambíóin Kringlan, Laugarásbíó, Borgarbíó, Sambíóin Keflavík
- **Speed Racer**
Sambíóin Álfabakki, Háskólabíó, Sambíóin Kringlan, Sambíóin Keflavík, Sambíóin Akureyri, Sambíóin Selfoss
- **Superhero Movie**
Smárabíó

HOW TO DRIVE IN ICELAND

A relatively large percentage of foreign tourists in Iceland travel around the country by car. Conditions in Iceland are in many ways unusual, and often quite unlike that which foreign drivers are accustomed. It is therefore very important to find out how to drive in this country. We know that the landscapes are beautiful, which naturally draws the attention of driver away from the road. But in order to reach your destination safely, you must keep your full attention on driving.

LIVESTOCK ON THE ROAD



In Iceland, you can expect livestock to be on or alongside the road. It is usually sheep, but sometimes horses and even cows can be in your path. This is common all over the country, and can be very dangerous. Sometimes a sheep is on one side of the road and her lambs on the other. Under these conditions—which are common—it is a good rule to expect the lambs or the sheep to run to the other side.

Further information on www.drive.is

SINGLE-LANE BRIDGES



There are many single-lane bridges on the Icelandic roads. The actual rule is that the car closer to the bridge has the right-of-way. However, it is wise to stop and assess the situation, i.e. attempt to see what the other driver plans to do. This sign indicates that a single-lane bridge is ahead.



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Music

AIM - 2008

From June 12 to 16, the city of Akureyri will be awash in music from all corners of the globe, featuring every genre from Techno to Classical to local Folk music. For three consecutive years, the Akureyri International Music Festival has brought in a diverse array of musicians from as far as Australia and Argentina, and as close as Akureyri itself for the cultural enrichment of the city of Akureyri and of interested festival-goers from across the nation. Highlights include the Australian Rockabilly

Jazz band Hoodangers accompanied by German trumpet player Sebastian Studnitzky playing at Marína on Friday 13. Saturday night, Kimi Records night takes over the program, featuring Mugison, Retro Stefson and Helgi and Hljóðfæraleikaramir playing at the Green Hat, N3 and Musical Jokers at Sjallinn, and Von at Vélsmiðjan. Tickets available at www.midi.is. Full program is included in the Grapevine's music listings.

■ The Forbidden Kingdom

Sambíóin Álfabakki, Regnboginn, Sambíóin Akureyri

■ The Hunting Party

Sambíóin Álfabakki, Sambíóin Kringlan, Sambíóin Keflavík, Sambíóin Akureyri, Sambíóin Selfoss

■ U2-3D

Sambíóin Álfabakki

■ What Happens in Vegas

Smárabíó, Háskólabíó, Regnboginn

■ Zohan

Smárabíó, Háskólabíó, Regnboginn, Borgarbíó, Sambíóin Keflavík

■ The Happening (June 11)

■ Flawless (June 11)

■ Wanted (June 08)

■ The Bank Job (June 18)

■ Meet Bill (June 18)

■ The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian (June 18)

both sound specialists as well as visual artists. For more information call 695 0262 (Þórunn). The course will start on the 16 of June and last 2 weeks. Registration is at www.myndlistaskolinn.is or call 551-1990.

■ Organ Market

Every weekend

This summer Organ will open a diverse market outside of the pub. Every weekend will have a theme, such as clothes, music, art and so on. The Market will be open on Fridays and Saturdays between 2 and 7 PM. Live music and food will be available. Anyone interested in participating in the market can send an e-mail to organthememarket@gmail.com or call 694-6844. A schedule is available at www.myspace.com/organmarket.

■ Icelandic Courses

June 9

Alþjóðahúsið now offers a series of courses in the Icelandic Language starting June 9. There are 3 main courses, a 40 hour course, a 20 hour course, and the crash course, a quick lesson in commonly used Icelandic phrases, for those who most likely won't have time to get a firm grip on the native tongue but want to make communications easier. For more information see www.ahus.is or to register send an e-mail to audur@ahus.is or call 5309315.

■ Viking Festival 2008

June 12 - 17

The Viking Festival has it all. A Viking Market, Story-tellers, ancient games, music, archery and even duelling. Everyone has wanted to be a Viking at one point or another and the Viking Village in Hafnarfjörðu (just 10 minutes drive from the city centre) is the perfect place to do it. Starting on the 12th and ending on the 17th, the Viking Festival is a good way to have some fun with family or friends. For more information see www.fjorukrain.is.

■ Independence Day - 17 Júní

June 17

The Icelandic Independence Day is a day of celebration throughout the entire country. Concerts, games, food stalls, balloons, bonfires, parties, there's something for everyone. The itinerary has yet to be announced but will be widely advertised. Have a hot-dog, crack open a brew and smile!

Movie Theatres

■ **Regnboginn**, *Hverfisgata 54 101 Reykjavík, Tel. 551-9000*

■ **Háskólabíó**, *Hagatorg 107 Reykjavík, Tel. 525-5400*

■ **Laugarásbíó**, *Laugarás 104 Reykjavík, Tel. 565-0118*

■ **Smárabíó**, *Smáralind 201 Kópavogur, Tel. 564-0000*

■ **Sambíóin**, *Álfabakki 8 109 Reykjavík, Tel. 575-8900*

■ **Sambíóin**, *Kringlan 4-12 103 Reykjavík, Tel. 575-8900*

■ **Sambíóin Akureyri**, *Ráðhústorg 600 Akureyri, Tel. 461-4666*

■ **Nýja-Bíó**, *Hafnargata 33 230 Reykjanæsbær, Tel. 421-1170*

■ **Selfossbíó**, *Eyrarvegur 2 800 Selfoss, Tel. 482-3007*

Events

■ Can you see with your ears, or hear with your eyes?

June 16

The Reykjavik School of Visual Art will offer a course designed for 9-12 year old participants in which they experiment with the idea of listening with their eyes and seeing with their ears. Students will study sound in the environment and games and studies will emphasise sensing the surroundings. The course's supervisors are Þórunn and Þórunna Björnsdóttir who are

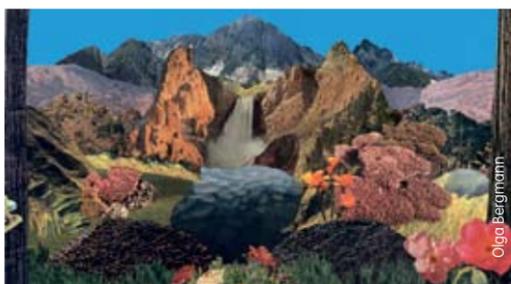
Listasafn Reykjavíkur
Reykjavik Art Museum



Hafnarhús
May 15 - August 24
Experiment Marathon
Reykjavik
Curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist
and Olafur Eliasson

Roger Harris

Reykjavik Art Museum



Kjarvalsstaðir

May 18 - August 31

Dreams of the Sublime and Nowhere In Contemporary Icelandic Art

Curated by Æsa Sigurjónsdóttir

May 18 - July 20

Martha Schwartz - I Hate Nature - 'Aluminati'

Hafnarhús, Tryggvagata 17
Open daily 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Thursdays to 10 p.m.

May 18 - December 31

Jóhannes S. Kjarval

Kjarvalsstaðir, by Flókagata
Open daily 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

May 18 - August 31

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THE REYKJAVIK GRAPEVINE

1 EATING

American Style
Tryggvagata 26

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

2 Nonnabiti
Hafnarstræti 11

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

3 Bæjarins Bestu
Tryggvagata

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

4 Pizza King
Hafnarstræti 18

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

5 Austurlanda-hraðlestin
Hverfisgata 64A

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

6 Hlöllabátar
Ingólfstorg

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

7 Domo
Þingholtsstræti 5

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

8 Brons
Pósthússtræti 9

Lively dining spot Brons features a variety of affordable and exciting tapas dishes as well as burgers, sandwiches, soups and salads and some very addictive Mojitos. Brons turns into a vibrant DJ-bar when the kitchen closes, open until late on weekends.

9 Shalimar
Austurstræti 4

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

10 Sjávarbarinn
Grandagarður 9

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

11 Fljótt og Gott
Vatnsmýravegur 10

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

12 Gullfoss
Pósthússtræti 2

Gullfoss is a luxury restaurant that specialises in Mediterranean cuisine. If in an adventurous mood, try their "New Style Tapas", specially selected by the chef. If not, sample your own gourmet meal from the a la carte menu. The weekend brunch-buffet is also a hearty treat.

13 O Sushi
Lækjargata 2a

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

14 Tapasbarinn
Vesturgata 3b

For those with a bit of money and time on their hands, the evening is well spent at Tapas, where you can while away the evening having course after course of miniature dishes served in an authentic Spanish style. There's also a lounge in case you don't feel like getting up straight away afterwards.

SPOT THIS: Q-Bar

Ingólfstræti 3, 101 Reykjavík

A roomy gay/straight friendly bar, the stylish Q-bar is a welcome addition to the downtown nightlife. Some of the greatest DJs in town regularly play there which makes for a great vibe and craziness on the dance floor. Weekends are especially lively.



15 DRINKING

Organ
Hafnarstræti 1-3

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

16 Prikíð
Bankastræti 12

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

17 Kaffibarinn
Bergstaðarstræti 1

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

18 Dillon
Laugavegur 30

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

19 Næsti Bar
Ingólfstræti 1a

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

20 Bar 11
Laugavegur 11

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

21 Ölstofan
Vegam

Ölstofan has been a staple of late twenties and thirties culture. A drink and stay for a while, blasting DJs have been playing background music. Better show up early for the regular clientele in as its popularity has increased, it's possible to find a table.

22 Nasa
Thorvaldsgata

In recent years, Nasa has built its reputation on a mix of Icelandic and international bands have performed as a variety of international acts. One of the bigger clubs in the city, there's always a party during weekends, and the atmosphere is as diverse as the crowd.

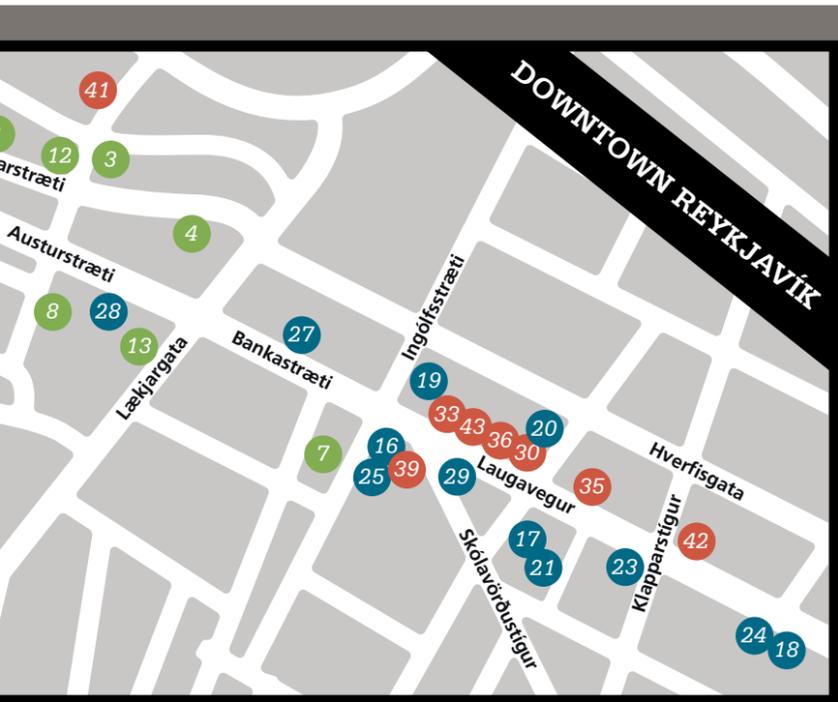
23 Óliveri
Laugavegur

If you like trendy parties, Óliveri is like crazy to a lively atmosphere. Glamour is all that counts on the dance floor, nightclub for you. Fine dining, fine conditioning, fine brunch served during the week. Óliveri a recommended place for brunch served during the week.

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30 SHOPPING

Cintamani Laugavegur 11

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

37 Kraum Aðalstræti 10

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

31 Kronkron Laugavegur 63b

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

38 Handprjónasambandið Laekjargata 2a

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

32 Húfur sem hlæja Skólavörðustígur 18

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

39 Nakti Apinn Bankastræti 14

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

33 Álafoss Shop Laugavegur 1

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

40 Gallerí Sautján Laugavegur 91

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

34 The Viking Hafnarstræti 3

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

41 Kolaportið Tryggvagata 19

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

35 Blue Lagoon Store Laugavegur 15

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

42 Aftur Laugavegur 23

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

36 Kisan Laugavegur 7

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

43 Trilogía Laugavegur 7

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

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DEAD

LAUGAVEGUR 29 - BAKHÚS

ALEXANDER **Mc**QUEEN

Trilogía

fan
Ótastígur 4

Attracting a clientele of hipsters and up who come for the company, since been replaced by nice to go with the drink. Early on weekends clientele comes rushing makes it hard if imble.

24 Boston
Laugavegur 28b

At Boston, the casual atmosphere, stylish interiors, low-volume music and nice crowd create a laid-back vibe on any given day, ideal for early drinks and chitchats. The comfy two-floor bar provides plenty of seats and recently started serving great traditional Icelandic dishes to hungry regulars – try the 'kjötsúpa' (meat soup) and 'plokksúpa' (fish and potato dish).

27 B5
Bankastræti 5

By day, B5 is a chic little bistro with good food and a prime location on Laugavegur for people watching. By night, B5 is one of the most stylised bars in town, with a "whiskey room" resembling a buccaneer's jail, and another room reminiscent of a high-class Manhattan bar.

Q-Bar
Ingólfsstræti 3

A roomy gay/straight friendly bar, the stylish Q-bar is a welcome addition to the downtown nightlife. Some of the greatest DJs in town regularly play there which makes for a great vibe and craziness on the dance floor. Weekends are especially lively.

25 Q-Bar
Ingólfsstræti 3

A roomy gay/straight friendly bar, the stylish Q-bar is a welcome addition to the downtown nightlife. Some of the greatest DJs in town regularly play there which makes for a great vibe and craziness on the dance floor. Weekends are especially lively.

28 Hressó
Austurstræti 20

A spacious neutral place with no special type of clientele, Hressó is a place where the menu spans a variety of lunch dishes during the day and troubadours and tab-beer are the order of the night. It becomes a somewhat basic club during weekends notable for its size and amount of seats.

Glaubar
Tryggvagata 12

Glaubar follows in the American sports bar tradition as it boasts a humungous satellite television that broadcasts matches from across the globe. This is the place to be on the night of any big game. Glaubar is also notorious in town for its late closing hours and loud music.

26 Glaubar
Tryggvagata 12

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29 Kofi Tómasar frænda
Laugavegur 2

With its basement location, Kofi Tómasar Frænda (Uncle Tom's Cabin) has the feel of a tucked-away alley café in London. During the day, the café has a relaxed feel with easy access to Laugavegur and Skólavörðustígur. At night, it becomes a happening and diverse bar.

36 Kisan
Laugavegur 7

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

43 Trilogía
Laugavegur 7

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

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Photos by GAS

Indian Mango

Indian Mango doesn't offer Indian food proper. They don't serve any Rajita or Naan, for instance. What they do serve, however, is a fusion influenced take on Goan cuisine, with an emphasis on fresh materials and inventive presentation. Looking over the menu, I could envision many repeat visits to the place, since most of the courses sounded like something I'd love to try out. And I would, if I could afford it. With main courses ranging in price from 2-4.000 ISK, I feel like I'll need to be celebrating a raise if I'm ever going to be a regular there. Even with a three course set menu going for 3.990, it's still steep for your average wageslave.

We started our meal with some freshly made Mango Lhasies. The yoghurt based drinks served as an excellent induction to the Indian Mango experience, and our bellies were positively roaring when the starters were served. The fish soup starter had a very special taste, and actually puts to shame most of the bouillon concoctions that pass for fish/lobster soup here in Iceland. It comes highly recommended, as does the delicately cooked scallop appetizer we ordered alongside it.

Next, we sampled a variety of Indian Mango's main courses. The Tandoori arctic char was fine for all its purposes, with the subtle tandoori and char tastes contrasted nicely with the char's engaging texture. Likewise, the Prawn Masala was plentiful and rich. However, the aforementioned courses both pale in comparison to the Beef Vindaloo, where the meat was cooked to tender perfection and served in a vindaloo style that offered up just the right mix of hot and tasty. Truly the highpoint of our meal, and a dish that leaves you calling for more.

For dessert, we had a chocolate tower and some mango ice cream, both of which were excellent. All in all, our Indian Mango experience was a good one; the place offers up a great atmosphere and is perfect for romantic outings, the food is good and the service is professional and friendly.

Address:
Frakkastigur 2, 101 Reykjavik
Tel.: 551 7722

Reviewed by
Haukur S. Magnússon

Rizzo Pizzeria

Nothing beats a good pizza, right? OK, that's not entirely true, but I think we can all agree that a good pizza is one on the fundamental elements of life as we know it. A good pizza should not only be tasty and fulfilling, it should be a life affirming experience. It should make you want to sing and dance, and volunteer for the elderly. Some of you may think that I place ridiculous standards on the quality of my fast food, but pizza should not really be a fast food. It should be made with love and care – delicate tenderness. That is why a mass-production pizza chain like Domino's or Papa John's will never be able to recreate the genuine pizza experience.

Sadly, Rizzo falls completely flat as well. There is considerable ambition to serve good food at Rizzo, and the pizza is actually quite good, once its finally served; but still, no pizza is really worth being disrespected by the service to the point where you feel like a second rate citizen.

It started as soon as I entered the establishment. I stood by the counter for about five minutes before anyone deemed me worthy of taking my order. Still, I was the only person ordering, and they had already noticed me. They just didn't acknowledge me. After ordering, After waiting for a good while (a while I used to admire the dirty dishes left on the surrounding tables and not removed by the service) I decided to check on the progress of my pizza. It turns out that the pizza was ready, but somehow they had forgotten to bring it to me, or at the very least let me know that it was ready so I could fetch it myself, you know, in case I was hungry or something. When the pizza arrived at last I asked if I could get something to move it from the hot metal plate it rested on, to my own plate for the eventual consumption process – a spade perhaps? The waitress offered a curt 'no,' turned her back and left.

So, if you are in the market for a tasty pizza, served with all of the enthusiasm of a 15-year old on his way to school, this is your plate.

Address:
Grensásvegur 10, 101 Reykjavik
Tel.: 577 7000

Reviewed by
Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

"They put on such a beautiful meal for us. We had the most amazing freshest fish I've ever had in my life. It was all so perfectly cooked too...Beautiful!"
Jamie Oliver's Diary

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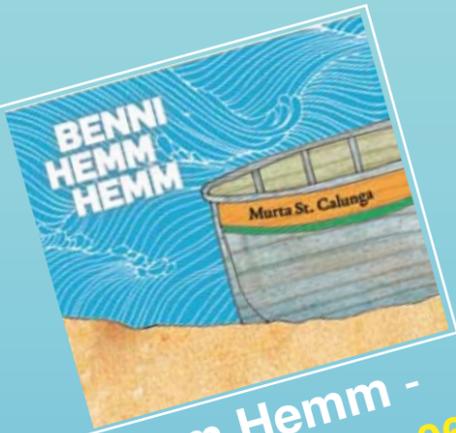
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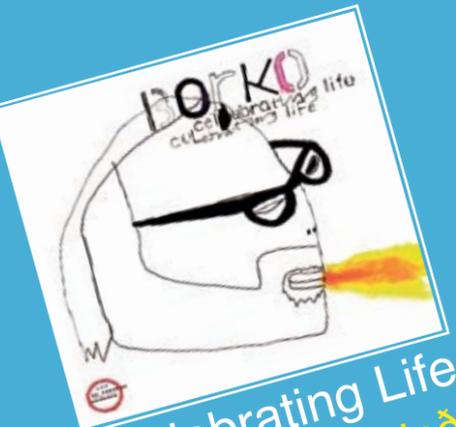
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		17:00	17:00	17:00		





Office Skills for Foreigners

“The course is unique in that it offers students a combination of Icelandic and specialist skills without the commitment of university. “We are the only school that does this – there is university and there are language schools but this is something in between.”

Since 2006, Menntaskólinn í Kópavogi (MK) has been offering a course in Office Skills for students over the age of 20 who don't speak fluent Icelandic.

The course consists of subjects in Book-keeping, Computer Studies and Icelandic taught in the first two semesters, and Book-keeping, Marketing, Business English, Culture and History of Iceland, Commercial Law, Maths and Icelandic in the final two.

The course is primarily taught in Icelandic so a basic knowledge of the language is necessary. “We try to teach as much as possible in Icelandic – basic Icelandic – and support this with English or whichever language we can,” Inga Karlsdóttir the program's director says.

Karlsdóttir, who is also an Icelandic teacher of many years, first got the idea to hold a course in Office Skills about 20 years ago. “We started the course around 16 years ago but later realised that it would be good to also have a course for foreigners,” Karlsdóttir explains. According to Karlsdóttir, since its inception in 2006 the course for foreigners has seen increasing enrolments.

The business units of the course are identical to those taught to fluent Icelandic speaking students, but because more time is spent on im-

proving students' language skills, it takes students four semesters, rather than two, to complete the entire course. Students have the option, though, of simply completing two semesters and receiving a diploma, rather than graduating with the full qualification.

The course aims to give students some experience in the Icelandic education system and, more importantly, an Icelandic qualification. “Some foreigners have a lot of knowledge and education but looking for a job doesn't always go so well – sometimes it's the language, other times it's the education. They may have degrees from foreign countries but that doesn't necessarily mean that they are accepted here and it takes a while for them to be translated. So, I thought ‘why not have them come into the Icelandic school system so they can say they have both experience in the Icelandic system as well as their degrees from abroad,’” Karlsdóttir says. And for one student this resulted in direct employment. “One company rang the school and specifically asked to hire someone who had completed the course,” Karlsdóttir says.

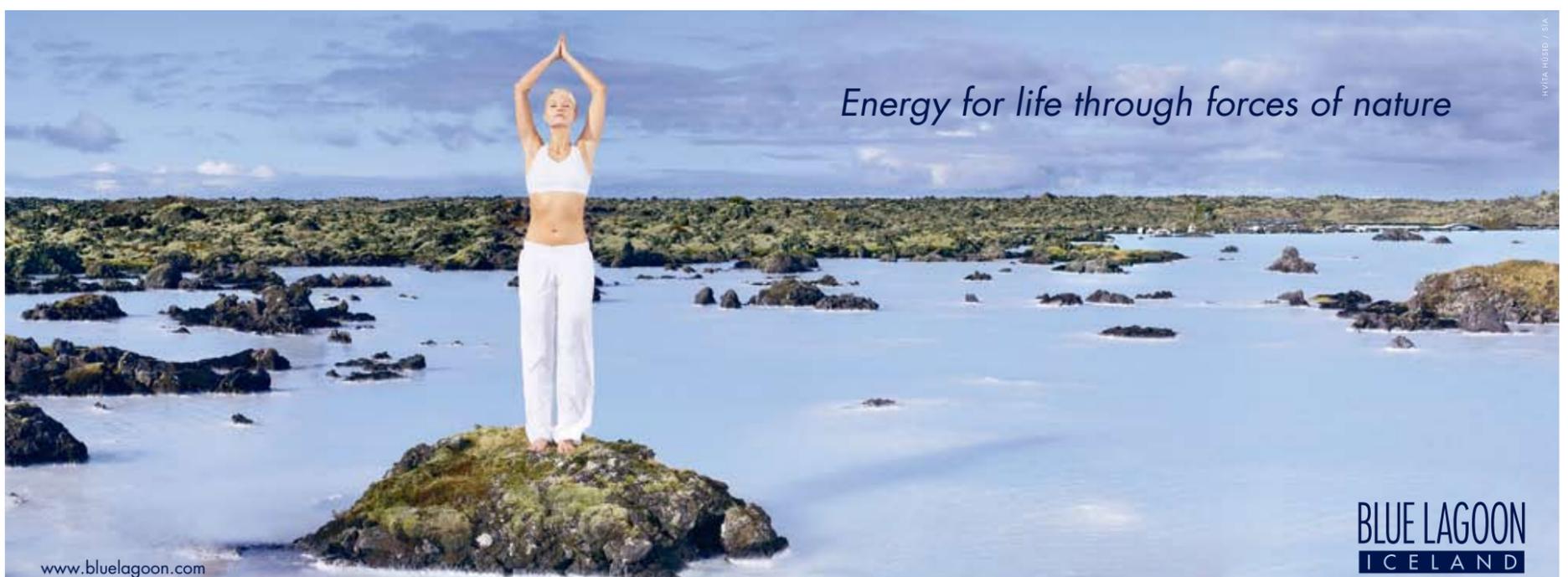
According to Karlsdóttir, students mainly enrol in the course on their own initiative, but some are sent by their employer. “They [employers] may

say ‘I have a lady cleaning whom I know has a good education from home and I'm willing to pay for her to go on this course,’” she says. And this was the case with one woman, who was working as a cleaner, and who has been enrolled by her employer for the next semester. The course runs in the evenings from 17:30 to 20:30 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, allowing students to attend after they have finished work.

Karlsdóttir says that the course is unique in that it offers students a combination of Icelandic and specialist skills without the commitment of university. “We are the only school who does this – there is university and there are language schools but this is something in between,” she explains.

The next course begins in autumn. For more information visit www.mk.is or contact Inga Karlsdóttir at ik@mk.is

Text by Zoë Robert





Your Guide to This Summer's Releases

2007 was a very fruitful year indeed for the Icelandic music. Many albums saw the light of day, and some even received rave reviews and warm receptions by music lovers. Iceland's pride and joy, Björk, kick-started the year with her album *Volta*, and in her footsteps followed a string of well received albums by well established local artists. Last year also saw the release of a string of successful debut albums, most notably by newcomers Hjaltafín, Ólöf Arnalds and Sprengjuhöllin.

This year's highlight is obviously Sigur Rós' announced release of their first studio album since 2005's *Takk*. But wait, that's not all. While we did not expect it beforehand, we done some investigative reporting and come to the conclusion that 2008 might be just as fruitful as 2007 for Icelandic music.

Here is your list to all the expected Icelandic releases this summer:

Atomstation

Exile Republic (June)

Formed in 2003, Exile Republic is Atomstation's second LP album. The band itself has been described as "a timeless, hard, rock'n'roll band" which pretty much says all that needs to be said.

Bang Gang

Ghosts From the Past (just released)

3rd album from psychedelic indie-pop singer Barði, who at times is reminiscent of Billy Corgan (except with a heavy Icelandic accent). This band is worth the hype.

Benni Hemm Hemm

Murta St. Calunga (June 13)

Enjoyable orchestral pop, Benni Hemm Hemm draws on a wide array of musical genre's so that the result has something for everyone.

Bob Justman

Happiness and Woe

Bob Justman (Kristinn Gunnar Blöndal) A.K.A. KGB, A.K.A. Unsound, A.K.A. Phil Stadium will release his first album (as Bob that is) sometime this summer on Bad Taste.

B-Ruff

Rólegur í kvöld

A new Icelandic mix-tape by one of Iceland's most respected DJ's.

Bubbi

Fjórir naglar (June)

Bubbi's new album promises not to disappoint his fans, although honestly the former-punk artist has such a loyal fan base that he could probably release an hour of silence and they wouldn't be disappointed.

Dimma

Stigmata

Dimma is an Icelandic heavy metal band that have received quite a bit of acknowledgment from abroad and even toured with the likes of Michael Bruce and Dennis Dunaway. Good for Sabbath and/or Cooper fans.

Dísa

Dísa (just released)

I was initially afraid that this would be another Emiliana Torrini wannabe but was pleasantly surprised that Dísa had managed to create a style quite unique to herself. Comfortable and catchy.

Evil Madness

Demoni Paradiso

Demoni Paradiso is Evil Madness's second album and although it was not a huge hit "Demon Jukebox" (or perhaps just in my mind) was great. Their music sounds like 80's horror-flick music if 80's horror-flick music had sounded this good that is.

Garðar Thór Cortes

When You Say You Love Me

Garðar Thór Cortes, the Icelandic tenor who, according to all Icelandic media coverage of him is becoming hugely popular abroad, can sing and sing very well at that. If you're into Classical/Pop check him out.

Ghostigital featuring Finnbogi Pétursson and Skúli Sverrisson

Aero

Not to be mistaken for another pop band hoping to ride the "nu-rave wave", Ghostigital is a very fun and very good electronic band fronted by former Sugarcubes member Einar Örn and multi-instrumentalist Curver. These guys are some of the O.G.'s of Icelandic electro.

Grjóthrun í Hólshreppi

Grjóthrun

Powerful acoustic rock, Grjóthrun í Hólshreppi is the countryside's way of reminding us that they're there and they're pissed.

Hraun

Silent Treatment (June 9)

This album due to come out Monday June 9th and is all about anger as a steppingstone between misery and happiness. The kind of anger you feel when you realize that the boy/girlfriend you've been moping about actually sucks and didn't appreciate you. Good anger.

Kira Kira

Our Map to the Monster Olympics

Kira Kira is hard to describe, especially in the space of approximately two lines of text so I'll let it suffice to say that OMMO is the band's second album and will probably not fit conveniently into any one musical genre any more than their past work.

Klive

Sweaty Psalms (just released)

Úlfur (Klive) makes a strange but enjoyable type of electronic music. Unique without being self-centred, Klive's music is quickly gaining popularity.

Megas og Senubjófarnir

Á morgun

Released two albums last year, Frágangur and Hold er Mold, to raving reviews. Only cover songs. 63 year old Megas reinvents Icelandic classics.

Mercedes Club

I Wanna Touch You

Mercedes Club's third single will probably be as full of musical genius as the first two. Thank you for destroying the last vestiges of human dignity in this world.

Múgsefjun

Skiptar skoðanir (just released)

Their first album, Skiptar skoðanir (Different Opinions), is an alternative folk/rock album that offers catchy melodies and lyrics as well as musical talent.

Ómar Guðjónsson

Framan af

This is guitarist Ómar Guðjónsson's second album and will be a purely instrumental trio project.

Sesar A

Of gott

Established hip-hop artist Sesar A has released his third album which also features performances by his band partners in IFS. International, salsa-inspired hip-hop. All that remains to be seen is if the "Grandfather" of Icelandic Hip-Hop's new album will be greeted by the rap scene as an instant classic or if granddad has lost his touch.

Shogun

Charm City (June/July)

What makes a good hardcore band? I have no idea. But millions of angry young people all around the world have seen to it that hardcore metal is here to stay and as far as bands of that nature go Shogun is probably one of the most true to its roots.

Sigurður Guðmundsson og Memfismaffan

Oft spurði ég mömmu (just released)

Hjálmar and Senubjófarnir member Sigurður releases his first solo album. Entirely composed of cover songs.

Sigur Rós

Með suð í eyrunum við spilum endalaust

(June 23)

Sigur Rós's new LP will be their first record made outside of Iceland and will feature a song in English. The overall sound of the album is more ambient and acoustic than earlier recordings.

Singapore Sling

Godman (June 20)

At first glance Singapore Sling might look like ordinary punks, but indeed, these are no regular punks, but rather super-punks and they're here to kick ass.

Sólstafir

Köld (September)

Planned for release sometime in September, Sólstafir's new album, *Köld*, has been described by the band as heavier and more relaxed than their last album "Masterpiece of Bitterness". Vintage instruments play an important part of the album's overall sound.

Ultra Mega Technobandið Stefán

Circus

Circus sees the Ultra Mega Technoband move away from their techno-party-punk roots in the direction of more concept driven, psychedelic tunes. The band has described the album as "Sex Pistols strangling Jean Michel Jarre with Nintendo controllers".

Villi Valli

Í tímans rás

78 year old Villi Valli teamed up with his grandson Viddi (Trabant) to record his newest Jazz-swing album. This dude might be old but that doesn't mean he doesn't know how to swing.

And more:

Also in the pipeline are albums from: Dr. Spock, FM Belfast, Hairdoctor, Jeff Who?, Kimono, Kuroi, Lay Low, Motion Boys, Retro Stefson, Reykjavíki!, Viking Giant Show and Slugs. Titles and released dates are still to be decided, but we know they are coming.

Text by Oddur Sturluson

The Grapevine's Euro 2008 Pool

The highlight of the summer is going to be the UEFA's European Football Championship. Either that or the Olympics. It's a toss up really. Either way, it looks like everybody is going to be glued to the TV this summer. Like the rest of the civilized world, except for those barbarians in North America who call it soccer, Icelanders are crazy about football. We are yet to formally qualify as a nation for the big event, the Euro Finals, but we still reserve the rights to go absolutely insane this time of year. We cancel our summer vacation plans, or ditch work completely. Our GDP takes a hit, but for two weeks everyone just thinks about football. Good thing this is only every four years.

The Grapevine office pool is underway. Here is the rundown of the picks and the logic behind them. Yours truly, the trusted editor, has picked France to go all the way this year. I believe that no team can match their depth, and combination of speed and power. Also, I picked France for the World Cup in '98 and the Euro 2000 and both times they made me look good. I believe they will do so again. Assistant editor Steinunn Jakobsdóttir is picking Germany. Germany is considered a slight favourite to win the title this year by most sports betters, carrying 4/1 odds. I still think they will choke in the first stage of the competition. The Grapevine's art director, Gunni, is picking Portugal, for aesthetic reasons obviously. Our photographer, GAS, is going with Croatia, still blinded by his love of Davor Suker in '98. The Grapevine's staff writer, Haukur, refuses to acknowledge this as an event of any significance, but still wants to be in the pool for the off chance of winning a lot of money. He has decided to pick Portugal as well, as he believes our art director is the in-house authority on all things football. He will obviously lose as well. The Grapevine's sports commentator, Páll Hilmarrsson, is choosing underdogs Sweden. His unwavering faith in Zlatan Ibrahimovic is admirable, but ultimately unfounded. He will not earn a part of the office pot, obviously.

So, France it is then.

The opening match of Euro 2008 kicks off on Saturday, June 7 at 16:00. All matches will be broadcast live on RÚV – The National Broadcasting Service. Check www.ruv.is for a full schedule.

Text by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson



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The Most Expensive Icelandic Film

“Dagur Kári is a little eccentric they say and he won’t release anything until it’s completely ready. So whether we will witness the payoff of this vast filming procedure before this Christmas or in two years, hopefully it will live up to its expectations...”

Director Dagur Kári has earned his spot as one of Iceland’s leading directors, although he was born in Paris and educated in Denmark. After the success of his debut film, *Nói Albínói*, Dagur Kári shot his second feature film, *Voksne Mennesker*, in Denmark. Even though he once described the Icelandic movie industry as a playground, compared to Denmark, Dagur Kári has returned to Iceland to shoot his next and biggest film so far, *The Good Heart*.

Much Ado About Something

The project has received considerable publicity over the last few months. The script was written by Dagur Kári himself, and has won several awards amongst others the prestigious NHK International Filmmakers awards at Sundance Film Festival. The script has gotten rave reviews by many and Þórir Sigurjónsson, the producer, has described it as if Charles Bukowski had written the *Pygmalion*. Ryan Gosling and Tom Waits were originally scheduled to star in the film, but both had to pull out due to other engagements. That hardly dampened Dagur Kári’s spirit. Instead of Gosling he casted the rising star Paul Dano who has, in spite of his young age, starred in two Oscar films. Tom Waits was promptly replaced with the experienced and unimpeachable Brian Cox.

When *The Grapevine* tried to catch up with

some of the stars attached to this film it turned out to be rather strenuous; the foreigners were always either shooting or on mandatory tours around the country. At last we gave up on trying to reach the stars, and instead got a hold of some of the production staff, the all-important behind-the-scenes people who everyone knows really put the films together anyway. They informed us that the atmosphere on set wasn’t typical for an Icelandic film sets, but much more metropolitan to say the least.

Barflies Redux With a Twist

The film plot line is elaborate but it takes on the coarse New York Bartender Jacques (Brian Cox) who operates a bar attended by hardcore bums and is as fierce looking as he is in his words. One day the homeless young man (Paul Dano), who appears to possess some mysterious healing powers, shows up and starts healing all the bums, including Jacques himself. Jacques had suffered from heart difficulties for many years and spent almost as much time at the hospital as he did on his bar.

He grows immensely fond of the young man and plots to train him up so he can fill his imminent void but things get complicated and don’t exactly work out as Jacques meant them to.

According to this synopsis, it sounds like

a drama, right? Not so, says the production staff. They claim it would be a vulgar understatement to call it a drama. The storyline combines comedy, tragedy as well as drama and is rather enigmatic. Their spirit was so determined there didn’t seem to be any point in objecting.

The filming process has been adventurous and includes filming at the previous US Naval Base in Keflavík as well as in Iceland National Hospital where an actual heart transplant surgery was caught on tape for the first time, at least for cinematic purposes. This helps to make *The Good Heart* the most expensive Icelandic film made hitherto, with a budget of 2,6 million Euros.

When asked when the premier could be expected, the production staff simply hissed, shook their heads and said they weren’t the right people to answer that question, and probably nobody could at this time. Dagur Kári is a little eccentric they say and he won’t release anything until it’s completely ready. So whether we will witness the payoff of this vast filming procedure before this Christmas or in two years, hopefully it will live up to its expectations...”

Text by Sigurður Kjartan Kristinsson

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