



# The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE



Check out our  
Xmas special inside!

[www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is)

YOUR **FREE** COPY >> THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL & ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

**IN THE ISSUE** Issue 18 • 2011 • **December 2 - January 6** 2102

**+ COMPLETE CITY LISTINGS - INSIDE!**

**POLITICS** Pirate parties, collapsing governments, small states

**MUSIC** A '90s kid remembers the '90s quite fondly

**TRAVEL** Monster trucks and a miniature Iceland! **LITERATURE** Bought or borrowed

**OCCUPY** No wait, was that last month?



## IS ICELAND REALLY AN IDEAL ENVIRONMENT FOR FEMALE MUSICIANS?

— We explore with the help of Lay Low, sóley, Adda, Myrra Rós and others —

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:**

Sari Peltonen  
Marc Vincenz  
Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir  
Birkir Fjalar Viðarsson  
Bergrún Anna Hallsteinsdóttir  
Gerður Jónsdóttir  
Rebecca Louder  
Kári Tulinius  
Snorri Páll Jónsson Úlfhildarson  
Valur Gunnarsson  
Donald Gíslason  
Bob Cluness  
Ramunas Bogdanas  
Jake Harris  
Ragnar Egilsson  
Siggi Pönk  
Paul Fontaine  
Kári Tulinius

**EDITORIAL INTERNS:**

Monika Domeniková / [monika@grapevine.is](mailto:monika@grapevine.is)  
Clyde Bradford / [clyde@grapevine.is](mailto:clyde@grapevine.is)  
Jesse Ziebart / [jesse@grapevine.is](mailto:jesse@grapevine.is)

**ON-LINE NEWS EDITOR**

Paul Fontaine / [paul@grapevine.is](mailto:paul@grapevine.is)

**ART DIRECTOR:**

Hörður Kristbjörnsson / [hoddi@grapevine.is](mailto:hoddi@grapevine.is)

**DESIGN:**

Páll Hilmarsson / [pallih@kaninka.net](mailto:pallih@kaninka.net)

**PHOTOGRAPHERS:**

Alisa Kalyanova / [www.alisakalyanova.com](http://www.alisakalyanova.com)  
Hvalreki

**SALES DIRECTOR:**

Aðalsteinn Jörundsson / [adalsteinn@grapevine.is](mailto:adalsteinn@grapevine.is)  
Guðmundur Rúnar Svansson / [grs@grapevine.is](mailto:grs@grapevine.is)  
Helgi Þór Harðarson / [helgi@grapevine.is](mailto:helgi@grapevine.is)

**DISTRIBUTION MANAGER:**

distribution@grapevine.is

**PROOFREADER:**

Jim Rice

**RELEASES:**

[listings@grapevine.is](mailto:listings@grapevine.is)

**SUBMISSIONS INQUIRIES:**

[editor@grapevine.is](mailto:editor@grapevine.is)

**SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES:**

+354 540 3605 / [subscribe@grapevine.is](mailto:subscribe@grapevine.is)

**GENERAL INQUIRIES:**

[grapevine@grapevine.is](mailto:grapevine@grapevine.is)

**FOUNDERS:**

Hilmar Steinn Grétarsson,  
Hörður Kristbjörnsson,  
Jón Trausti Sigurðarson,  
Oddur Óskar Kjartansson,  
Valur Gunnarsson

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

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



**Photography:** Hörður Sveinsson  
[www.hordursveinsson.com](http://www.hordursveinsson.com)  
**Art direction:** Hristbjörnsson  
**Stylist:** Hulda Halldóra  
Tryggvadóttir  
**Make-up:** Vigdís Jónsdóttir and  
Tinna Gunnarsdóttir  
Special thanks to Hótel Holt, Fríða  
Frænka and Rokk og Rósir

**CORRECTION!** Last issue we erroneously credited a photo accompanying the article 'Surfing USA Iceland!'. It was taken by the lovely Alisa Kalyanova. We apologise to her profusely!

# I'll Stick To My Simplistic Naïveté

## Haukur's 50th Editorial



You know that scene in that old Simpsons episode when Homer gets a job at a bowling alley and all of the sudden he feels happy and content and his posture improves and he loses a bunch of weight and his hair grows back?

And then when he learns that Marge is pregnant again and he'll need to go back to work for Monty Burns and instantly his belly sort of plops out, all his hair falls off and he slumps down like a defeated mollusc?

You saw that, right? That scene pretty much nails what happens every time I go on, and subsequently return from, vacation.

I'll leave the country and stop imbibing news and angry blogs and Facebook statuses about Icelandic politics and politicians and officials and banksters and celebrities, and slowly but surely a weight is lifted from my shoulders and I start feeling and acting all happy and content and I lose weight and my hair pretty much stays the same, but it's more vibrant and voluminous and I get these really cool curls.

Then I'll be on my way home and a flight attendant will hand me the latest copy of Fréttablaðið. And, you know, just looking at the cover makes my gut pop out again and by the time I've leafed through the thing I'm back to being my old, sad, miserable slob of a self. I'll hunch in my seat (20A if I can help it) and shiver, nursing a G&T while dreading the fact that I am once again throwing myself into all that wonderful, enlightened, intelligent, and rational discourse.

And I'll wonder if my own contributions to our ongoing conversation (if whatever it is we're doing can be thought of as 'a conversation') are of the same ilk, and I'll usually reach the conclusion that they probably are, even though I try my best to avoid this (it is generally much easier—not to mention more satisfying—to find faults in others than in oneself).

I'll try to think of ways out. Not for myself, but for all of us. At which point do we stop all the shouting and get back to being, like, nice to one another and not assuming everyone has an evil ulterior motive with everything they do and that everyone that doesn't completely agree with us about everything is a sociopath or stupid or both.

(Not that there aren't evil and stupid sociopaths out there that are totally willing to throw everyone and everything under the bus for their own personal gain. There are plenty of those. But I refuse to believe that such human stains make up the majority of us, and I don't think we should let these bad examples taint our views of our brothers and sisters. Most people I've met are pretty nice and thoughtful when given the chance).

At which point do we acknowledge that we are mostly in this together, and we are all humans that probably all share the same dreams of inhabiting a peaceful and pleasant community where our siblings and children (and we!) can grow up and

make the most of themselves in.

(We all want that, right? It seems like a pretty solid and reasonable goal.)

There has been a lot of anger ever since a lot of us realised we'd sort of been living a lie for the majority of the '90s and '00s, and there still is a lot of anger and this is totally understandable and it was definitely provoked. And angry energy can be useful for a lot of things—it certainly helped us accomplish some cool stuff in January of 2009.

But it's probably a bit like sugar or hard drugs or popular soft drink Mountain Dew. It gives you a sudden rush of energy, and then you fizzle away and feel all tired and ruined. Angry people are pretty apt at destruction and deconstruction (those things were very much needed here, and in some areas still are) but they are rather poor at listening and empathy and building stuff and fixing it (those things are definitely needed here).

Oh I'm probably being totally naïve here. I'm a pretty naïve guy, and this whole 'all of us at our core just want to coexist peacefully and build a nice society for our children' shtick is likely far too simplistic and hopeful.

Folks that say this is a 'dog eat dog' world are probably right. But I am not interested in living in such a world, and I think I'll just stick to my simplistic naïveté for now and pretend most people are good and well intentioned and can be trusted (except those who can not—even if I'm naïve, I'll still try to learn from experience). It serves to make my life a tad more pleasant, and the worst that could happen is some dogs eat me.

Even as those dogs tear me to shreds and devour my carcass, that carcass will spend its last, painful minutes thankful for having enjoyed a relaxed and joyous life of not being a dog that eats other dogs and thinks all the other dogs are out to get it.

OK that was fun. Now: Happy Holidays and Merry Xmas and etc. etc. May you spend lots of good times with your family and friends in the coming month, and may you eat lots and lots of delicious food (and no dogs)!

**TRACK OF THE ISSUE**

**NOLO**  
**Souls Of Shanghai**

Download at [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is)

This issue's track selection was inspired by Sindri Eldon's raving review of the album it comes from! And Sindri is right: 'Nology' is a wonderful, wonderful album! Read Sindri's review below, and then go download the track they so graciously donated, 'Souls Of Shanghai', from [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is)!



**NOLO**  
**NOLOGY**

[facebook.com/noloonline](http://facebook.com/noloonline)

So good it's hard to believe it's Icelandic.

Treading a curious line between meticulously soundscape and haphazardly simple, Nology is a slightly daft adventure in post-modern musicianship, but its daftness certainly doesn't prevent it from carving some beautifully austere pop hooks. 'Yorkshire' encapsulates everything that's still bearable about indie condensed into one song, and 'When You're Gone' is pretty much the best Icelandic song I've heard all year. It on/offers between cocky guitar chugging and those marvellous moments that come only when musicians don't give a flying fuck how silly or cheap they're being, they're just belting out a good tune. The lyrics make no sense, the vocals aren't very good and the synths are about as cheesy as you can get, but these guys really are on to something. Check this fucker out and enjoy bathing in sweet, sunny apathy.

✎ SINDRI ELDON



Our frequent collaborator and supporter, Hermann Fannar Valgarðsson (or Hemmi as he was affectionately known to his many, many friends) tragically passed away recently at the young age of 31. Hemmi was an inspiring man, and we are grateful for having gotten the chance to know and work with him through some of his many exciting projects such as Nýlenduvöruverzlun Hemma & Valda (which is still going strong) and Atómstöðin/Skapalón (who host and service [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is)).

Thank you, dear Hemmi. You will be missed. A benefit for Hemmi's family featuring some of Iceland's favourite musicians will be held in Kaplakriki stadium, in his hometown of Hafnarfjörður, on December 20 ([www.facebook.com/xmasoghemmi](http://www.facebook.com/xmasoghemmi)).

...Laugarvatn, where, deep in the ancient earth, the devil boils the local waters to impossible temperatures.

But by the time the engineers of Laugarvatn have finished siphoning them around the town's old steam bath, the hellish waters have cooled to a delightful outdoor warmth. I had an adventurous natural sauna, followed by an adventurous natural hot bath.

– Waldemar Januszczak, [www.waldemar.tv](http://www.waldemar.tv)

# The Devil's Own Hot-Pot?

## Open daily

Icelandic  
Fountain of  
Wellness

A New  
Bathing  
Experience

**LAUGARVATN**  
**fontana**

Hverabraut 1 | 840 Laugarvatn | [fontana@fontana.is](mailto:fontana@fontana.is) | Tel: (+354) 486 1400

[www.fontana.is](http://www.fontana.is)

# GEYSIR

- Welcome to Geysir -



- GEYSIR woolen blankets -

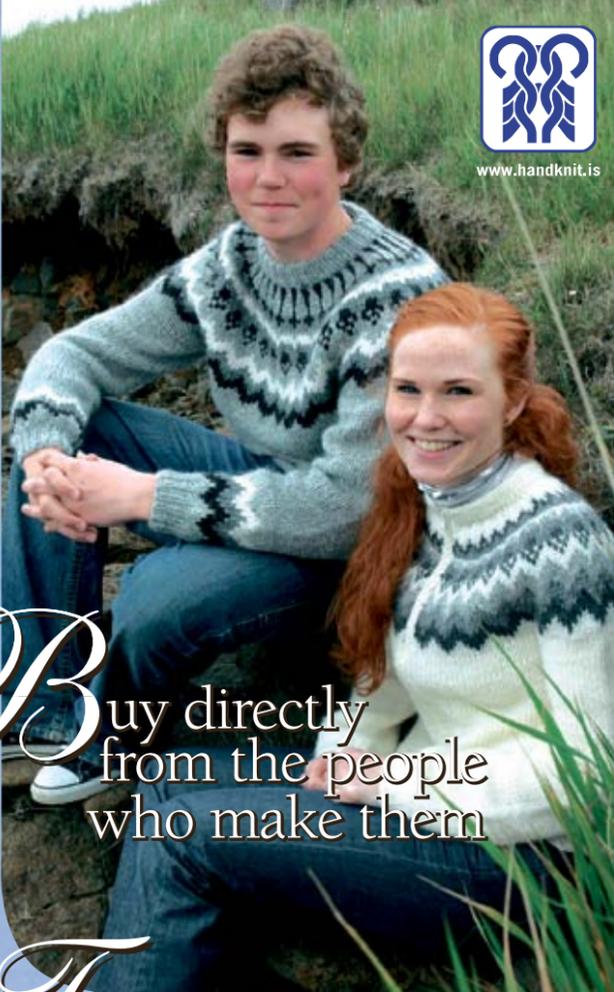
## HOME SWEET HOME

*Special Christmas offer - only ISK 10.800\**

The winds may howl but the good old woolen blankets from Geysir will keep you warm. Elegant retro look, now on a special offer until Christmas.



### GEYSIR



www.handknit.is

**Buy directly from the people who make them**

**The Handknitting Association of Iceland**

**TAX FREE**

- Skólavörðustígur 19 tel.: 552 1890
- Radisson SAS, Hótel SAGA tel.: 562 4788
- Laugavegur 64 tel.: 562 1890

PURE NEW WOOL

Say your piece, voice your opinion, send your letters to: [letters@grapevine.is](mailto:letters@grapevine.is)

## Sour grapes & stuff

### MOST AWESOME LETTER:

I was wondering if anyone out there has noticed how piss-poor the health care is in this country? I'm from the USA and I know that healthcare there is not perfect and as a result of frivolous lawsuits, in many times, much is done that is overkill. Isn't that still better than indifference and unwillingness to provide adequate healthcare? During the time that I have lived in this country (7 years), I have become appalled at the inadequacies in healthcare here. In the USA I worked in the medical field such as the insurance end of business, routine care, mental health and emergency care, so I am familiar with how things could be done.

A few months ago I saw a doctor for what were allergy symptoms. The doctor prescribed allergy medicine and an asthma inhaler (I did not know it was for asthma as the doctor didn't tell me and just said that I needed it). In September I was ill and saw another doctor and he questioned why I was taking an asthma medication and asked me if I had a history of asthma. I replied 'no', I didn't. He saw that in my medical record from the previous doctor, I had requested an asthma medication and that I needed it. He told me that I should not be using the asthma meds and to stop them immediately. He was quite concerned about this error on the part of the other doctor. Great-I paid 5000 ISK for a medication that I never should have been given. The previous doctor, whom I have seen several times, due to the lack of my speaking adequate Icelandic, is always quite happy to prescribe drugs. I have never left that office without a prescription. On more than one occasion I didn't fill the prescription because I thought it was not needed. I have even had to tell that doctor what I thought needed to be done and the doctor was like 'Oh, ya, ok. We should

### MOST AWESOME LETTER FREE GRAPEVINE TEE HEE HEE!



There's prize for all your **MOST AWESOME LETTERS**. And it's a scorcher! Whoever sends us **THE MOST AWESOME LETTER** each issue will receive a cool new **REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE T-SHIRT**, featuring the majestic G that adorns our cover. So you should make sure to keep writing us fun and/or interesting letters! This new Grapevine tee surely is the **SHIZNIT** (whatever that means)! It was designed by our very own art director man, **HÖRÐUR KRISTBJÖRNSSON**, and it's good for posing in front of a mirror, impressing folks with your impeccable taste or picking up men or women of all ages (no minors). **DON'T PANIC** if your letter wasn't picked **AWESOME LETTER**. You can still get a tee for a low, low price over our website, [WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS](http://WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS) Now, if you're in the market for free goodies next month, write us some sort of letter. Give us your worst: [LETTERS@GRAPEVINE.IS](mailto:LETTERS@GRAPEVINE.IS)

do that.' Needless to say I have not seen that doctor again because I have no trust in her. Two years ago, I developed severe abdominal pain (thought it could be my appendix) and went to the hospital and told the receptionist that I needed to see a doctor right away as I was ill. This was about 9am and she was talking to a physician that was standing there. The receptionist said, "you'll have to call in at 11 and talk to the doctor on call as we can't see you today." I told her that was not acceptable and wanted to know who was on call. She said Dr. X, who was the one standing there! That doctor also told me to call at 11 as she had no time to see me. She made no attempt at care at all. At that point, I probably said a few things that can't be printed and they managed to find me an appointment 3 hours later but that I needed to go home and wait. I was ecstatic....

I am also borderline diabetic which is new to me and saw a different doctor. Ya know what that doctor told me?? "Here is a pamphlet in Icelandic. Have someone read it to you and find the rest of the information you need on the internet." No referral to a nutritionist, diabetic training, nothing. Yep, the internet is 100% correct all the time (NOT). I had seen a doctor at Reykalandur. That doctor subsequently quit and I was cast adrift, not transferred to another physician, nothing. Again-massive indifference in these situations.

About a month ago, I was talking to a physician friend of mine and he is planning on leaving the country because the healthcare system is such a shambles here. He is a caring and competent person and is concerned about the path of healthcare here. He is predicting a complete collapse of the system

here in the next few years. That is scary. A prediction like that from an Icelandic physician.

I am fortunate that all these medical issues are behind me now and completely taken care of and I am now well. I pray every day that nothing serious comes up.

I think that the government or ministry or whoever oversees healthcare in this country needs to step up to the plate and make some huge changes before all is lost and all the good doctors leave the country. Of course, most of those will probably be in the age group that are now emigrating out. What a loss.

Oh yeah, I'm also looking for a doctor that is confident, knowledgeable and that I can trust. Anybody know of one?

Anonymous

Dear Anonymous (if that IS your real name!),

thank you for your letter. It's quite long, and there probably won't be room for any other letters in this issue because we're printing it, but you know: this is an important issue, and probably an important letter.

While your horrid experiences of local physicians and medical services might be due to chance and circumstance, there are plenty of these sorts of stories floating around. Is our tiny healthcare system falling apart at the seams? That would be horrible! Everyone loves healthcare!

We should do a feature on this at some point. That's a good idea. Thank you!

Dear Grapevine

London is now in the grip of yet another financial crisis and our Government is still giving money and underwriting loans to the banks. This is akin to giving an alcoholic a litre of vodka and saying "Now make this your last". The trouble in the UK has made me reflect on the situation in your country. My family spent a great four days in Reykjavik in June.

So I have two reflections.  
- I am pro EU but it could be totally the wrong move for your country. Surely the history of Iceland tells us that where you have been under foreign control or the concentration of power has fallen into the hands of a powerful elite then disaster follows. Take the more democratic road (which Icelanders pretty much invented) then you can control your own destiny, ride out the storms and even volcanic eruptions. You have a well educated resourceful popu-

lation, unlimited energy, abundant water and lots of cod. So what's the problem?

- When we got back home from a great trip (we were planning the next visit on the return flight) the first thing everyone said to us was.

"Sounds lovely but isn't Iceland impossibly expensive like Norway?". Your tourist authorities need to get over the message that Iceland offers a unique experience and high quality but at affordable prices. I spent more recently on a mediocre dinner in Madrid than I did on a superb lunch at the Laundromat Diner. You also don't have a MacDonalds. This is a unique selling point for millions of people who are sick of the Golden Arches.

So wishing you all a happy Yuletide.

Paul Bower

Dear Paul,

thank you for your letter, and your kind words.

You are probably right in most of your assertions. Well maybe. Some of them anyway. Some people think that joining the EU would actually serve to free us from the powerful elites that run our shit (Iceland is pretty much a feudalistic society, with some nepotism blended in for good measure. Unfortunately. It's a real bummer).

We are definitely cheaper than Norway. Looking at Norway on a map costs like, thirty quid. Forget about getting a pylsa there, too (there's plenty of million Norsk Krone Big Macs though). But we're still pretty expensive, right? At least in Madrid they give you free food with your beer. Here, you barely get a beer in your beer. It's just watery, yellow fizzy stöff (we call it "bjór").

OK SEE YOU LATER!



**HI Hostels Reykjavík**  
- your affordable quality bed

We'll be here, to arrange the most exciting excursions at the best price, and offer you local advice on how to get the most from your stay in this wonderful city.

Check out our website at [www.hostel.is](http://www.hostel.is)

Stay at Reykjavik City Hostel or Reykjavik Downtown Hostel.

Reykjavik City Hostel  
Reykjavik Downtown Hostel

**Reykjavík WELCOME CARD**

See more and save more when visiting Reykjavík.

Free admissions and discounts off tours, shopping and services for 24, 48 or 72 hours. Great value for money.

The Welcome Card can be purchased at:  
The Centre, major hotels, museums, tourist information centres and Hlemmur and BSÍ bus stations.

**THE CENTRE**  
The Official Tourist Information Centre in Reykjavík

Aðalstræti 2 • 101 Reykjavík • Tel +354 590 1550 • [info@visitreykjavik.is](mailto:info@visitreykjavik.is)

[www.visitreykjavik.is](http://www.visitreykjavik.is)



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

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



# Leading in Price and Quality!

Budget guarantees you highest quality rental cars at unbelievable low rates. We combine the strength of one of the world's largest car rental brands together with detailed local knowledge, flexibility and great value for money.

Call us from any hotel or guesthouse in Reykjavík  
and we will pick you up FREE of charge.



Car Rental

Call us on  
**+(354) 562 6060**

Alternatively email us at [budget@budget.is](mailto:budget@budget.is)  
(Office hours are from 8 am to 6 pm)

[www.budget.is](http://www.budget.is)

# Calls for Media Policy On Cultural Diversity

*Diversity policies have been in place in Europe since the '60s. Isn't it time the Icelandic media follows suit?*



**The Integration and Immigrants' Participation conference, held last month in Reykjavík, focused among other things on immigrants' representation and participation in the local media. The issue has received renewed attention in recent months in relation to coverage of a number of criminal cases in Iceland in which it was emphasised that the crimes were committed by foreign nationals or those of foreign origin. Spokespersons for immigrant groups have condemned this emphasis, arguing that it is unnecessary, reflects prejudice and reinforces stereotypes.**

**Words**  
Zoë Robert

**Photo**  
Hvalreki

## ABSENCE OF MEDIA POLICY ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Helga Ólafsdóttir, one of the organisers of the conference, is writing her PhD dissertation on media representations of immigrants in Icelandic newspapers. According to Helga Ólafsdóttir, the absence of a media policy in Iceland on cultural diversity is a contributing factor.

"Diversity policies have been in place in Europe since the 1960s. The fundamental principle of the Nordic public service system is to embrace the entire population, but in order to fulfil that principle, the Icelandic national television needs a policy regarding cultural diversity," she says.

"In the Nordic countries policies have been set forward due to pressure but the fact is that there is almost no pressure in our society and the discussion limited, according to my research, to mostly revolving around whether to mention nationality in crime news."

Helga Ólafsdóttir says that Morgunblaðið adopted a set of guidelines (the only paper to officially do so) in 2002 following

an incident when nationality was mentioned despite it being irrelevant to the story.

## 43% DECLINE IN COVERAGE OF IMMIGRANTS

Still, Helga Ólafsdóttir and other speakers at the event say that discussion about immigrants lacks diversity and is often linked to crime. In fact, there has been a 43 percent decrease in articles on immigrants from 2007–2010, according to a content analysis of the Icelandic mass media by Media Watch.

Furthermore, they argue that immigrants overall have very little presence in the media. "What is a bit troubling is that there are so few immigrants in the media. They are really seldom interviewed and there are very few articles written by immigrants," Helga Ólafsdóttir says. "Additionally there are no immigrants working in the [Icelandic language] media apart from one on [television station] [INN]."

She explains that the decline in coverage can be partly attributed to newspapers shrinking and immigrants return-

ing to their country of origin following the economic crash.

Nonetheless, Helga Ólafsdóttir says hiring people with immigrant backgrounds in the media would be one step towards the media better reflecting multicultural society. "It would be very positive to have an immigrant on the screen and also for Icelanders to get used to listening to for-

*"What is a bit troubling is that there are so few immigrants in the media."*

eigners speaking Icelandic with an accent," Helga Ólafsdóttir says.

"[But] we must keep in mind that diversity is not only being able to count the number of ethnically different faces on screen. The important question is how they are portrayed, how they are part of the story."

## LANGUAGE IS A BARRIER

Helga Ólafsdóttir points out that the language is a barrier particularly when it comes to television not just in immigrants being hired to work in the media but also when it comes to the media interviewing them. Helga Ólafsdóttir, an MA student in Anthropology at the University of Iceland (not to be confused with the aforementioned Helga Ólafsdóttir), who has also conducted research on the topic, agrees with Helga Ólafsdóttir.

"Immigrants are hardly ever spoken to as just normal members of the public and one of the reasons for this is the Icelandic language," she says.

"There is a strict language policy at the national television station, which is actually quite limiting for Icelandic journalists too because they get lots of criticism if they don't use the language correctly or even if they interview people who lack some knowledge of Icelandic or use it in an 'improper way,' so many are scared of interviewing immigrants, I think, because of their accent or because the person might not be understood so they will get lots of emails asking 'why did you interview this person?'"

## NARROW REPRESENTATION OF IMMIGRANTS

Helga Ólafsdóttir adds that when immigrants are spoken to it's usually in relation to problems and in cases where they are spoken to because of special knowledge or interest, they are still asked where they are from despite it being obvious that they live in Iceland. "It

always has to be emphasised, 'you're a foreigner,'" she explains.

Similarly, Helga Ólafsdóttir says that the representation of foreigners needs to be broadened. "Minorities are all too often treated as issues, not as people," she says.

## A LOT OF WORK TO BE DONE

Fréttablaðið Editor Ólafur Stephensen, who was a discussant in one of the sessions on media, agrees that there is a lot of work to be done.

"In many ways we have reflected the fact that Iceland is becoming a multicultural society, but we've been pretty much focused on the negatives and on the problems of integration and changes in society," he says.

"We need to shift our focus away from portraying people who are born elsewhere and who have moved here as a departure from the norm to portraying them as normal people living here. That is probably one of our important tasks ahead—to reflect how people of foreign origin are living here in Icelandic society. We want to do better because we want to reflect all groups of society." ❖

Iceland in the international eye | December

# Can the 99% Really Defrost A Scrawny Icelandic Chicken?



It looks good on the plate, but something simply doesn't taste right.

Much of the international media is hailing Iceland as an example of how to squeeze through the crisis tunnel and come out the other side grinning like a Cheshire Cat. As SPD candidate George Kerevan points out in his Scotsman article from November 25: "...this week, it was the ultra-orthodox Germany that the fickle bond markets turned on. In Reykjavík they have a right to smile..."

So should we all be guzzling champagne with our defrosted chicken?

An early November AFP headline reads: "Key lesson from Iceland crisis is let banks fail." Three weeks later, the Financial Times (FT) runs with: "Iceland: out of the deep freeze," and then there's a whole host of 'Occupy Wall Street' blogs trumpeting Iceland as the only place in the world where citizens have made a real difference. The ever-optimistic Birgitta Jónsdóttir points out in her Guardian article on November 15 that it will be, "up to the 99% to call for a national vote...so that we inside the parliament know exactly what the nation wants and will have to fol-

low suit."

Sounds fantastic, but will it really make a difference when the Icelandic court system rules against the people? In the words of the FT: "Iceland will now repay the Dutch and British government for money spent compensating personal deposits—despite an Icelandic vote in a referendum in April to block the compensation deal."

And where on Earth is the media getting its facts and figures?

The Scotsman proposes, "Iceland's export surplus is growing like the clappers. Hence the reason Standard & Poor's says it is safe to invest in Iceland again." On the other hand, a more cautious Reuters whispers that, "two key problems to Iceland's growth are that domestic demand is flatlining and exports, despite a depreciation in the value of the crown [sic] are basically unchanged compared to 2008."

You tell me? To coin an Icelandic knitting metaphor: Who's spinning whose yarn? Could it be that there's politics at work here? In the media? Heaven forbid!

Shouldn't we be grateful for the FT's healthy scepticism: "Iceland has a long way to go before it becomes a pin-up for

post-crisis recovery...private sector investment is only about half the level it was in 2008, while public sector investment is falling." And little brother Reuters concurs: "...the government and the creditors of the collapsed banks own the new banks. This distorts the allocation of capital, with banks unwilling to lend to businesses other than their own."

But I ask you. Who really owns the banks?

The only reason that unemployment figures are presently just below 7% is because, in the words of Reuters, "a large number of companies, which are being kept in business only because they are bank-owned, would go bust. Unemployment, down from a peak of about 10 percent to six percent, would start going up again."

The ever-cheerful AFP says: "After three years of harsh austerity measures, the country's economy is now showing signs of health despite the current global financial and economic..." Paul Krugman, the US Nobel-laureate economist told the AFP that Iceland has its krona to thank for the speedy recovery. "In Iceland, the government was actually in a sound position

debt-wise before the crisis." Doesn't that make you want to shake Mister Haarde's hand?

On the other side of the Richter Scale, Michael Hudson, everybody's pessimistic US economist, points out in an interview with GRTV, that "since the last census a few years ago, 8% of Iceland's total population has had to emigrate to avoid the debt plunge...Most of the Icelanders of working age have left for Norway and other countries in order to find work. The situation in Iceland is becoming as bad as it was in Latvia...where they've forced one third of the population to plan to emigrate in the next few years. The approval rating of the Icelandic government by its people is reported to be 10%. That's even worse than the US approval rating of congress."

From the sidelines, Reuters adds that the "[Icelandic] government recently said it was focused on export-driven growth, but its plan lacks detailed measures," and according to the FT, one reason why investments are not being stimulated is because "capital controls remain in place. Removing them could boost activity, but the omens are not good." Apparently we shouldn't hold our breath. "The last time

Iceland introduced capital controls, in the 1930s, they were not lifted until 1993."

A little further into his GRTV interview, the enigmatic Michael Hudson makes a tragic 'whoops' mistake. He says that Iceland has a population of 800,000 people. Well, if only he were right—unless there are 500,000 individuals mingling with the Huldúfölk (the hidden people).

Of course I know that success stories are relative, and numbers can be adjusted according to (nudge nudge) variables. I don't want to finger-point, but there should be all manner of MBA number-crunchers on hand who are quite fey in presenting long-term debts as assets...

Well, I guess I have no choice but to eat my attractive yet weird-tasting chicken and see how I fare in the morning. Here's a little secret: Much of the frozen chicken for sale in Iceland isn't even Icelandic. Just ask Mister Strauss-Kahn of the IMF (cluck cluck). ❖



Tindur Parka is the super-high quality, stylish 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition Parka by 66°NORTH. The parka's sleeve features the 66°NORTH original brand mark. Tindur is made of tough, durable fabrics and filled with 90% goose down which makes it extremely warm and comfortable. This anniversary edition is only produced in limited quantity.

» [magazine.66north.is](http://magazine.66north.is)

Emil

Tindur Parka - Limited Edition  
54.800 ISK

Vatnajökull Softshell Jacket  
42.000 ISK

Öskjuhlíð Scarf  
7.500 ISK

Glymur Softshell Pants  
34.000 ISK

La Sportiva Nepal Evo Hiking Boots  
75.000 ISK

# ON THE SOLIDARITY OF SMALL NATIONS

An interview with Iceland's former Minister for Foreign Affairs Jón Baldvin Hannibalsson



A version of this story originally appeared on the newsportal DELFI, which is the most popular news aggregator for Lithuania and Estonia. Its writer, Ramunas Bogdanas (former assistant of Lithuanian independence hero Vytautas Landsbergis), contacted Jón Baldvin with an interview request in the aftermath of Iceland voting for—and Lithuania against—UNESCO recognising Palestine, as the former Minister for Foreign Affairs instigated the international community's recognition of Lithuania as an independent state, despite both US and German opposition.

The below exchange was reportedly the source of much discourse in Lithuania, the crux of which was an open symposium held by the Lithuanian parliament's foreign affairs committee.

In light of Alþingi's recent vote to ratify Palestine as an independent and sovereign state, we are publishing a slight edit of the original story, along with an additional question from us (it's at the very end in case you were wondering).

## How did Iceland vote at the UN on admitting Palestine as a full member of UNESCO?

Iceland voted yes, since we support the Palestinians' claim for statehood. We think

this is a small step in the right direction. I fully agree with our Foreign Minister Össur Skarphéðinsson on this issue. I think that Israel's intransigence and brutality vis-à-vis Palestinian civilians is one of the great tragedies of our times. The victims of European racial prejudice and brutality have now become the perpetrators of those vices themselves. It is not merely immoral, but stupid, since it goes against

*"Remember: There was a time when Western leaders (e.g. both Mr Reagan and Mrs Thatcher) nicknamed Nelson Mandela as a 'communist terrorist'"*

the long-term Israeli national interest. It actually endangers Israel's future security.

The US has utterly failed as a mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and has lost all credibility as such. The silent US acquiescence in the continuous expansion of illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied lands has disqualified the US as a mediator. Both the US and Israel have to be helped out of this mess. Before they call upon themselves the rightful wrath of people, suffering from unmitigated injustice.

**As a pioneer in advocating international recognition of Lithuania's declaration of independence in 1990-91, when we were still occupied by the USSR—do you see any similarities between the Palestinian situation now and the Lithuanian situation then?**

The similarities are obvious, aren't they? Let us cite some of them: The Palestinians have been occupied by a superior military power for 44 years—and so were you. The occupying power, Israel, is in breach of the basic principles of international law and international treaty obligations. So was the Soviet Union in your case. You were at the mercy of a superior military power. So are they. The Soviet Union tried to force you into submission by economic sanctions. So do the Israelis, supported by the US. The US and Germany said that your declaration of independence on March 11 in 1990 was "premature." They urged you to withdraw or "freeze" it. They are still at it. Their advice should be rejected, now—just as then. But are there any differences? Of course there are. Some say that whereas you used only peaceful means, the Palestinians have resorted to armed struggle. What do you do, when a superior, occupying power excludes peaceful means? Remember the "Forest Brothers"? I would never condemn them. Rather I admire their heroism.

**Palestine is divided, both geographically (between the West Bank and Gaza) and politically (between Fatah and Hamas). At the end of the current electoral period, Palestine will have no legitimate governing body. Should this deter us from supporting their statehood?**

The Palestinians do have legitimate governing bodies, their mandate established through democratic elections, just as you did in 1989-90. The geographical partition of Palestine is partly a consequence of the illegal occupation and is wholly irrelevant for the justification of the Palestinians' claim for statehood.

## Should we base the right to an independent state on historical examination or on the right of the people living in a defined territory?

All nations have an inalienable right to national self-determination, based on their national identity and cultural heritage as well as the established tradition of living in a defined territory. Statehood in the past may strengthen your case for restoration of independence, but it is not a precondition.

## Some people say that the Palestinians must reject the use of military force, prior to recognition. Do you agree?

It is the Palestinians, by the way, who have been living under a military occupation for 44 years—not the other way round. Gaining statehood is not the end of the story. The new Palestinian state would have to negotiate with the occupying power to withdraw their troops from its territory—just as you did negotiate troop withdrawal with the USSR-successor state in 1994. The two states must define the ultimate borders of their territory through negotiations. They will have to negotiate a host of other issues, as is well known. But they should do so as two independent states, on the basis of equality. The relationship of a colonial master and subjugated, inferior people should be ended. That is the only way to break out of the current impasse. If the international community can help, it should do so. We should recognise that the US is out of the game. A representative of a small nation, such as the former president of Finland, Mr Ahtisaari with a solid reputation and a proven track record in conflict-solving, would be a suitable candidate.

## Hamas has the declared aim to annihilate Israel. Should we not insist that they withdraw that declaration before recognition of statehood is considered?

My understanding is that Hamas has rejected Israel's right to exist on occupied territory. That is a simple fact of international law. You don't establish a state on occupied territory, which belongs to others. You can hardly expect the international community to recognise such use of force. Can you? This is one of the issues to be settled through direct negotiations between the two states.

## The Baltic road to freedom was peaceful. With their track record of terrorist attacks on civilian targets, do the Palestinians deserve recognition of their statehood?

In January 1991 those in power in the Kremlin had decided that it should no

longer be peaceful. The decision was made to crack down on your embryonic statehood by military force, on the pretext that it was being done to protect national minorities and even human rights! Mr Gorbachev's claim to a respectful place in history rests on the fact that at the last moment he withdrew from the abyss. That is why the Baltic nations could secede from the colonial power peacefully. If Mr. Gorbachev had persisted in using force, it would have resulted in a huge bloodbath. Are the current extremists in power in Israel as farsighted as Mr Gorbachev? Unfortunately not. That's why they need help.

Remember: There was a time when Western leaders (e.g. both Mr Reagan and Mrs Thatcher) nicknamed Nelson Mandela as a "communist terrorist." Mr Mandela is now revered the world over as a global symbol of forgiveness and reconciliation. His is the great example of a peaceful solution of a long peering conflict. He has set a shining example for the rest of us to follow.

## Shouldn't small states simply be content to follow the leadership of the major powers, when it comes to solving controversial international issues?

Well, we didn't, did we—when we decided to support your claim to restored independence against the paternalistic advice of Messrs., Bush and Kohl?

## Do you feel Alþingi made the right decision in ratifying Palestine as a sovereign state? What do you believe the effects will be, if any?

Yes, indeed. If Alþingi would have followed the cowardly position of the Independence Party, not daring to take a stand, we should all have had reason to be ashamed of ourselves. Our Foreign Minister Össur Skarphéðinsson deserves credit for his initiative in support of an independent Palestine. It takes some courage to dare to do the right thing, even if the majority of Western democracies have abandoned their own declared principles of acknowledging the inalienable right of every nation to national self-determination. Fortunately, a vast majority of UN-member states (132) welcomed Palestinian membership to UNESCO. Hence, the Palestinians have the right in the future to refer the Israeli army's war crimes to the international court in the Hague. This is therefore a significant step on the road towards Palestinian statehood. 🇮🇸

## Words

Ramunas Bogdanas

## Photo

Julia Staples

## ATV/Quad Adventure in lava and black sand by the Blue Lagoon

**Panorama 1-hour ATV tour**  
9.900 ISK p.p two on each bike.  
12.900 ISK p.p one on each bike.

**Lava Beach 2-hour ATV tour**  
16.900 ISK p.p two on each bike.  
20.400 ISK p.p one on each bike.

**Trip to the Moon 3-4 hour ATV tour**  
22.000 ISK p.p two on each bike.  
27.000 ISK p.p one on each bike.  
Refreshments included!

**Volcanic Safari 6-7 hour ATV tour**  
42.000 ISK p.p two on each bike.  
52.000 ISK p.p one on each bike.  
Refreshments and lunch included!

Pick-up in Reykjavik 3.400 ISK p.p

Optional: Relax in the Blue Lagoon after the ATV tour  
Free pick-up in Grindavik and Blue Lagoon

ATV 4x4  
Lava tours.is +354 857 3001 - atv4x4@atv4x4.is

Join us in the coolest celebration in the world on our New Year's Eve Bonfire and Fireworks tours



## Day Tours, Activities and Airport Express ✈️

Taste the saga

See a glacier up close

Airport Express

Seljalandsfoss waterfall

Northern lights



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

Check out our online Christmas calendar, tour offers with every yule lad coming to town

Gullfoss



24 hour  
booking service  
(+354) 540 13 13

7ruly,

The Local Expert



[www.grayline.is](http://www.grayline.is)



Visit our sales office downtown at Lækjartorg square (👍 Like-yar-torg), call (+354) 540 1313 or go to [www.grayline.is](http://www.grayline.is)

**Icelandexcursions**  
GRAY LINE ICELAND



Occupy | Where did you go now?

# Tents Around The Tower

*How the occupy movement takes shape in Iceland*



On a cold November evening, a large canvas tent lies half-collapsed in front of parliament. Small crates of food lie out in the open, and a young man in coveralls is helping to gather the tentpoles. This is Occupy Reykjavík, part of the global Occupy movement and formed a month previous, but already going on hiatus.

It wasn't pepper spray or tasers that forced this group to stand down for the time being, though, but rather a combination of poor logistics, the exhausting grind of Icelandic bureaucracy, and a deafening roar of indifference.

## IT'S ALL ABOUT LOCATION

As the Occupy movement began to gather momentum in the US and around the world, Iceland wasn't entirely slow on the uptake. Occupy Reykjavík began organising on October 15, and had its official start on October 30. Their chosen location—Austurvöllur, the grounds in front of parliament—would prove to be the source of many of the group's difficulties.

While the parliamentary building is itself a national structure, Austurvöllur is land owned by the city. As such, any permission to be on the property was in the hands of City Hall. While Occupy movements around the world had chosen the direct action approach of simply occupying public space and dealing with the consequences later, Occupy Reykjavík chose instead to seek permits to be on the property. Police told occupiers that without such permits, their tents—numbering around half a dozen at the time—would be immediately removed. Indeed, while the question of their legal

right to be on the property remained unanswered, police did remove the largest tent from the encampment, which was later reportedly returned in damaged condition.

The occupiers argued that being on public space, they had a constitutionally protected right to assemble there, but this made little difference to authorities. Eventually, city hall agreed to issue permits to the occupiers to camp on Austurvöllur, but these permits needed to be renewed on a weekly basis. Re-applying for a permit each week, while police continued to doubt the legality of the occupiers' presence, began to wear the group down.

Austurvöllur also happens to be in the heart of downtown Reykjavík. On weekends, this means dealing with

*"The thing that we are striving for, that is closest to my heart, is direct democracy," says Pétur. "We don't want a few people controlling the affairs of everyone else."*

passing crowds of drunks who may be less than sympathetic to the cause. One occupier, Sigurður Einarsson, told the Grapevine, "The police have been ignoring us very loudly. We had some drunk people here the other night, we called the police for aid, and they said 'Yes, yes, yes, we will send someone', and they never came. So we've had to take care of security ourselves." There was also a theft of some speakers from one of the tents. With a lack of manpower to be able to stand guard, and police doing little to protect the occupiers, the Austurvöllur camp has been a vulnerable target left to their own devices.

"There are very few people capable of manning all the shifts, and winter is coming," adds Pétur Karlsson, another occupier. "And we're also getting harassed by the police once in a while. We're really undermanned right now. There aren't a lot of people helping us."

## WHAT DO THESE PEOPLE WANT ANYWAY?

One of the most frequent questions that arises about the movement anywhere in the world has been what, exactly, the Occupy people want. In the case of two members of the Occupy Reykjavík movement, the emphasis seems less about economics and more about democracy.

"The thing that we are striving for, that is closest to my heart, is direct democracy," Pétur says. "We don't want a few people controlling the affairs of everyone else. Neighbourhoods could become more active, there could be more public referendums, but I would also like to see changes to the economy as well. I'd like to see cooperatives. We all come here with our own ideas. We are all here

to contribute. I don't think it's advisable to define it so narrowly. This is about the 99%. We want the community to get together and try to arrive at a consensus, find solutions together."

Sigurður echoes much the same sentiment: "I would like us to not dehumanise other people with needless power. I want a society that is egalitarian, instead of having a hierarchy. I want people to be able to get together, whoever they are, to decide on things, instead of some higher power that tells everyone what to do. I want to see people brought more openly into the decision-making process."

In trying to bring people into the fold, Pétur admits there have been logistical problems: "We don't really have a lot of resources to network, but I think that our best tool is the internet. We are trying to contact the media and let them know what's going on, but there are some difficulties there. If we want to get them to cover us, they demand stuff like free

pictures or they're just not interested. So not a lot of them are coming here to see what's going on."

Sigurður is a bit more optimistic on this point: "We've had some support from the general Occupy movement around the world by having them come here to check us out and offer their assistance. We've also had some good conversations with journalists from around the world. Journalists in Iceland? Mostly freelance journalists who are already deep in the grassroots movement themselves." In fairness, he admits that it was the presence of a camera crew from RÚV that kept police from taking away their tents on their first night, and that Morgunblaðið was there to take photos when police eventually did seize their tents.

## LOUDLY IGNORED

On top of this, support from public officials has been lacking.

"I would not be aware of any other public figures showing us support," Pétur says. "Some people support us in spirit, but for the most part we're on our own. They give us the thumbs-up, but they don't do anything."

The strongest show of support from any public figure has been from Movement MP Þór Saari, who earlier this month submitted an official proposal that parliament allow the protesters to have access to the building's toilets, and to provide hot soup in the evenings. His motivation is pure altruism.

"I think that parliament should do as much as possible to try to heal the rift between itself and the people," he told the Grapevine. "Parliament has become an ivory tower whose occupants are afraid of those outside and refuse to speak to them. In general parliamentarians have contempt for the public and do not consider them as important as the special interest groups."

MP for the Independence Party Ragnheiður Ríkhartósdóttir, posted this status on Facebook: "Terrible view of

Austurvöllur which shows unbelievable disrespect from the city of Reykjavík towards the Icelandic parliament." She also expanded her criticism to include the Occupy movement itself. "Do people think this is some kind of performance piece?" adding that Occupy protests elsewhere have been in front of financial institutions rather than legislative bodies. "So can any kind of performance piece be held in Austurvöllur, or any other public space then?"

But Þór is convinced that the Occupy protesters are exactly where they're supposed to be: "Parliament is the originator of all things and the most powerful institution in Iceland. As long as it does not change its ways or remake legislation favouring the people instead of special interest groups, it remains the correct and in fact the only relevant target for protest."

## MOVING ON, MOVING FORWARD

The logistical problems and public indifference have unfortunately compelled the group to pull up their tent stakes for the time being, but their optimism remains.

"I'm optimistic for change overall," Pétur says. "I don't know about the path of this movement. We pretty much copied it raw from America. There may be different tactics that we'll have to take. Whatever happens, we're going to develop new methods, adapt to the situation, and we're going to go on."

Sigurður tells us the movement plans to expand its horizons. "Taking down the tent seemed the next logical step, so we can conserve our strength to do other activities that we want to do: organise protests and sit-ins, go to places other than Austurvöllur, such as the commercial districts. The camp is coming down until we've re-assessed our strengths, focused our abilities elsewhere, and then when we feel the need to put up the camp again, we're going to do it more organised, with all the equipment we need." 🍷

## Words

Paul Fontaine

## Photos

Páll Hilmarsson



Heavenly pizzas!



Home delivery  
See our menu at [www.gamlasmidjan.is](http://www.gamlasmidjan.is)

# WE'LL TAKE YOU THERE!

ALL THE MOST EXCITING PLACES IN ICELAND

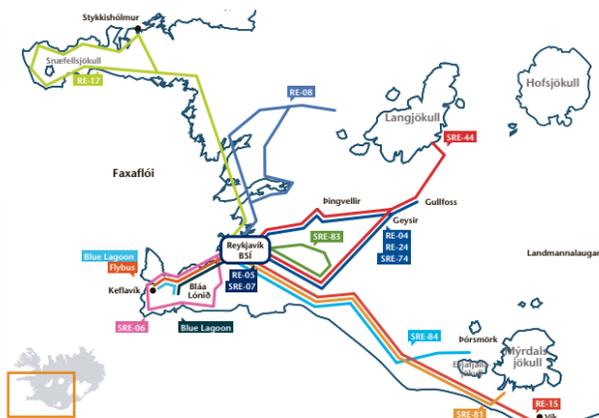
Discover all the magical places not to be missed when in Iceland: Beautiful nature, multicoloured mountains, fertile farmlands, stunning views, plummeting waterfalls, natural wonders and geological phenomena.

EXPERIENCE A GREAT DAY WITH US!

Book now on [www.re.is](http://www.re.is)

Book now at the reception

Book now by calling 580 5450



MORE DETAILS ON TOURS IN OUR BROCHURES

## Relax at the Blue Lagoon



From Keflavík Airport to Blue Lagoon  
09:30, 12:45 & 16:45

From Blue Lagoon to Keflavík Airport  
12:00 & 14:15



From Reykjavík to Blue Lagoon  
09:00, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00, 13:00, 14:00, 15:00, 16:00, 17:00 & 18:00

From Blue Lagoon to Reykjavík  
11:15, 12:15, 13:15, 14:15, 15:15, 16:15, 17:15, 18:15, 19:00 & 21:00

**flybus**   
in connection with all departing flights.

**1950 ISK** - from BSÍ Bus Terminal.  
**2500 ISK** - from most hotels and guesthouses in Reykjavík - see list on [flybus.is](http://flybus.is)

Children 0-11 years <b>FREE OF CHARGE</b>	Teenagers 12-15 years <b>50% DISCOUNT</b>
--	--

For our flexible schedule please visit [www.flybus.is](http://www.flybus.is) or consult our brochures.



Wishing you all a Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year

**flybus**

**Reykjavik Excursions**  
KYNNISFERÐIR



Scan the QR code



BSÍ Bus Terminal • 101 Reykjavík • 580 5400 • [main@re.is](mailto:main@re.is) • [www.re.is](http://www.re.is)

Pirates | Yarr

# SHIVER ME TORRENTS!

*The Berlin Pirate Party visits Reykjavík*



Despite their silly name and a platform originally focused on Internet issues, The Pirate Party won an unexpected 8,9% in the Berlin elections this September. Shaking things up much like The Best Party did in Reykjavík, The Pirate Party ousted the Free Democrats and became the first new party to come to power in Berlin since the 1980s. While some of these newly elected Pirates were in Iceland to meet with representatives from The Best Party and the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative, we met up with them to learn more...

**First, briefly what is The Pirate Party?**

**Christopher Lauer:** So it's too simplistic to say we're just an Internet party. It started that way, but then the platform broadened with the party's membership explosion in 2009.

The Pirate Party is a left liberal, social party. The neoliberal policymaking of economy that we've seen in the last ten to twenty years is just inhumane. Of course we are for free economy, but within borders of law. So we are social, but not socialist. We are for society, not society for economy.

The liberal part of our agenda is about people's rights—all the rights that protect you against the State, which has the monopoly on using force. Especially since 9/11, policy has been driven by fear—by the idea that society is a danger to the State. But if you think about it, we are the State. So we believe in a free and open culture. I think what the Prime Minister of Norway said after Utoya was the only right thing to say: "We have to be a more friendly society."

So basically we have a silly name and we are not typical politicians, but we have a very pragmatic view on politics—a sane view about what is right and wrong.

## Words

Anna Andersen

## Photos

Hvalreki and Alísa Kalyanova

**Silly? It must be pretty cool to be called a pirate...**

**Alexander Morlanger:** Yeah, if we lower the voting age, we would do very well because all the six year olds would vote for pirates.

**Yeah, and I've read that you want to lower the voting age. What's that about?**

**CL:** Basically our idea is that anybody

*"The Pirate Party is a left liberal, social party. The neoliberal policymaking of economy that we've seen in the last ten to twenty years is just inhumane. Of course we are for free economy, but within borders of law. So we are social, but not socialist. We are for society, not society for economy."*

should be able to go into the city office and ask to vote. My 84-year-old grandmother is completely demented and she can vote. I met some children during the campaign that knew more about the party platforms than the average Berlin voter.

It's the same thing with drugs. If you treat people like normal, sane, educated people, they behave that way. If you encourage young people to get involved with politics by giving them the opportunity to vote, you get a less indifferent political culture.

## PEOPLE WANT FRESH POLITICS

**Why do you think you were so successful in this latest election? Have Internet issues become so important? Are people just fed up with the traditional party politics?**

**CL:** There were different factors. First of all, people want fresh wind in the political system. They are fed up, but not so fed up that they are ready to start a revolution—to march on parliament. Germans are not that kind of people. We ask, 'where do we have to announce the revolution. Who can give us the form to make everything proper to make the revolution? Can I make it on a Sunday or do I have to come back on a Monday.'

**Yeah, that is so stereotypical German...**

**CL:** But it is that way. The reason that The Pirate Party has done well in Berlin and not in France is because if we

start something, like a club and party, we take it very seriously. So The Party is very progressive and liberal and breaks rules, but in other respects is very formal.

**AM:** Some guy blogged that The Pirate Party is like a massive multiplayer offline role-playing game...

**CL:** ...World of Warcraft in real life... We organise ourselves with liquid democracy, which was developed by Ber-

lin chapter of The Pirate Party two years ago. It mixes direct and representative democracy. It's like a social network; everyone in the party has an account, and they can make suggestions and provide constructive feedback.

We are showing it to the Better Reykjavík people and also to The Best Party. In our view, Iceland could be a showcase for a country using a programme like that.

**AM:** ...the first country that upgrades its democracy to the next generation.

## A SERENDIPITOUS BEST PARTY CONNECTION

**So people wanted fresh wind in the political system. What was it specifically about The Pirate Party that appealed?**

Actually, there are a lot of chance parallel developments between The Best Party and The Pirate Party. It's funny, the day I called Heiða, Jón was talking about our good result and he said, yeah, we have to get in contact with them... I think both The Best Party and The Pirate Party see the need for change in politics—not only in policies, but also in the way politics are done.

**What do you mean by 'the way politics are done'?**

The style—not the clothing; the way you do it. The question is, do you want to play their game or define your own rules, and I think the answer is somewhere in-between. I thought when we talked to Jón and the other guys that

there seemed to be similar developments both here and in Germany and in other countries, like Poland, where a very progressive party also gained 10% in an election.

Voters knew we weren't pros; they knew we were amateurs. If we made one thing clear during our campaign it was that we have big gaps in a lot of political issues. Our number one candidate, Andreas Baum was asked how large the city debt was, and first he said he didn't know, and then he said many, many millions. Everyone laughed because in fact, Berlin's debt is 65 billion Euros and rises by 87 Euros every second. See we have now done our numbers. We made an iPhone app, and you can see very dynamically that the city of Berlin will never ever pay back its debt [shows app with debt growing by the second].

If we don't know something we just Google it. In our culture, not knowing something is not bad if you know where to find it. We say, yeah, if you elect us, we'll try to learn, and if we don't figure it out after five years, don't vote for us again.

**AM:** If there's one thing we have in common with your mayor it's the ability to say 'we don't know.'

**So did you come primarily to meet The Best Party?**

**CL:** Yeah, and we also came for IMMI. When we met with Birgitta Jónsdóttir today we were surprised that IMMI wasn't further along because in Germany you get that impression. We actually came to discuss the terms of placing our servers in their data centres, and we found out that we can't do it. We have to find a way to support her...

**DOWNLOADING .MP3 TORRENTS There's one topic we haven't talked about. I'm sure you get a lot of flack for your stance on copyright. How do you explain your view to musicians who want to make a living from what they create?**

**CL:** Well, I'm not very satisfied with our agenda on copyright issues as it is right now. We say, for instance, that after ten years you lose your rights, and it goes to the public domain. That makes sense if you are talking about Lady Gaga, for example, but a playwright needs ten years to make gains. He publishes the play, sells it and sells it and sells it, and then after ten years, the play makes it

and has to live off of that.

**AM:** Right now the guy who buys it gets ripped off, the guy who creates it gets ripped off, and the guy in the middle makes a fortune. This can't be right. We need to change this so that consumers and creators get more.

**So you are not suggesting that people steal?**

**CL:** No, no, no. Everybody should have a share, but it has to be fair. The music industry was based on monopoly. The Internet destroys gatekeepers and monopolies. What we have are old elites who are scared, and use their money to uphold the system for as long as they can. Lawyers are sending notices to people who download stuff telling them that they will be prosecuted unless they pay 1000 Euros; it's like modern blackmailing. We agree as a party that the consumer should not be criminalized. Too much money is being spent on upholding the system.

**Do you have an idea of how to solve this problem? ...The million-dollar question.**

**CL:** Yeah if I knew I wouldn't be sitting here, a politician. I would be rich...

**AM:** There was a lot of money involved when ships were built to transport ice from the north to Europe so that people could cool things in the summer. It was a big business, employing many people. Then some idiot invented the refrigerator, and in five years the whole business went bankrupt. Should they have forbid refrigerators to protect these workers? Maybe they'll concentrate on something else, like organising concerts.

**Jón Gnarr recently said in an interview with The Grapevine that he doesn't have very much power to change things, and that he is more responsible for making sure that bad things don't happen. Do you think you will be able to change things up?**

Well, no. People don't understand politics...we are trying to make this more transparent like Jón has done with his Diary of a Mayor. But basically we just want people to take responsibility for their lives. If people don't want to, then okay, I've learned something, but for now I have faith in the people and a positive view of society. 🍷



A Unique  
Design and  
Jewelry Store  
in Downtown  
Reykjavík

aurum

Bankastræti 4 | Reykjavík | Tel: 551 2770 | [www.aurum.is](http://www.aurum.is)



EXPECT  
HANG  
OVERS...

NASA

THE BIGGEST CLUB IN  
DOWNTOWN REYKJAVÍK.  
LIVE MUSIC EVERY WEEKEND.  
[WWW.NASA.IS](http://WWW.NASA.IS)

# A Tiny Piece Of Freedom

*Palestinian poet and journalist Mazen Maarouf has been given sanctuary in Reykjavík*



*"I told them that the country does not have an army. For my father and mother, who lived all their lives seeing guns in the streets and armed people and wars and bullets, it sounds very different and shocking to them in a good way when they hear that their son is in a place with no army"*

**Mazen Maarouf—who has lived all his life as a Palestinian refugee in Lebanon—was recently granted sanctuary in Reykjavík through the International Cities of Refuge Network, or ICORN, which offers to relocate persecuted writers to a safe city elsewhere in the world. We met up with him to discuss this, and more.**

Before discussing why he was given sanctuary, we talked about his poems. His third book of poetry, whose title translates to "An Angel On The Clothesline," has just been published in Lebanon by one of the country's largest publishing houses. I ask him what it is like to have his book come out while he is so far away. "When I was present in Lebanon I did not publish a book for seven years. So my publication was absent. Now my publication is present and I am absent. I am very happy that my book will be there, because that is my voice."

We also discuss why he writes poetry. "For me a poem is just a piece of freedom, just a tiny piece of freedom. I imagine freedom as a fabric that we all try to stitch a part of, or clean a part of it. I think that when we write a poem, regardless whether the poem is good or

bad, it is something that makes us feel relaxed. It is a kind of treatment, like you are going to the hospital, and this hospital is established only for one hour and only for you. The only nurse in this hospital is you."

"You are receiving yourself and treating yourself. In this treating room, this intensive care, no one sees you, and you can express and do whatever you want. You destroy a part of this hospital, you keep another, you sit wherever you want, and you establish one tiny piece of freedom. It's like a magic pill that makes us very happy. I want to jump sometimes, when I write a poem and have conviction in what I wrote, I feel very happy. This sudden happiness is also confusing. You feel yourself losing your mind, but it is very good to lose your mind peacefully, without bad consequences. Poetry is the key to freedom for me."

## **"YOU FEEL TRAPPED AND YOU WANT TO GET OUT"**

Mazen's political involvement started in the late '90s at the University of Lebanon, where he was studying chemistry. He established with others an organisation called Palestinian Cultural Club. "[We wanted] to establish a Palestinian movement that sprung from students and was totally nonviolent, using culture, history, literature, poetry, the internet—we have many tools to work with." They also wrote articles critical of the established Palestinian parties in Lebanon. As the writer of these articles and spokesman of the Palestinian Cultural Club, Mazen felt he had to take responsibility. He told the other members: "If something

bad happens, if anyone gets any kind of threat, tell them to talk to Mazen."

In 1997, during his first year at university, two fellow students armed with guns pulled Mazen out of a group of his friends. "They took me and told me that it was better not to talk like this. They thought this was the way to get me to shut up. This was the first threat." He was threatened in the same way every year until he graduated.

From 2000 to 2008, Mazen wasn't as politically active, working as a chemistry teacher at a secondary school. Still, he was not left alone by those who had been angered by his articles. He had, as he put it, three 'accidents' during that time. "I got kidnapped and it was not a nice experience. I do not want to go through details. It is not easy and it is in the past. They were very tough. You feel yourself trapped when you are attacked many times by the same people. You feel trapped and you want to get out of this pattern."

## **"WE WARN YOU THAT YOU WILL BE IN DANGER"**

In 2008, Mazen wanted to start regularly writing about politics again. "I was thinking about doing a series of articles critiquing the Palestinian struggle against Israel. Because for me it was very important that if we are fighting and struggling to get our rights as Palestinians we do not have to be blind and ignore our mistakes. Maybe I sound pessimistic, but that is my view, that we failed. I sent one article to a newspaper and they said: 'We do not feel that you will be okay if we publish this article, so if you want

us to publish this article it is your own responsibility. We warn you that you will be in danger."

The warning from his editor frightened him, understandably. Through 2008–10 he wrote mostly reviews of books, theatre, and so on, but he never stopped writing about politics altogether. "I wrote a few articles criticising the Palestinian radical parties. Part of the big problem we have as Palestinians is the old Palestinian parties. But the radical parties must also be questioned: 'What have you done for your cause?' Again, some people were not very happy about it." One article was so critical that a friend called to check if he was still alive. It was during this period, in 2010, that an Iraqi poet and friend of Mazen's recommended that he seek sanctuary through ICORN.

## **"THE SECURITY NET IN LEBANON HAS MANY HOLES"**

Soon after Mazen applied, revolutions spread around the Arab World. "I became really involved in social criticism when the revolution started in Tunisia. I increased the amount of my writing when the Syrian revolution started. Because the way the Syrian regime treated their people was brutal, beyond any limit."

Mazen soon drew attention, both from those who supported the Syrian uprising and those who are for the current government. "Many Lebanese parties support [Syria]. In Syria and Lebanon there are also intelligence agents. The security net in Lebanon has many holes and you can easily fall through, or they push you. You feel yourself trapped. You are followed and you get messages. They were annoyed because they do not expect a Palestinian to say these things. They expect that you shut your mouth and blindly follow them."

## **"THE SYRIAN CAUSE IS A UNIVERSAL CAUSE"**

His articles appeared in many publications, including Arab magazines published in Europe. "There were people who felt angry about these articles, and they can reach you easily because Lebanon is a small country." But that did not stop Mazen. "[The protesters] are very brave. Why should I stop writing if these people are continuing every day, protesting in the streets. The revolution

in the Arab world did not start because a journalist wrote an article. It started because people took part in demonstrations in the streets, calling for the downfall of regimes. Writers were following them. This is true of every revolution in history. They were not started because of writing but because there are people who live in bad situations for many years and they explode."

I ask Mazen why he continues to write about politics. "Maybe it is stupid to believe in humanity. Human beings prove all the time that they are violent creatures. Earth has not been at peace for one moment. Still it feels very beautiful to be linked to this sense of humanity, to the dream of humanity and the hope. Human beings are calling for their rights and you want to support them. The Syrian cause is a universal cause. It is important to me to be in alliance with those people. For me that is the least that I can do as a writer or a journalist."

## **"A PLACE WITH NO ARMY"**

Mazen has been making himself at home in Reykjavík. He spends his time writing and reading, frequenting the library and bookstore cafés. He talks to his friends and family through Skype. I asked him what he had told his family about his new home.

"I told them that the country does not have an army. For my father and mother, who lived all their lives seeing guns in the streets and armed people and wars and bullets, it sounds very different and shocking to them, in a good way, when they hear that their son is in a place with no army."

Towards the end of our talk, the conversation turns towards literature. I mention that, aside from 'One Thousand And One Nights', I know very little Arabic literature. Mazen says: "I feel it is a pity that in the Arab world we know almost nothing about Icelandic literature. Literature is a universal language. Literature can touch any mind. It is very sad that on Earth there are tools of communication that have never been here before, like the internet, and the accessibility to knowledge, so the world is much more connected and yet some areas are totally out of the consciousness of other areas. I think if we can establish some link between Icelandic and Arab literature that will be very good." ☘

## **Words**

Kári Tulinius

## **Poem / Calligraphy**

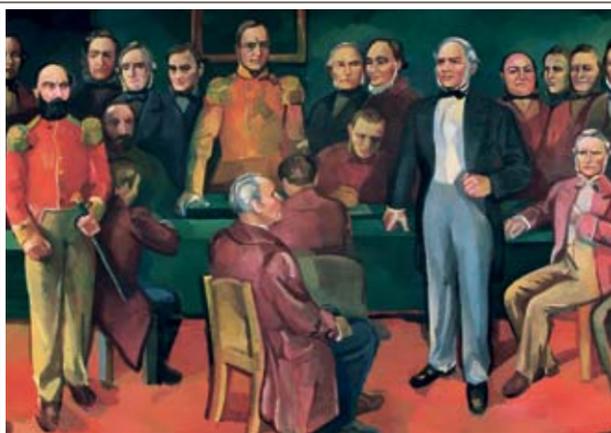
Mazen Maarouf / Everitte



**MILLENNIUM**  
Icelandic art through the ages. Phase one.



**MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS – Eddas and Sagas**  
The ancient vellums on display.



**CHILD OF HOPE – Youth and Jón Sigurðsson**  
Tribute to the leader of the independence movement.



**EXHIBITIONS - GUIDED TOURS**  
**CAFETERIA - CULTURE SHOP**

The Culture House – Þjóðmenningarhúsið  
National Centre for Cultural Heritage  
Hverfisgata 15 · 101 Reykjavík (City Centre)  
Tel: 545 1400 · thjodmenning.is · kultur.is

Open daily between 11 am and 5 pm  
Free guided tour of THE MEDIEVAL  
MANUSCRIPTS weekdays at 3 pm,  
except Wednesdays.



Joy to everyone!



# For The Greater Glory Of... Justice?



**Criminal court cases, waged by The State against political dissidents for acts of protest and civil disobedience, can be understood in two ways. Firstly, the juridical system can be seen as a wholly legitimate platform for solving social conflicts. Such a process then results in a verdict delivered by Lady Justice's independent agents a ruling located somewhere on the scale between total conviction and absolute acquittal. According to this view, it is at this point only that a punishment possibly enters the picture. And only if deserved.**

Secondly, and herein lies a fundamental difference the original decision to press charges can be seen as a punishment in itself, regardless of the final verdict. With these two points of understanding in mind, two recent verdicts, which have not received much attention, are worth observing.

### YOU SHALL NOT RUN

Number one is the case against Haukur Hilmarsson and Jason Slade who in June of 2008, while attempting to prevent an airplane from departing and thereby deporting Kenyan asylum seeker Paul Ramses to Italy, ran onto a closed-off area at the Leifur Eiríksson International Airport. To shorten a long and complicated story (covered at length in our issue 14, 2011) their political sprint snowballed into protests of all kinds, eventually bringing the asylum seeker back to Iceland where he and his family were granted asylum.

During the case's most recent court proceedings the two accused attempted a moral defence, speaking solely of the act for which they are charged and which they justified with a reference to the asylum seeker's desperate need and the large-scale impact of their actions. But neither prosecutor nor judge were willing to discuss such things, focusing instead on fences and the possibility of destroying an aeroplane's

engine by being sucked into one. Eventually, the two were found guilty of violating air-safety regulations and air-traffic laws, and ruled to pay a fine, lower than what The State pays for executing the trial.

### YOU SHALL NOT STAND

Number two is the case against Lárus Páll Birgisson, who was recently sentenced for disobeying police orders and this is in fact his second sentencing in a year due to exactly the same scenario: Lárus stands on a sidewalk in front of the U.S. embassy in Reykjavík, holding a sign bearing a message against war. Police arrive after a complaint from the embassy and order him to leave the sidewalk. Lárus refuses, citing his legally and constitutionally protected right to protest, and official data regarding the sidewalk's public status. He is then arrested, charged and finally sentenced.

And what is it, so heavy and hazardous, that undermines his right to protest in public? "It is well-known," says in the judge's verdict, "that embassies worldwide have in recent years and decades been targets of perpetrators and hence it is not strange that their staff is on alert regarding traffic in the most nearest surroundings." And not a single additional word. The justification starts and ends in one and the same sentence, referring to something "well-known" a concept as blurry, insignificant and out-of-

context as "public opinion" and "common sense."

### YOU SHALL BE PUNISHED

On the surface, these sentences per se are of no heavy-weight importance for The State (actually minor enough, according to recent rules, to not be published officially, which might explain the little-to-no attention the cases have received). And while the defendants would obviously have preferred different results, the relatively low fines are certainly not equivalent to physical imprisonment.

To begin with, such verdicts give the police a further green light to give illegal orders and arrest those who disobey in the name of their rights. Probably more importantly, they clearly determine the precedent that it is worth forcing political dissidents into long and costly court cases, in these two cases, keeping people inside the court system for years and repeatedly charging the same man for the same completely harmless act even when the final results amount to be mere small-talk. An ongoing and ever-hanging threat of sentences, fines and jail-time, is more than likely to keep people away from resisting oppression meaning that the threat is a form of silencing, itself a form of oppression.

### FOR MINE IS THE STATE, THE POWER AND THE JUSTICE

Regarding the first way of understanding, it might be worth wondering if these court cases possibly manifest a resolution of social conflicts. In order to do that, the discussion in court would have had to be free from anything like "well-known" or "public-good" and instead deal with the tough tug between status-quo such as airport rules and fences, or the police's right to order and be obeyed and people's legal, ethical and natural rights to directly and spontaneously interfere with their up-front reality.

But as Haukur Hilmarsson said during his procedure, one of the most humiliating factors of being dragged through the courts is to have a dialogue based on The State's premises. No matter how willing the defendant is to speak about his action and debate its over-all legitimacy, in such context Lady Justice just does not seem to weigh a challenging argument. The weighing-scale might be broken... or is this punishing via prosecuting maybe what solving social conflicts and doing justice is essentially about? ☹

SNORRI PÁLL JÓNSSON ÚLFHILDARSON

### Governments | Collapse

## Is The Government About To Collapse?



In many countries, the above question might lead to pundits punditing and even stock markets crashing. In Iceland, the possibility is taken in stride, and not just because we no longer have a stock market to speak of.

In fact, it has been asked pretty relentlessly ever since the current government took power in the aftermath of the 'Pots and pans revolution' of January 2009. And it has often been close. Even though this is the first left-wing government in this country in recent history, sometimes more seems to divide the parties than unite them. And this despite accolades from almost every foreign observer on their handling of the crisis.

### UNEASY BEDFELLOWS

The Social-Democratic Alliance (Samfylkingin) are still held in disgrace by many after having formed a ruling coalition with the conservative Independence Party in the years leading up to the economic collapse. It took the largest protests

in Icelandic history in early 2009 for this government to resign. Even under a new party leader, Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, many of their former ministers are still in office, the party leader included. This is not the new beginning many had hoped for. Some party leaders from smaller towns have resigned from the party, either claiming the party has ventured too far left, or not left enough.

Their partners, the Left-Green Party (Vinstrihreyfingin—grænt framboð), have a clean slate when it comes to pre-collapse guilt, having been out of power since the party was founded in 1999. This led to some success in the post-collapse election, but ever since the party seems like it has been falling apart. In fact, three of their MPs left the party last spring, bringing their Parliamentary strength down to twelve. This is in addition to twenty representatives of the Alliance party, out of the sixty-three members in the Icelandic Parliament in total.

This led to Independence Party Chair Bjarni Benediktsson, who had been weakened in his own party after supporting the government in the Icesave dispute, to try for a vote of no confidence last April. The government barely hung on by a majority of one. This means, in effect, that members of both ruling parties can hold

the government hostage if they so choose. This is particularly difficult for the Left-Greens, where party discipline seems non-existent.

### THE TROUBLESOME TWO

Two ministers in particular are known for going their own way. One is Minister of the Interior Ögmundur Jónasson, who has already left the government once (over the ever-present Icesave dispute) before being brought back. He recently caused a furore with the coalition Alliance Party when he refused to grant an exemption to allow Chinese investor Huang Nubo to buy land at Grímsstaðir to build a luxury hotel. Some claim that the land is a strange choice for a hotel, being quite remote, while questioning Mr. Nubo's finances and suggesting he might be acting for the Chinese government instead. Mr. Nubo is a former roommate of the husband of former Alliance Party Chair Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir and thus well connected to that party.

Ögmundur, while arguing that he was simply following the letter of the law by denying land purchases to citizens outside the European Economic Area, is hardly unbiased himself, saying that he also opposes land sales to non-Icelandic EEA citizens. The Left-Greens have proclaimed

themselves to be in favour of Ögmundur's decision, further angering their coalition partners.

### A SHAKE-UP IN THE WORKS?

As if this wasn't enough, the Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture, Left-Green Jón Bjarnason, is also acting on his own accord. One of the major goals of the current government is reform of the so-called quota system, which leaves control of Iceland's fisheries in the hands of a few individuals. Jón had his own committee propose changes, which are not seen as going far enough, without consulting the government. The Prime Minister then decided to take the matter out of Jón's hands. In this case, the Left-Greens have declined to support their minister.

According to recent updates, Jón may soon be removed from his post, and Minister of Industry Katrín Júlíusdóttir of the Alliance will soon go on maternity leave. This would lead to a considerable shake-up in ministry posts as both parties start to prepare for the next elections, due in the spring of 2013.

### THE TROUBLE WITH EUROPE

The question then is whether Jón will withdraw his support for the shaky majority. In this case, the government will have

to rely on Guðmundur Steingrímsson, an MP without a party (voted to Alþingi as member of the Progressive Party), who has pledged his support.

Another major disruptive factor is EU membership, with the Alliance strongly in favour and the Left-Greens opposed. However, with Europe's current economic troubles, the membership talks have little support from the nation and might not be concluded before the next elections anyway.

So, will the government hold up this time? As always, the situation is tenuous, but the fact is that neither party sees much hope in going elsewhere. Any new government would probably have to rely on the Independence Party, and neither one wants to go there. The Alliance is still reeling from their last collaboration with the conservatives, and the Left-Greens are even less willing to work with their ideological opposites, even if they now happen to agree on Europe. The government coalition might therefore hold up for a while yet, if only due to lack of alternatives. Then again, who can tell? It might burst by the time this goes to print! ☹

VALUR GUNNARSSON

**Dogma**  
T-Shirt: 3.200 kr.

**American Apparel**  
Hoodie: 7.900 kr.

**Unzipped**  
Glass Bowl: 3.390 kr.

**Rubik's Cruet**  
Pepper Mill: 2.290 kr.

**Hopside Down**  
Glass: 3.490 kr.

**iPlunge**  
Phone Stand: 1.490 kr.

**Fisticup**  
Cup: 3.190 kr.

**Buckyballs**  
Magnetic Toy: 4.500 kr.

**DOGMA**  
LAUGAVEGUR 30 & SMÁRALIND

THE HALLGRÍMSKIRKJA FRIENDS OF THE ARTS SOCIETY 30TH SEASON

# HALLGRIMSKIRKJA CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL 2011

NOVEMBER 27 - DECEMBER 31



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10TH - 2PM

## ORGAN FOR ALL ORGAN CHRISTMAS!

Björn Steinar Sólbergsson plays well known Christmas organ works e.g. by J.S. Bach and Messiaen.

Admission: Adults 1500 ISK, free for children.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28TH - 8PM  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29TH - 8 PM

## CHRISTMAS CONCERT THE HALLGRIMSKIRKJA MOTET CHOIR THORA EINARSDÓTTIR SOPRANO

Festive Christmas concert with beloved christmas carols sung in 8 different languages, works by Icelandic composers, J. S. Bach and more.

Hördur Áskelsson conductor, Björn Steinar Sólbergsson organ, Daði Kolbeinsson oboe and Áshildur Haraldsdóttir flute

Admission: 3.900 ISK

NEW YEAR'S EVE, DECEMBER 31ST - 5PM

## FESTIVE SOUNDS ON NEW YEAR'S EVE 3 TRUMPETS, TIMPANI AND ORGAN!

Famous festive music by Zelenka, Händel, Bach, Vivaldi and Albinoni.

Ásgeir H. Steingrímsson, Eiríkur Örn Pálsson and Einar St. Jónsson trumpets, Eggert Pálsson timpani, Hördur Áskelsson organ.

Admission: 2.900 ISK



## NEW ALBUM: HEILÖG STUND Á JÖRÐ (HOLY MOMENT ON EARTH)

A 2010 Christmas concert with Kristinn Sigmundsson and The Hallgrímskirkja Motet Choir

Live recording from last year's sold out christmas concerts, featuring Iceland's leading opera singer Kristinn Sigmundsson, and the Hallgrímskirkja Motet Choir.

Available in Hallgrímskirkja and all major record stores from December 10th.



# GETTING RID OF 'THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN'

Six singer-songwriters discuss doin' it for themselves...

Words Rebecca Louder and Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir  
Photography Alisa Kalyanova

Before we begin, let's just go ahead and acknowledge the illustrious, dazzling elephant in the room: Björk. She's always there. Our cultural ambassador: a symbol for independent womanhood, for creative freedom, for our supposed musical matriarchy.

Indeed, Björk's success plays into a recent perception of Iceland as some sort of egalitarian paradise—following this year's Airwaves, a journalist for *The Quietus* gleefully commented that: "with sell-out shows by Björk, Sinéad O'Connor and Yoko Ono, this year's Airwaves is also the first music festival I have ever attended where the star attractions are all female [...] It is tempting to suggest this girl-power bias reflects the traditionally matriarchal and egalitarian values of [this] Nordic nation."

Likewise, Iceland's recent media attention has focused on women as headliners—in September, *Newsweek* crowned Iceland the "best place to be a woman," based on factors ranging from health care to political power; last year, an article on *The Guardian* website named us "the world's most feminist country"; and for the past two years in a row, Iceland has been rated #1 in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report.

And yet a poll conducted on behalf of the labour unions Efling, HÍ and VFSK by Gallup shows a 25% discrepancy between the full-time salaries of men and women.

So what is the climate really like on the ground? Does the media's emphasis on Iceland's progressive social policy insinuate that cultural practices follow suit—attributing Björk's success less to her own talent and resolve, and rather to a culture that has seemingly done away with gender bias?



Myrra Rós, Lay Low, Adda, sóley

## WHERE ARE ALL THE GIRLS?

The bar was sparsely filled. Adda Ingólfssdóttir was performing a few original songs from her upcoming album, accompanied on vocals by her sister Sunna as they warmed up a release concert for their dad, Ingólfur Steinsson. "This is a song about things that don't quite fit" said Adda mildly, smiling at a modest crowd, comprised mostly of friends and family.

Her melodies were minimal yet not simple, an ebb and flow of tempo and sentiment that came out sounding like a sigh of gentle relief. Like with the best poetry, there was a luscious intimacy to her expression, the carving out of another world. It was all bewitchingly understated. One couldn't help but wonder where one had been all this time. Or where Adda had been hiding.

Indeed, there is an array of independent female singer-songwriters operating in Iceland at or just below the radar. A few have attained success on an international level—namely Emiliana Torrini and Ólöf Arnalds, who have toured with the likes of Sting and Blonde Redhead, respectively. But the truth is that there is no coherent scene built around female musicians in Iceland, no solid foundation on which women

can choose to launch their careers. And while the number of female solo singer-songwriters in Reykjavík seems to be growing, many—like Adda—remain relatively unknown.

That first step onto the local music stage takes a ridiculous amount of

cal level. Although the numbers keep growing, the 'scene' is still difficult to identify. "There's a lot of difference between us," says Lovísa Elísabet Sigrúnardóttir, better known as Lay Low.

Although none of the women we spoke with felt they were musically

learning how everything goes, getting advice from her and just seeing how she does it. Both on personal matters and musically, she has been a mentor to me."

Adda, in turn, cites among others Lovísa as a supportive figure: "It has

I love the guys, they are really nice, but it's so hard to talk to people when they have not experienced that feeling. Like once, this guy asked me why I was drinking red wine before a gig. But he didn't ask the guys. Only me. We were all standing there."

not-giving-a-fuck. Singer, songwriter, and guitarist Elín Eyþórsdóttir—better known as Elín Ey—recognises this from when she started to play music live at age 13. "I totally started on my own," she says. "I think my first gig was at Hljómáland. I was really young, so I mean it was scary. I remember my hands shaking so much that I could barely play the guitar. But it was very exciting. I liked it. At that point I had finally found myself in some way. I had found what I wanted to do."

Elín says that when she started playing she knew of very few other solo female musicians playing at the lo-

similar to each other, they all agreed there were links between them through friendship, collaboration or the act of mentoring. "I think you can find a connection from one to the other," says Myrra Rós Þrastardóttir, who performs her original compositions as Myrra Rós. "You can find some sort of a link, even though not everyone knows each other."

Following these threads of professed support reveals a tangled web.

"For me, it's been Emiliana Torrini," says Lovísa. "I was invited to join her [on tour] and I got the most experience I've ever had, playing shows and just

been really important for me to know other women in the music scene. Like Lovísa who has released all these records and has so much know-how and is so willing to help. And Ólöf, who is also a friend. My third concert was organised by Myrra Rós. She was doing interesting stuff, like this *Trúbatrix* thing. It was important for me to get to know her and Elín Ey."

Sóley Stefánsdóttir, better known as sóley, cites Ólöf as having been encouraging to her in the field of music composition. And Myrra likewise cites Elín as an influence. "I saw this girl called Elín Ey perform, and I was just

mesmerized. Around our friendship I started playing more shows. We have this connection through what it is that we do. It's maybe corny but, yeah, nobody gets me like she actually does. We tried to make music together for some time but then we just both realised that we are our own acts."

Ólöf, in turn, brings it all back to Björk: "The most helpful woman to my career has been Björk. She's been very supportive of my work and I'm signed on her record label. And also artistically, her sort of bringing her cultural weight into supporting my music has been very beneficial."

Sóley likewise admits Björk as an influence: "Though I don't listen to her music everyday," she says, "I really appreciate what she is doing. And you can look at her and say: 'ok, I can also do this'. I'm not talking about like the same music or anything, but she's so creative and so powerful and that's really positive to know."

## AND YET, NO SCENE!

This mutual admiration and support, however, has not translated into a more concrete allegiance between these singer-songwriters.

"I would find it interesting to know the female influences within Iceland" says Adda, "because I would think that there might be a hesitation for women to identify too strongly with each other. I know, for example, that I have felt hesitant in naming Björk as an influence, but she's one of my biggest influences."

Adda points out that frequently when a woman engages in or becomes prominent in a particular field, she is seen as being the spokesperson for all women—a litmus test for the entire gender to be gauged by. This pressure in turn affects how women perceive each other and their own abilities and fuels a possible hesitancy to align with other women.

"I don't think I would want to align myself [with any scene]," says Elín. "I feel like I'm not ready to set myself in some kind of category of music yet. It's nice to have support. It's different than playing with just men. In some way women are more like your equals. But the Icelandic music scene is corrupted in some ways. I just feel like people sometimes lose their heads in competition. I feel like everyone should have a shot at what they want to do."

## NO MAN'S LAND

Adda and Lovísa have targeted the issue of competitiveness through direct action by putting together a series of concert nights at Barbara showcasing queer women performers—in the broadest sense of those terms. Adda attributes her motivation for creating these nights to a sense of insecurity she felt when she began playing music in 1998, completely surrounded by boys.

"At that point I was really shy," Adda says. "No, shy is not the right word—I had a massive inferiority complex. Huge. I was especially insecure towards boys. Onstage I was free, but off-stage I was like, 2 percent of myself. I wasn't a feminist back then so I didn't recognise this pattern at all. I just thought that the disempowering feeling was because I was such a loser." Adda moved away to study sonology—once again surrounded exclusively by men—and upon her return made the conscious decision to work mainly within the context of friendships with women, she says, such as with Lovísa.

It was in this context that Adda and Lovísa decided to create a women-dominated platform called 'Skyndilega greip mig óstjórnleg löngun' ("Suddenly I'm Seized by an Uncontrollable Urge") with the intention of building a safe-space in which to explore different sides of their musical selves, while also targeting their cultural environment.

"As a group of friends, we would go to places [like Trúnó, and Barbara] and feel that it was a bit disco-dominant,

a bit gay-male dominant," Adda says. "We wanted to diversify the scene, feminise it and also queerify it. We wanted to break out of the bounds of straight and gay, but also to create a space where people could play with gender and their sexual orientation in a musical, artistic sense." These nights frequently featured musician Björg Sveinbjörnsdóttir, comedian and historian Íris Ellenberger and performance artists Eva Rún Snorradóttir and Eva Björk Kaaber.

Indeed, the gay community seems to be one of the more receptive spaces for female performers. Both Lovísa and Elín identify as queer women and agree that the gay community has been supportive of their careers. Myrra also finds a sense of comfort within the walls of gay-friendly bars. "I like the people who run the clubs and the people who go to the clubs," she says. "It's different to be in a gay bar than in a straight bar. There's a different kind of vibe you get."

Despite drawing a good turn out and a regular audience to their nights, Adda and Lovísa point out that there was very little attendance from non-queer people—especially men. That is, until they did a woman-featured hip hop show titled 'Mellur Strike Back, Elskið'a' ("Sluts Strike Back, Take That"), a play on words of a misogynistic song title by local rapper Blaz-roca, which Adda says drew the largest and most diverse crowd the group had seen at their nights. This was due

**"I wasn't a feminist back then so I didn't recognise this pattern at all. I just thought that the disempowering feeling was because I was such a loser"**

in no small part to a rare performance by Ragna, AKA Cell7, from legendary '90s hip-hop group Subterranean: "I think it was also the fact that the girls were gonna do the 'boys' stuff now," Adda says.

The question remains if these so-called safe-spaces for some may be alienating to others. "I think there are a lot of people who don't even go here [Trúnó], not because they are prejudiced but because they just don't feel like it's their home," Adda says. "For me, it's much more important to create this platform and forge connections between women and queer-women musicians rather than to [focus on] inclusion. I was just thinking 'Hey, people are missing out! This is cool stuff! Where are they?'"

## THE BOYS JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND

A general sentiment amongst the women we spoke to is that, on some level, the guys just don't get it; that, at the very least in the professional field of music, men do not have quite the same experiences as women, either in their interactions with other musicians or with members of the press.

While touring with and opening for Sin Fang, Sóley noted inconsistencies between the ways in which she was spoken to as opposed to the guys, being the only female in the bunch. "I was always pointing out things I saw as wrong and they would agree, but not in the way another girl would," she says. "I love the guys, they are really nice, but it's so hard to talk to people when they have not experienced that feeling. Like once, this guy asked me why I was drinking red wine before a gig. But he didn't ask the guys. Only me. We were all standing there."

"It's a male scene," Ólöf agrees. "But I feel like all those girls that are making music of my generation are really supportive of each other and will sort of

seek advice from each other about business related things. It's a complicated business. I feel that if someone is in a tough spot or is in some kind of trouble that, yeah... the girls call each other."

"There should be some kind of support," Sóley continues, "because we're all thinking the same things and we are probably all experiencing the same things when we tour or when we play."

## 'MANSPLAINING'

Beyond having one's motivations for enjoying a nice glass of red questioned, the phenomenon of being singled out for being female often crosses into the territory of being condescended to about musical abilities.

"When I was first starting out, people were amazed," Lovísa says. "They couldn't believe I was so good at playing guitar—for a girl!"

"Sometimes I get comments from guys that are like 'It's so crazy that you're a girl and you play guitar so well,'" Ólöf says. "Is that a compliment?"

Many of Sóley's frustrations similarly lie with presumptions regarding her basic technical knowledge, like whether or not she knows how to plug in her own keyboard. "So many times," she says, "I get told 'You're doing it wrong!' I mean, goddamn it! I've done it a thousand times! They are probably just trying to be nice, but they wouldn't

do it to Robbi, the guitarist in Sin Fang. They wouldn't tell our drummer how to put a cymbal on."

In their events at Barbara, Adda and Lovísa stress the importance for them of every role being filled by a woman. "I find it very important that when you are organising a concert with just women on the bill, that the sound engineer is a woman," Adda explains. "Our soundwoman is Úlfhildur Eysteinsdóttir and if she's not available we only call other girls. And if they can't come, we do it ourselves. When I am around other women, I feel more comfortable making mistakes, not being great or perfect. That might be something personal with me or whatever, but I feel others have talked about it as well. Not knowing what to do with a cable and being able to figure it out yourself without some guy coming and mansplaining it to you."

In feminist vernacular, 'mansplaining' is a phenomenon in which men attempt to explain things to women as though the former were the assumed authority. This is often an absent-minded or well-intentioned error, yet it does impact the environment in which some women work.

"I have this new policy now compared to when I was making music before, to only rely on other women," Adda says. "There used to only be guys to call if you needed to borrow some equipment. This time I've been really, really careful and I only call girls."

## MIXING IT UP

Nonetheless, it's a shallow pond. For example female sound engineers in Iceland are few and far between, to the point that even women musicians are pleasantly surprised whenever they see one. "We were in Sweden on tour and there were two girls and one guy doing sound," Sóley recalls. "It was so funny, because when we saw them we were like, 'Hey, girls!' Why would I think like that? But I did. Everyone did."

This imbalance in the roles that women fill in the music industry also

applies to the local stage. Sóley points out that few women play the drums in Icelandic bands, and that there is for example only one notable female jazz pianist in Iceland—Sunna Gunnlaugs. The women who choose less conventional instruments, Sóley point out, receive a disproportionate level of scrutiny.

"If there is a girl playing the drums in a band," she says, "you always have to focus really hard on her. Kind of waiting for her to fail or something. It's really important to have women in every type of music. I know that we have few female drummers, most of them are young and studying at music schools but why do they quit? Nor are there any women playing bass in a jazz band. Who said to the world that these things were not for women? There are some out there, that's cool, but we need more."

Sóley herself is no stranger to being the target of ridicule for her unconventional musical choices. Having played in her school's marching band as a teenager, she opted for the bass drum and cymbals, rather than the more customary choice of flute. "My school-mates made fun of me," she admits. "It was not very cool. I mean, people think it's not very feminine to play a big bass drum in a parade but only because someone said so long time ago."

## HOW DOES THE GROUND FEEL NOW?

Ultimately, there are very few visible women who occupy musical roles other than being singers. Beyond that tendency, there is also a seeming hesitancy to see those women as artists, the originators of ideas and the real creators of their work; to see them as the women behind as well as in front of the curtain.

"The media always say I'm a singer," Sóley says. "I know I'm a singer but I also play instruments—almost every instrument on my album. But still people say 'Sóley the singer'. I think people will always think that there must be someone doing all this stuff. 'You couldn't record this all by yourself!' I'm waiting for it to be asked. And maybe people think that I didn't do it, but I really want them to know that I did it, because it's a lot of work. You want to get credit for what you do."

This trend rises all the way to the top. In August of 2008, Björk issued a statement on her website in response to comments by local DJ B-Ruff, published in the Grapevine, in which he attributed the instrumentals on her album 'Vespertine' to Valgeir Sigurðsson, despite the fact that Valgeir, according to Björk's statement, only acted as "a computer programmer for a third of [the recording process], and a recording engineer for a third."

What could have contributed to such a misunderstanding, for a solo performer who is so clearly in control of her own artistry, her own work?

"Very often it's conceived that women are in less control of their work," Ólöf says. "There's a danger for female songwriters and artists, that they just get sort of written out of history."

Glowing as though illuminated solely by the candlelight scattered across tables, the wood-paneled interior of Rósenberg could not have existed at that moment in a more welcomed juxtaposition to the frost outside. Before launching into her last song, Adda speaks into the microphone: "Am I speaking too loudly?" 🗣️

### MEDIA GETS CALLED OUT

**Björk interview in The Grapevine, published in issue 14, 2008**

"This happened to me with Mark Bell as well on 'Homogenic'. People believe he did everything on that album, when he only did a few beats. The beats that define that album, the beats from 'Jóga', 'Bachelorette' and 'Five Years' for example, the distorted beats, which I described in the media as my attempt to make volcanic beats, Mark Bell did not do those beats, but he has often been credited with making them, and producing the whole album."

"I know Goldfrapp has had the same problem. Everyone seems to think she just does vocals. She recently said that whenever she and (collaborator) Will Gregory are interviewed together, she is asked about her dress while questions about their equipment are directed at Gregory. Missy Elliott, too, whenever people write about their music, they always talk about Timbaland, too. I have heard the same story from so many women, the exact same thing. M.I.A., Peaches, Missy Elliott, Joanna Newsom, they can't believe it, but it has happened to all of them. There is a reason people don't talk about this, as it might be the most boring subject ever, but I am willing to take it upon me if it means that in the future, journalists will do their research."

**M.I.A. interview with Pitchfork, published online August 3, 2007**

"Yesterday I read like five magazines in the airplane [...] and three out of five magazines said 'Diplo: the mastermind behind M.I.A.'s politics!' [...] I just find it a bit upsetting and kind of insulting that I can't have any ideas on my own because I'm a female or that people from undeveloped countries can't have ideas of their own unless it's backed up by someone who's blond-haired and blue-eyed. After the first time it's cool, the second time it's cool, but after like the third, fourth, fifth time, maybe it's an issue that we need to talk about, maybe that's something important, you know. [...] I mean, for me especially, I felt like this is the only thing I have, and if I can stick my neck out and go for the issues and go through my life as it is, the least I can have is my creativity."

**Alison Goldfrapp interviewed by**

**Rebecca Nicholson for the Lipster** "Like the tradition of 'rock star'—what's his face, Babysambles?—classic, fucked up, takes drugs, he must be a genius. That really winds me up because he's read some books on poetry, so therefore he must be a fucking genius? Whereas the girls, they're just troubled. There's a slightly different criteria, somehow. They certainly don't get called a genius if they've read some books. It's just the old cliché, isn't it? He's a genius because he took some drugs and read some books."

**Ólöf Arnalds interviewed by The Grapevine**

"I've been asked by a French journalist whether I make music to seduce men."

**Lay Low interviewed by The Grapevine**

"I have often felt in interviews that I am asked questions differently because I am a girl."

Music | Live review

## Homey And Cosy



**We are in a small church, beside a small lake, in a small city in the far, far North. On a not-so cold November night, Christ, arms aloft in a gesture of welcome (or an attempt to kill his followers with his likely funky body odour), is lambent with red and green disco lights, which rotate in mesmerising patterns across his image. A girl in a red dress is singing in a soft, sweet voice the poetry of her forebears.**

Thus the stage is set for the release concert of 'Brostinn Stregur,' the most recent album by Lay Low, singer/songwriter Lovísa Elísabet Sigrúnardóttir of local (and even a bit of international) renown. The church, Fríkirkjan on Lækjargata, proved to be a good set-

*"Overall though, it was a good concert. Nothing to amaze, but homey and cosy and all that"*

ting for the concert and matched well to the extraordinarily laid back sound of Lay Low herself. The band provided the aforementioned disco lights, and the stage was further decorated with lamps of the kind usually found in your grandparent's living room. Tassels abounded. This cosy feeling, combined with the happy-family interactions of the band members made for a pleasant, chilled out show.

The concert started off a bit on the slow side atmosphere-wise, but once things got warmed up it was all very down-home nice, the most awesome moment being when Lovísa left the stage to go and hug her grandparents (who have just moved back to Iceland

from Portugal in case you wanted to know). Lovely.

Obviously, the focus was on songs from the new album, 'Brostinn Stregur' (which is made up of songs based on poems by Icelandic female poets), and the album seems to continue down the same twangy, lonesome Americana path, through which Lay Low has made her name, though with a somewhat more complex and harder sound coming through, some songs even having a bit of an electronic feel (woo). The classics were also performed, mixing things up a bit, which was nice.

If there are any complaints it would be that the seats at Fríkirkjan are insanely uncomfortable, and if they want to hire their church out to be used by people other than masochistic church go-

ers, then maybe they should consider a more comfortable seating arrangement. Overall though, it was a good concert. Nothing to amaze, but homey and cosy and all that, and though this isn't usually seen as a good thing, I found it cool that it was music that could justify eyes-shut listening. ☺

BERGRÚN ANNA HALLSTEINSDÓTTIR  
LUKÁS JANÍČÍK

Music | CD review



Björk

Biophilia

www.bjork.com

Woman creates superb album about the grand order of things, makes grown man cry. Job done.

As most people on Grapevine's Facebook will know, I recently had the misfortune of losing my cat. True, in the grand scheme of disasters from war and genocide, to massive tsunamis, we're talking strictly first world problems here. But fuck that. I LOVE that little troll of a fuzzleball. And when he went missing for days, there seemed to be a gray emptiness that squatted right in the middle of our lives. It was a truly stressful and miserable time in our house.

After about three days of him being missing, I go to work as usual. While working, and to cheer myself up a bit, I put on 'Biophilia.' Like many, I had heard all the breathless commentary that accompanied this release. The three years spent working on the album with the likes of Apple and National Geographic. The myriad of release formats, including an education workshop for children and bespoke iApple apps that allowed you to control and manipulate the music. The world tour of eight city residencies. The custom built instruments, spectacular stage show and costumes. That with this album, she was redefining music, blah, blah, blah. Personally, I didn't care for it all to be honest. It just seemed that people were talking about everything BUT the music, as if it were a mere afterthought.

But I admit that the album had started to grow on me after several listens. I could see the attraction of the album being used as an educational tool for children. With tracks such as 'Mutual Core' and 'Virus,' you could truly hear the wonder in her voice, singing of science, space, nature and the human body. It's that same kind of desire for learning that kids have at a young age when they see something that's cool and amazing, and they want to know MORE. There's no "FUCKING magnets, how do they work?" going on here.

So I put the album on and listen. The first track 'Moon,' with its intro of lightly plucked strings, brings mental images of the old children's television show 'Bagpuss' for some inexplicable reason.



The next track, 'Thunderbolt,' contains elephantine synths, as if Bach were in charge of the alien communication scene from Close Encounters. This is followed by 'Crystalline,' a song of controlled beats and child-like melodies, that forgets to take its meds in the last minute, going all whacked-out junglist on me.

*"And I start to cry. We're not talking misty eyed or a lump in the throat. I'm actually crying. I'm fucking losing it! I quickly walk to the toilets before anyone can see me, where I spend the next five minutes with tears streaming down my eyes"*

And then the album arrives at 'Cosmogony.' Starting on a choir whose sound seems to act like an angelic comfort blanket, a warm mournful brass feel comes into play (like Jóhann Jóhannsson, Björk knows there's soul in brass). I find myself listening intently as Björk sings of different creation myths with a tune and vocals that seem almost hymnal. The chorus rises up and swoops around my brain, and... and...

And I start to cry.  
We're not talking misty eyed or a lump in the throat. I'm actually crying. I'm fucking losing it! I quickly walk to the toilets before anyone can see me, where I spend the next five minutes with tears streaming down my eyes and a rope of snot coming out of my nose, all the while the song is still playing. I have to take my headphones off and clean myself up. After a while, I return to work, looking like someone had just crawled inside and yanked my soul out through my eyes.

What the fuck just happened there? Since when did I suddenly turn all emo? I've NEVER cried to music before in my life. Sure, in the past music has made

me happy to the point of giddiness. It's also made me sad, relaxed, depressed, angry to the point of violence, even made me want to jump and dance in an instant (case in point—while listening to 'Locust Sounds' from Reykjavík!, the chorus of 'Hellbound Heart' is such a finely tuned piece of ROCK action, I found myself fist pumping to it while in the meat section of my local Bónus supermarket. True story). But no music has ever made me physically cry, until now.

And it's not as if I could call myself a massive fan of Björk. Sure, I truly believe that she is probably the last in her generation of peers still hungry to push new ideas and boundaries. And there have been many of her tracks that I've really loved, such as 'Human Behaviour,' 'Hyperballad,' 'Declare Independence,' etc. But often I've found that I end up approaching her music with a certain cold detachment, music that's more an exercise of the head, rather than the heart.

So what does this mean? God, I wish I knew. All I know is that 'Biophilia' is an album that scares me. No, scare is not the right word—wary is probably better. I'm not sure that this was Björk's intention when she wrote it, but she seems to have made an album that in one small moment, reached into my inner psyche and flayed at my anima until it can't take any more. I can now listen to 'Cosmogony,' but I find that I have to steel myself to the point of numbness, just in case I find myself welling up again. Man, Nico's 'The Marble Index' is a walk in the park with puppies compared to this.

Björk has made a piece of music about science, the cosmos, and human life that has etched a carving on my mental landscape that many local musicians, for all their nice tunes and ditties, will NEVER get anywhere close to repeating.

Damn you Björk. Damn you for making me feel this way.  
☺ - BOB CLUNESY  
PHOTO BY ARI MAGG

## MERRY CHRISTMAS IN THE 12 TÓNAR CD SHOPS

Live at Skólavörðustíg 15:  
Friday 02.12.

kl. 17.30 Dikolson (CZ)

Thursday 08.12.

kl. 18.00 Reptilicus & Auxpan (collaborative set)

Live in Harpa –

the Undercurrent Concert Series in co-operation with Harpa:

Friday 02.12.

kl. 17.30 Náttfari & Plastic Gods

Friday 09.12.

kl. 17.30 Samaris & Mr. Silla

The concerts start at 17.30 at Kaldalón in Harpa

– free entrance for all

BUY YOUR CHRISTMAS PRESENTS IN 12 TÓNAR

– WE HAVE ALL THE ICELANDIC RELEASES AND MUCH MUCH MORE.



12 Tónar

# Learn

# Icelandic

## NEXT COURSES:

### Icelandic 1

Jan. 4th.-Feb.17th. 17:00-19:00 Mon. Wed. and Fri.

### Icelandic 2

Jan. 4th.-Feb. 17th. 17:00-19:00 Mon. Wed. and Fri.

### Icelandic 1

Jan. 4th.-Feb. 17th. 10:00-12:00 Mon. Wed. and Fri.

### Icelandic 3

Jan. 5th.-Mar. 13th. 17:00-19:00 Tue. and Thu.

### Icelandic 4

Jan. 5th.-Mar. 13th. 17:00-19:00 Tue. and Thu.

- 👍 Experienced teachers
- 👍 Downtown location
- 👍 4 levels
- 👍 Modest-sized groups, max. 12

60 CLASS HOURS  
(40 HOURS)  
26.000 ÍSKR.

**INFORMATION  
& REGISTRATION:**  
islenska@multi-kulti.org  
Tel.: 8996570

**Múltikúlti**  
*islenska*

Barónsstígur 3 - 101 Reykjavík  
tel: 8996570  
islenska@multi-kulti.org / www.multi-kulti.org

www.lækjarbrekka.is



30  
Years  
1981 - 2011

The restaurant Lækjarbrekka has been offering fine Icelandic dining in a cosy atmosphere for 30 year and is one of the best known restaurants in Iceland, in a class of its own.

Lækjarbrekka restaurant truly defines fine Icelandic dining.



Lobster - Fish - Puffin - Lamb



Lækjarbrekka - Bankastræti 2, 101 Reykjavík, Tel. 551 4430 - info@laekjarbrekka.is

## Copy Editor Wanted

Skjal Translations are now looking for a native English-speaking Copy Editor. The position is a full-time position at our office in Reykjavík.

The job involves proofreading and editing translations mainly from Icelandic into English. In addition, the right candidate will perform diverse copywriting tasks for clients, in particular marketing material and website content. Direct communication with clients may be required, as may providing assistance and consultation.

### Requirements

- Applicants must be native English-speakers, preferably brought up in the United Kingdom.
- Proofreading and copywriting experience required.
- Excellent writing skills in the English language.
- University degree in English or Linguistics preferable.
- Translation experience and familiarity with translation tools is an advantage.
- An understanding and knowledge of Icelandic is preferable but not required.
- Independence in performance of duties and the ability to partake in teamwork.
- Good computer skills.

Please send applications along with CV by e-mail to: [atvinna@skjal.is](mailto:atvinna@skjal.is) with the subject line "Copy Editor". **For further information:** Contact Hjörtur Einarsson, Production Manager, by phone +354 530 7321 or by e-mail [hjortur@skjal.is](mailto:hjortur@skjal.is)

Skjal Translations is a leading company in the Icelandic translation market, with seven full-time translators and numerous part-time freelancers.



SKJAL ÞÝÐINGASTOFA

Art | Or technology?

## LAB IT UP!

*How a group of artists, technicians, computer experts, musicians and sundry others have created an organisation where everyone helps one another make their wild ideas come true.*



Media labs have been around for about a quarter-century, the most famous being the original one at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. They have yet to fully enter the mass consciousness, but media labs have sprouted all over the world. The basic idea is to bring together people interested in various disciplines—usually some form of technology or art—and to have people learn from each other and bounce ideas back and forth, figuring out new applications for existing tools or ways to make new ones. What comes out of the media lab process can be anything from highly practical inventions to madly beautiful art and most everything in between.

*"This is an idea generator. When you have conversations, ideas are passed around and people make use of them."*

Margrét Elísabet Ólafsdóttir, aesthetician and lecturer at the University of Iceland and the Iceland Academy of Arts, organised the first meeting to get a media lab going in Reykjavík and in 2010, LornaLAB was founded. The lab now runs monthly workshops at the Reykjavík Art Museum, which tackle the theme of musical instrument building from various perspectives. At the October session I attended, two violin-makers, Hans Jóhannsson and Jóhann Gunnarsson, gave short presentations on their craft and showed the audience some of their violins.

They work on different principles, the former using technology to make all kinds of non-traditional violins, while the latter works along more traditional lines (hot tip: if you think violins are pretty, wander to Óðinsgata street, the violin repair shop of Jónas R Jónsson is one of Reykjavík's most beautiful sights). Then two members of LornaLAB, Þráinn Hjálmarsson and Halldór Úlfarsson, talked about the instruments they were building and gave demonstrations.

After the workshop I sat down with the latter two, and three other LornaLAB members, Bjarni Þórisson, Hannes Högni Vilhjálmsson and Jesper Pedersen. The group provided a good overview of the type of soul that flocks to the media lab banner. Halldór is a visual artist, Bjarni, Þráinn and Jesper are composers and Hannes is a professor of computer science at Reykjavík University.

For a group like LornaLAB, it is important to have a diverse membership. There are few venues that bring together people on both ends of the arts and technology spectrum like LornaLAB. As Þráinn puts it: "It is good to create connections like that. LornaLAB is primarily a place for conversation. It is necessary that it exists."

### "WHERE EVERYONE THIRSTS FOR KNOWLEDGE"

One of the main aims of LornaLAB is

to share knowledge, through lectures, conversations, and perhaps most importantly, letting people play around with the various technologies and instruments that members bring to meetings. Bjarni says: "The first thing that got me excited was attending a course where I got hands-on experience with Arduino."

Arduino is a good example of the kind of technology that is spread through an organisation of this nature. It is a tiny computer that is designed to make it easier for people to craft their own electronics. A lot of the members and workshop regulars got involved because of their interest in that, as Halldór puts it: "In a small way we became the shepherds of that flock." Jesper had started working with Arduinos well before LornaLAB was founded. I asked him if he had been teaching other members of the media lab. "I have taught, but I have also been taught by others. Everyone takes part, teaching each other. That is what is so wonderful, sharing knowledge. I am not an expert, but you also learn by teaching."

Hannes adds: "I was at the MIT Media Lab for eight years, and so in a way I was raised in an environment where everything is allowed, where everyone thirsts for knowledge and ways to apply it." This organisation has great personal importance to its members. "I do not feel like a complete human being without something like it," Hannes says, to enthusiastic agreement by the others.

### "SEEDS WHICH CAN GROW IN ANY DIRECTION"

For the members of LornaLAB, the organisation is like a research and development centre. Halldór describes how it functions for him: "If I have an idea for something that I am unable to figure out how to make, instead of wandering around lost in a fog, there is so much knowledge within the group on the subject of what I am trying to create, that I can move straight towards my target." Bjarni picks up that thread: "May-

We are the enlightened ones

# Live music

every Sunday to Thursday.

# DJ

set every weekend.

SUNDAY - THURSDAY 11:00 - 01:00  
FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS 11:00 - 04:30

- BAR SNACKS
- TABLE GAMES
- FUSSBALL TABLE
- DARTS
- 700 TV CHANNELS
- HOT SPOT & INTERNET CAFÉ
- POKER ROOM
- OUTDOOR SEATING AT AUSTURVÖLLUR
- DJ'S ON WEEKENDS
- LIVE PERFORMANCE EVERY THURSDAY
- 10 TV'S & 4 PROJETOES

HVÍTA PERLAN

[www.hvitaperlan.is](http://www.hvitaperlan.is)



be you have somewhat silly ideas you want to make happen and if you explain them to others you get blank stares. But in LornaLAB you get concrete feedback from people that understand where you are coming from." Þráinn continues: "There is a lot of wasted effort in being completely independent and trying to reinvent the wheel. Here I have people who can help and tell me when I am doing something wrong."

Though the group is quite active, and has led to a number of different projects, from musical compositions to university courses, the members feel that it would be even more fruitful if there were a set physical location where they could meet. Until January of this year, LornaLAB had space in Hugmyndahús háskólanna ("The Universities' House of Ideas"). It was a building with facilities for business start-ups and organizations that might generate interesting ideas. Since it was shut down, LornaLAB has led a nomadic existence. Halldór stresses that having a home is important: "With physical proximity, intermixing happens, arbitrary connections are made because people are open to one another and contribute to each other's ideas."

The members feel strongly that a media lab benefits society, as Hannes explains: "It should be pointed out that groups like this are seeds which can grow in any direction. Some may even become business ideas, even though it is terrible to be always thinking along those lines. But business people should

have no problem finding justifications to assist something like this."

**"A DAMN BEAUTIFUL GATEWAY"**

One of the organisation's goals is to have access to a fab lab, even run one in association with like-minded groups, such as Hakkavélin, a hacker space currently located at the Reykjavík University. A fab lab, short for fabrication laboratory, is a physical space with a set of high-tech tools, usually computer-controlled, that can make pretty much anything that people can dream up. Most have laser cutters, 3D printers, lathes, grinders and tools for making circuit boards. These are often associated with media labs, which is not odd, considering that the fab lab idea was first developed at the MIT Media Lab.

Three fab labs exist in Iceland but, as Halldór points out, "it is weird that none of them are in Reykjavík. They are in Sauðarkrökur, Akranes and in Vestmannaeyjar. Many of our members are interested in working with others on running one, and there is work being done on making that happen. If the fab lab would become reality, then we have an anchor for our work."

One of the driving impulses behind the fab lab concept is that they are open to everyone, that any person can come in off the street and work on their idea. Halldór stresses this aspect: "It is a damn beautiful gateway for the general public into this 'do it yourself' maker culture. [Fab labs] and the Ardu-

ino work hand-in-hand in a truckload of projects. You design a system, cut out some custom parts, rig it together and the Arduino controls it. Whether it is a robot or..." Bjarni interjects: "...a cooling system for beer brewing."

**"THE PROMISE OF FUTURE POSSIBILITIES"**

LornaLAB, as an organisation, could develop in many different directions, which excites its members. Þráinn says: "This is an idea generator. When you have conversations, ideas are passed around and people make use of them." During our conversation so many different ideas for projects and ways that members of LornaLAB can help each other are brought up, that it can be difficult to figure out exactly how the organisation will develop in the future, and that is the point. Hannes explains: "Where it could lead is also important to me. Seeds are being planted, and the promise of future possibilities, which alone is enough to keep me going." ☘

✍ KÁRI TULINIUS  
📷 HVALREKI



**THE VIKING : INFO**

Laugavegur 1 • Reykjavík • 581 1250  
Hafnarstræti 3 • Reykjavík • 551 1250  
Hafnarstræti 104 • Akureyri • 4615551  
Aðalstræti 27 • Ísafjörður  
Eden • Hveragerði  
email: theviking@simnet.is



**FLJÓTT OG GOTT**

**ICELANDIC FOOD**  
*...just the way mom made it!*

**BSÍ - BUS TERMINAL**  
Vatnsmýravegi 10, tel: 552 12 88

**Tapashouse**  
By the old harbour in Reykjavík  
Ægisdalur 2 • Sólfellshúsið • 101 Reykjavík  
512 81 81 - info@tapashusid.is - www.tapashusid.is

**THE DIVERSE ALL ICELANDIC "PICNIC".**  
8 COURSE TAPAS MENU WITH THE BEST THAT ICELAND HAS TO OFFER, FROM ALL OVER AND BEYOND ICELAND.  
5900 ISK.

**SAMPLES OF MENU...**

- PUFFIN BREAST "BLACK DEATH" WITH CREAM CHEESE
- SMOKED LAMB "CARPACCIO" WITH BUTTERMILK
- MUSSELS "HOT POT" WITH LEMON
- LOBSTERTAIL "CARPE DIEM" WITH FOIE GRAS
- LAMB "CHOP" WITH MUSTARD GLAZE
- BACALAO WITH THE HERB OF LIFE
- CURED SALMON "SMÖRRE" WITH BIRCH
- CHEESE CAKE "ICELAND" WITH BLUEBERRY

**WE ARE OPEN BOTH NEW YEARS EVE AND NEW YEARS DAY**

**ICELANDIC CHRISTMAS SALSA PARTY**

**MAMMA STEINA**  
MATBÚÐ

**Icelandic Food Station**

Skólavörðustíg 23  
tel: 552 12 88

# Voodoo Economics

Reykjavík's zombie bookstore is being brought back to life



**Most bibliophiles have bookstores that mean a great deal to them, places where they have spent hundreds, thousands of hours. For many of Iceland's bookworms, me included, that bookstore is Bókabúð Máls og menningar (BMM for short) on Laugavegur 18, which has been in existence for half a century (full disclosure, I worked there three holiday seasons in my late teens).**

There are few business establishments closer to my heart and yet there was a two year period when I barely visited. The store was a decaying hulk, with a pathetic selection and a lifeless atmosphere. That started to change last spring when the company that ran it for the past couple of years went bankrupt and new owners took over. In our last issue I wrongly asserted that the store is owned by a bank now, for which I apologise. In fact, the current owners are the same people who run the bookstore Iða on Lækjargata. To revive some of the good feeling that the store had lost, they hired Kristján Freyr Halldórsson to run BMM, who had been part of the store's crew from 2000-06.

## SELLING BOOKS AFTER THE CRASH

There are eight bookstores in downtown Reykjavík. Half of these are specialised, but the general public is served by Iða, BMM and two branches of the Penninn-Eymundsson national chain of bookstores, where Kristján Freyr once also worked. The corporation that owned Penninn-Eymundsson went under in the financial collapse. "Of course

it stands to reason," says Kristján Freyr, "that when everything comes crashing down, the state, and therefore its bank, will take over an operation that employs 2-400 people. The reasons for that are completely understandable."

For a smaller business like BMM, a competitor that is financially supported by a bank is a daunting prospect, as Kristján Freyr explains: "There was a news story this fall which revealed that the bank is putting 2-300 million ISK into [Penninn-Eymundsson]. That is very unhealthy." He stresses that his company is not alone in feeling that way: "Furniture makers, who are in competition with Penninn-Ey-

*"I got called a voodoo doctor and was told that my job was to cast out evil spirits. We have been working systematically to lift the mood of the place."*

mundsson when it comes to office furniture, bought a full-page ad the other day, to protest this situation." He feels that Penninn-Eymundsson drowns his bookstore out in the media: "I have to think twice before I buy an ad in Fréttablaðið [newspaper] because if I did that today, I would be competing with 3-4 full page ads from Penninn-Eymundsson." He thinks that soon the market for books will be different: "The sales process will start soon. So change for the bookselling business is around the corner."

## "CASTING OUT EVIL SPIRITS"

Returning back to his former place of employment has been odd, but fun. "A client I remembered from back then came into the store. He started to ask me about a few books. With one he

stumped me. I said: 'I apologize, I seem to be drawing a blank. I just started working here.' He said: 'Just started? You have been here some time, no?' I replied: 'Yes, but that was a while back, I just started again.' Then he said: 'Now that you mention it, you have been showing up to work rather spottily.'"

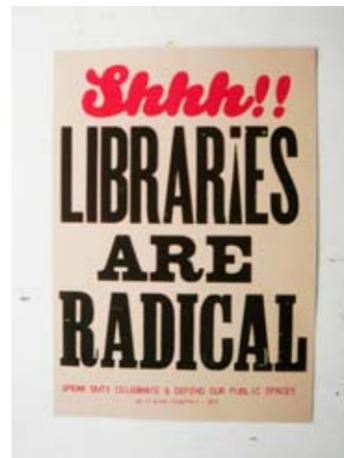
The store he came back too was a dim echo of its past self. The happiness of the staff had plummeted. Kristján felt that his first task was to reverse that trend: "I got called a voodoo doctor and told that my job was casting out evil spirits. We have been working systematically to lift the mood of this place."

## "THERE MUST BE A BOOKSTORE"

Before its decline set in, BMM had a notably extensive selection of books in languages other than Icelandic, especially English and the Scandinavian languages. For the last two years there has been little on offer beyond a few bestsellers and business guides. "Since we took over the store this spring," says Kristján, "we have added 18 shelf metres of English-language books. We get about four to five boxes a week." On the subject of books in other languages, Kristján admits that they are not a priority yet but that Scandinavian books sold quite well and that he feels it is important to offer a good selection.

Having watched one of the most important institutions of my youth shamble along half-dead for two years, I had begun to despair that it would ever come back to life. It still has some way to go, but it is heading in the right direction. I am not the only person for whom this is important. On the day that the previous owners went bankrupt I ran into my old boss from back when I worked at BMM. We talked in sombre tones, as if a close friend had died. But as we parted, she, a quiet woman in her seventies, bellowed: "There must be a bookstore in that house!"

# Radical Library As A Community Project



## SOWING SEEDS OF RADICALISM

Now the library has found a steady home in Reykjavíkurakademían, Hringbraut 121 on the fourth floor. There are around a thousand titles that I organise into roughly five categories; 'Anarchism' (from theory and propaganda to anarchist history), 'Activism' (various recipes against disaster), 'Environmentalism' (from veggie cookbooks to animal liberation), 'Philosophy' (from French intellectuals to disobedient Thoreau and from spirituality to anti-civilization), 'Left-wing Politics' (from Chomsky to Marx to girl power to Palestine issues) and 'Literature' (liberating, underground and thought provoking novels and prose).

The library books are full of fascinating ideas that no other media can or will put forward. Books keep giving me answers to my questions and feeding me new ideas. Books increase the quality of my life and for that I love them. That's why the library keeps growing and we keep spreading love and anarchy.

When people ask if the library works, I tell them the story about a kid who walked into the library one day and asked if I had seen a certain woman. I told him no, I had not seen her around and asked him why he was looking for her. "Well," said the kid, "I wanted to give her fish... you see, I work on one of the tourist boats by the harbour. The tourists go angling and they always leave the catch and we used to throw the fish away, but after I started coming to the library and reading these books, I always try to give the leftover fish to someone."

## A COMMUNITY PROJECT THAT WORKS

That made me realise that setting up an Anarchist library as a community project actually works. Also, we have not had any real problems with our self-service system, which is based on trusting the borrower. If people want to take out a book, they write their name and contact information into the "big book," with the date and the title of the book they borrowed, and I email them when I see that the book is still missing from the shelves after a few weeks.

Even if all the books were to slowly disappear, I wouldn't consider this a failed project. It would mean that all the ideas within them are somewhere out among people. The plan was never to set up an institution, but to spread ideas and inspiration.

SIGGI PÖNK  
GOITOLONETOGETHER.WORDPRESS.COM

**Seven years ago I started a library. The purpose was to sow seeds of radicalism in the community, to give people the opportunity to educate themselves on various issues that are not taught at school and are not being covered by the mainstream media.**

I began by setting up a few shelves in one of the rooms at Tónlistarþróunarmiðstöðin (TPM, "The Centre for Musical Evolution" at Grandi) with a couple hundred books from my own collection. Then I started organising hardcorepunk and metal shows at The Centre to raise money to buy more books, and wrote to Anarchist periodicals and publishers about the project, asking for book donations.

Friends have also helped out by bringing their own books and taking shifts at the library to keep it open. And when they go travelling I ask them to bring home radical and provoking titles second hand or wholesale from underground publishers in copies of eight to ten. That way I scored copies for the library and could set up a distribution to sell the extra books at punk shows.

That's not to say that it has always gone smoothly. We struggled to organise people to man shifts the TPM Centre and later at The Peace House. Then we moved to Kaffi Hljómalind where radically minded bookworms helped themselves to reading material, but sadly, after two years there, Hljómalind closed down (because of greedy capitalist landlord problems) and the library moved to Höfðatún 12, with Food Not Bombs and the DIY bike collective Keðjuverkun as neighbours, and Borgarahreyfingin ("The Citizen's Movement") offices upstairs. Finally, that hopeful grassroots centre crumbled because of a split within Borgarahreyfingin and we had to pack up all the books once again.

CAFÉ PARIS  
la vie est belle

Café Paris - Austurstræti 14 - Sími 551 1020 - cafeparis@cafeparis.is

Our famous traditional  
*Christmas plate*  
EVERY DAY 11-22

Two kinds of herring  
Cured salmon with mustard-dill sauce  
Danish pate with roasted mushrooms and bacon bits  
Pickled red cabbage with figs  
Waldorf salad  
Sugarcoated cabbage  
Reindeer paté with cumberland sauce

Smoked Icelandic pork  
Honeyglazed turkey breast  
Smoked lamb  
Rye bread, Leaf bread and toast  
Butter and jam  
Chocolate "Marquise"



Christmas plate kr. 2.990,-  
...including Icelandic Egils Gull beer kr. 3.590,-  
...and a shot of Icelandic Brennivín kr. 4.190,-

# sushi) samba



Sushisamba offers a unique fusion of Japanese and South American cuisine combined with the freshness of Icelandic ingredients.

The Sushisamba menu is created to fully capture and draw from those influences and offers a wide array of great selections, exciting small courses, new style sushi and even a steak platter.

**A must-try is the Juicy Sushi**



Our kitchen is open  
17-23.30 Sundays to Thursdays  
17-24.00 Fridays and Saturdays

**sushisamba**

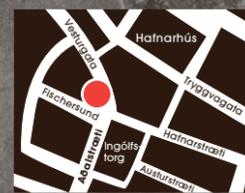
Þinghóltsstræti 5 • 101 Reykjavík  
tel. 568 6600 • [sushisamba.is](http://sushisamba.is)



## FEEL WELCOME

At the **SEAFOOD CELLAR RESTAURANT** we place New Nordic kitchen in the forefront. We are a seasonal restaurant that worships everything that Icelandic nature brings us as well as getting a few things from Scandinavia. We only use the freshest and the best nature brings us. We, and our ambitious, productive friends collect and produce the raw materials and bring it home. We serve it with love and respect for the ingredients and the environment around us.

*We do it our way.*



Aðalstræti 2 / 101 Reykjavík / tel. 511 1212 / [sjavarkjallarinn.is](http://sjavarkjallarinn.is)

can the money i send  
be there in minutes?\*

yes!



**WESTERN UNION** | yes!

\*Funds generally available in minutes subject to terms and conditions of service, including agent location hours and differences in time zones. See send forms for details.

send money to your loved ones now.

money transfer

## It Was Twenty Years Ago Today: 1991 And The Year The '90s Broke



Some decades arrive late, in a pop cultural sense at least. The '50s started in 1955 with the simultaneous advent of James Dean and rock'n'roll. The '60s came swinging in Britain with the Beatles first album in 1963, a year later in the States. As if to compensate, they spilled over well into the '70s which first found its own voice in the heyday of disco and punk. In Iceland, things happen even later. Arguably, the '60s here didn't really get going until the '70s and 1980 was the year that punk broke.

The 1990s, however, arrived just on time. And why not? It was the decade that brought the global infiltration of the internet and the low-cost airline. Admittedly, these things only really got going later in the decade, but in a musical sense the '90s took off in 1991.

### R.B.I. (ROCK BEFORE IRONY)

The year saw a slew of albums that were to dominate the first half of the decade and which remain among its best. The most eagerly awaited albums were by Guns'n'Roses, which the band spent the next three years touring before imploding. The 'Use Your Illusion' albums were probably popular music's last attempt to rock out without any sense of irony attached. Bare-chested gentlemen in snakeskin boots and very tight leather trousers (ok, stretchy bike-pants by this stage) may have become easy targets for ridicule just a few years later, but the albums still, well, rock.

Metallica's 'black album' was poppier than their previous outings, and reached a much larger audience. Die-hard fans may have felt betrayed, but the album still, for the lack of a better word, rocked. The band's ability to stick together, even allowing the drummer to have his say (if not necessarily the bass player) later led to them sailing past Axl and co. (ok, just Axl by then) in the supergroup sweepstakes.

### FROM BARE CHESTS TO FULL NUDITY

In 1991 too, three young men from Seattle made themselves known to the world at large and bare chests, whether adjoined to leather trousers or stretchy pants, would not be as acceptable again for a long time. Instead, torn jeans (if sometimes designer-made) and lumberjack shirts became the order of the day. Mickey Rourke's character in the movie *The Wrestler* later laments this moment as the end of the glory days of longhaired beefcakes. Be that as it may, 'Nevermind' remains, along with Radiohead's 'OK Computer,' perhaps the most seminal album of the '90s. To say that it simply rocked would not do it justice.

Radiohead were themselves signing their first record contract before year's end, but the single 'Creep' would not emerge until 1992.

Nirvana may have put bare-chested men temporarily out of business, but the Red Hot Chili Peppers were not afraid to bare all. They also had other attributes.

'BloodSugarSexMagic' rocked, but being somewhat more funky managed to be more contemporary than the Gunners who seemingly neither knew nor cared that the '70s were long over.

### ROCK VS. POP, AGAIN

It can, in fact, be amusing to muse over how teenage influences manifest themselves a decade or so later. Axl Rose was entering his teens in 1975, when stadium rock was at its apogee. Kurt Cobain was 13 in 1980, when punk was the cool thing to be. In 1991, these two worlds would clash again, more or less with the same results.

Around this time, the music itself was undergoing one of its periodic re-brandings. In the '50s it was known as rock'n'roll, in the '70s the moniker was shortened to just rock, but by the 1990s, guitar driven bands now became known as "alternative."

One established guitar band that tried hard to be accepted as alternative in 1991 was U2, who made their last truly great album with 'Achtung Baby.' They sampled some of the dance oriented music that most other old-style rock groups saw as threatening to their existence, in much the same way that the Rolling Stones incorporated disco and punk on their last great album, 'Some Girls.' Massive Attack, however, were the real deal and emerged with

their debut album 'Blue Lines,' which would lead the way to their later masterpieces, 'Protection' and 'Mezzanine.'

### WHATEVER HAPPENED TO HIP-HOP?

But we are getting ahead of ourselves. In 1991, when rock was becoming alternative, one is tempted to ask: Alternative to what?

Pop music continued the decline that had started in the late 80s. Before the Beatles (who were both rock and pop), most pop bands were disposable product controlled by their producers, record companies and/or managers. Lennon and McCartney, seizing control and writing their own material, changed all that, but Stock/Aitken/Waterman took the power back (away from the artists) by writing and producing forgettable ditties for interchangeable teen heartthrobs. Pop music has never really recovered.

Before the days of gangsta and macho posturing that made even the headbangers look meek, rap was the most dynamic new kid on the block. Its golden age was coming to an end in 1991, but still had a few punches left. One its foremost exponents, NWA, released their last album 'Efil4zaggin' (Niggaz4Life). The album took pot shots at former member Ice Cube, while Cube shot back on his 'Death Certificate' album. Cubes' near namesake, Ice-T, scored a career highlight with the album 'O.G.: Original Gangster' and toured with rock band Body Count which was to make one of the most hilarious albums of 1992. It's hard to remember that before their movie careers, Ices Cube and T were the kings of cool.

The greatest hip-hop band of them all, Public Enemy, crossed over into rock with thrash metal band Anthrax guesting on 'Bring the Noise' on the album 'Apocalypse 91...The Enemy Strikes Black.' At the time, it sounded like it might open up new and exciting directions for both art forms. No one could have predicted Limp Bizkit.

Meanwhile, with rap fully entering and even taking over the mainstream, A Tribe Called Quest were making their own form of alternative rap with 'The Low-End Theory,' reflecting the divisions which had already taken place in other genres.

### THE END OF ISOLATION

In 1991, Iceland was still largely outside the musical mainstream. No Icelandic

By the sea and a delicious lobster

At the Restaurant Fjöruborðið in Stokkseyri

Reykjavík  
Eyrabakki Stokkseyri

Fjöruborðið  
and the sea said ok...

> Only 45 minutes drive from Reykjavík

Eyrarbraut 3, 825 Stokkseyri, Iceland · Tel. +354 483 1550  
Fax. +354 483 1545 · info@fjorubordid.is · www.fjorubordid.is

# Iceland's Veil of Mystery!

Iceland's dramatic landscape clad in a veil of mystery. The forces of nature, silenced in the moment as the artist, Kristján Ingi, captures the roar of the waterfall and the desolate highlands clad in ash gray fog.

Available in English, Chinese and Japanese

Salka www.salka.is



artist had achieved global superstardom, and the bands that came to Iceland were mostly heavy metal bands past their prime, which had at this point not yet discovered that they could have profitable second acts in Eastern Europe. The years' concert highlight was held in Hafnarfjörður and included Slaughter, The Quireboys and headliners Poison. The headliners never showed up, but the Quireboys briefly became world famous in Iceland. The Sugarcubes had started to break Iceland's musical isolation in the late '80s and in 1991 had their last hit with 'Hit.' They would release an album, support U2 and break up in the next year, but it was Björk's solo debut that finally put Iceland on the musical map a couple of years later.

Domestically, the big five were Bubbi, Todmobile, Nýdönsk, Sálín hans Jóns míns and Síðan skein sól. The last two, affectionately dubbed "Sálín" and "Sólin," vied with each other for supremacy on the countryside ball circuit with their catchy pop hooks, the only way to make a real living out of playing music in Iceland. They succeeded so well that stories of members arriving at concerts in private helicopters started to circulate, but the local music market did not support such extravagance in the long run.

#### ART-ROCK AND THE KING OF ROCK

More musically innovative were the bands Todmobile and Nýdönsk. Todmobile released their third album, the ambitiously titled 'Ópera,' which continued honing their own sound with the prominent use of cello and singer Andrea's distinctive vocal. The lyrics, however, always seemed like a more of an afterthought to bandleader and superproducer Þorvaldur Bjarni.

Also making their third album, as well as an EP, were art-rockers Nýdönsk. 'Kirsuber' was one of summer's most appealing songs and the same could be said of 'Alelda' during the Christmas season. The video to the haunting 'Landslag skýjanna,' about a mad scientist learning to fly in black and white, remains one of the most innovative in Icelandic pop. Nýdönsk would go on to sell more records in the next year, but 'Deluxe' was probably their last truly vintage album.

The big five got together at 1992's Bíórokk, with Bubbi as the only solo performer. At this point, he was still

indisputably the king of Icelandic rock and when he entered the stage with just acoustic guitar in hand, the crowd sang his signature song to him. Bubbi started 1991 at the top of the charts, having had both the best-selling album and book of the previous year. By summer, he resurrected the career of "Icelandic Beatle" Rúnar Júlíusson and together they recorded some of the last great rock songs of Bubbi's career for the album GCD.

#### DEATH IN THE UNDERGROUND

If this was the music that people were buying, then in the underground strange things were taking place. At the annual battle of the bands, Músíktilraunir, most of the bands for some reason seemed to be playing variations of death metal, with Infusoria (later Sorricide) winning the studio time on offer and making their debut album as a result, which remains a fine testament to the short lived early Icelandic death metal scene.

While death metal bands disbanded and practitioners formed grunge bands once the full impact of Nirvana became clear, in quite different basements, another revolution was brewing. The Icelandic punk scene reached its zenith around five years after its predecessor in London, but in the early '90s the electronica scene in Iceland seemed to

be never more than five weeks behind its sources of inspiration. The world had grown that much smaller in course of a decade.

#### 'EVERYBODY DANCE NOW'

In the early '90s, while grungers, head-bangers and later Britpoppers did their best to emulate their '60s and '70s heroes, the electronica scene seemed to be creating something entirely new. In a sense, it was to the '90s what rock'n'roll itself had been to the '60s. And just like in the late '60s, every month seemed to bring out a new subgenre such as acid rock, folk rock, country rock, one now had a hard time keeping up with even the names of various styles, be it techno, drum'n'bass, trip-hop or jungle. This would all come to light some years in the future, even as the seeds were being sown in the underground raves of 1991.

Electronica made its way over here quickly, but hip-hop in Iceland lagged behind the times. Rap revitalised popular music here at the same time it was becoming institutionalized everywhere else during the later '90s. In 1991, the '90s were just beginning. Arguably, they would never again sound this good. ☘



ÞJÓÐMINJASAFN ÍSLANDS  
National Museum of Iceland



**The country's largest museum of cultural history featuring a permanent exhibition on Iceland's extraordinary history from settlement to present day.**

**National Museum of Iceland**

**OPENING HOURS:**

**Summer**  
(May 1st – September 15th)  
Daily 10–17

**Winter**  
(September 16th – April 30th)  
Daily except Mondays 11–17



Suðurgata 41 · 101 Reykjavík · Tel. +354 530-2200 · www.natmus.is

## KRUA THAI

RESTAURANT AND TAKEAWAY

# AUTHENTIC THAI FOOD SINCE 2001

HOME DELIVERY AVAILABLE!



LIKE THAI FOOD?  
YOU'LL LOVE KRUA THAI

TRYGGVAGATA 14  
(DOWNTOWN REYKJAVIK)  
PHONE: 561 0039

BAEJARLIND 14-16  
(KOPAVOGUR)  
DELIVERY: 552 2525

## FISH MARKET

FISKMARKADURINN

### Taste the freshness of a farmer's market

Housed in one of the city's oldest buildings, Fish Market uses ingredients sourced directly from the nation's best farms, lakes, and sea to create unforgettable Icelandic dishes with a modern twist.

OPEN FOR LUNCH WEEKDAYS 11:30 - 14:00  
OPEN EVERY EVENING 18:00 - 23:30



ADALSTRÆTI 12 | +354 578 8877 | FISHMARKET.IS

# PBP PUNK DON'T CARE ABOUT ANYTHING



There's a palpable air of "we don't care what anyone else is doing or if they like what and how we do" around the **Paradísarborgarplötur** ("Paradise City Records") label/collective. It's the quintessential hardcore/punk and beyond type of operation, ambitious yet somewhat mysterious, i.e. they seemingly do not dedicate much time trying to become the talk of the town; they'd rather just plod along, create on their own accord, and seemingly only for one another. Be it the raging and political metallised punk of **Dys** or the lonely, raw and tender crooning of **Pórir Georg**, **Paradísarborgarplötur** has something for almost everyone.

## MORE SELF CENTRED THAN DISCHORD

Fannar Örn Karlsson, a member of bunch of PBP bands and one of the collective's head honchos had a quick interworld chat with us and had this to say about the label's unique position in Iceland: "The main objective is of course to be a D.I.Y. label and to create some sort of a platform for releasing music in a way that we're comfortable with. It's all a little vague still because we're kind of testing the waters, trying to figure out how we can avoid compromises and still get music out there. Iceland can be difficult. With such a low number of inhabitants, changes within the music scene can be so drastic. Fifteen people are no longer interested or

don't have the time to be involved any more and suddenly there are no bands, no zines, no venues so you have to start over again."

"My current goal personally, with PBP is to create a stable environment for our music and our art and figure out how we can continue to do things the way we want without relying too much on certain people being there or the stability of a certain scene."

"Dischord Records is an amazing label and they've done really cool things in really cool ways and they're a big influence on us." In our conversation, I just had to make the comparison to the D.C. icon, something Fannar welcomed but put another spin on. "Dischord always had that archivist kind of feel to them, documenting what they felt important about the D.C. scene. At the moment we're much more self-centred. Hopefully some day we'll be in the position to be able distribute our records to a big enough audience so we can afford to be the archivists we would like to be. Oh yeah and we really like band shirts."

## A GIFT TO FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES

With Pórir Georg, aka My Summer As My Salvation Soldier, acting as PBP figurehead and best known musical entity, it was key to get him involved in the conversation what with his new record 'Afsakið' ("Apologies") just having seen the light of day. The album sees him switching from English lyrics

to Icelandic. "I'm aware of the fact that some people that enjoyed My Summer As My Salvation Soldier might not have the same connection with this album," he says but adds that it's not something that worries him. For him, the change isn't strategic but a natural one. "Lyrics in Icelandic were popping up in my head with greater frequency so I ran with it and decided to make an Icelandic album."

When asked if PBP was the appropriate home for him right now there was no doubt in the man's mind. "PBP is just one of several projects we've got going and I wanted 'Afsakið' to be a part of that. I'm responsible for pushing my own album. When I released 'Afsakið' I didn't really anticipate promoting it abroad, let alone in Iceland. Originally this material was intended as gift to friends and loved ones, and I didn't play the material live, but then it outgrew that notion and has led me to this point where I'm sharing it with everyone that's interested."

## NOT HYPERBOLIC, HONEST

Pórir and PBP opted to make all of their releases available for free downloads, thus going even more "punk" than the usual "trying to make at least the cost back." How is this working out?

"We never sold loads of copies of anything we released before. There's not much change really. Except now people can hear it," Fannar says. Elaborating on the issue he adds that "even those who buy records often download

them first to check them out and there's a lot records that come out and it's not very likely that somebody else will put our records online to distribute them amongst their message board friends. So to me, it can be a promotional thing. We're losing money anyway so it's really not a big issue for us. I could go on an ego trip and play the idealist card, but even though we do have ideals and consider ourselves to be an anti-corporate label, we're so tiny and have got nothing to lose so it would be kind of hyperbolic and not entirely honest."

Pórir concludes that "PBP's goal is not to utilize the internet to create hype or push our stuff upon people. We just want it to be readily available anyone, wherever they may be." 🍷

BIRKIR FJALAR VIDARSSON

## Casting A Light On The Artist

A visit to the **Hjálmar R. Bárðarson's** photo exhibition at **Þjóðminjasafn Íslands**



Few documents bring a nation's history and lost beauty more vividly and nostalgically to life than a photograph. In this regard, Iceland lives in the debt of perhaps its most prolific historian in the photographic medium, **Hjálmar Rögnvaldur Bárðarson** (1918–2009), a selection of whose black and white photographs is currently on display at the National Museum.

Hjálmar Bárðarson is certainly not unknown to Icelanders: his 'Ísland farsælda Frón' (1953) was the first book of photographs of this country to be published by a single photographer, and he went on to publish eleven more. He is best known for his later books, especially 'Ice And Fire', and 'The Birds Of Iceland.'

This exhibit honours the bequest to the Museum of the artist's 300.000 colour and 70.000 black and white photographs following his death two years ago. It represents a first attempt at making public a massive collection of images that chronicles Iceland as a land and as a nation over the almost 80 years of Hjálmar's photographic career.

The exhibit features black and white photographs from the 1930s to 1970s, beginning with a voyage he made in 1939 to the desolate Hornstrandir district of his native Westfjords, where he documented the rough beauty of an area that in coming years was to suffer depopulation. These are matched by later photographs of the deserted district from the 1970s that poignantly evoke the triumph of nature over human habitation.

Most eye-catching in the exhibit are his arresting photographs of the eruptions of **Surtsey** (1963) and **Vestmannaeyjar** (1973), especially the scenes of houses crushed and buried by the unstoppable advance of lava and volcanic rubble.

Hjálmar had a successful career as a marine engineer, but he photographed as an amateur. The engineer's preciseness is evident in the annotations he made to each photograph, giving the date, place, and name of the persons photographed—an inestimable gift to future historians of the land. The amateur nature of his enterprise allowed him great freedom to experiment in artistic ways, for example in the sculptural use of strong light and shadow in his portraits of artists and industrial tradesmen from the 1950s.

"In this exhibition," says curator **Ágústa Kristófersdóttir**, "we are trying to cast a light on him as an artist as well as a documentary photographer."

My personal favourite from the exhibit is the exquisitely balanced 'Boat on the Beach at Arnarfjörður 1938,' a simple but strongly composed study of two boats, one beached in the foreground, and its photographic echo moored at a contrasting angle off shore in the middle distance, leading the eye diagonally, with promise, to the mountain valley across the fjord.

This fascinating exhibition will hopefully stimulate further interest in one of this country's most remarkable photographers, and the moving tribute that his work pays to his native Iceland. 🍷

DONALD GÍSLASON



**STEINDINN OKKAR**

ÓNNUR ÞÁTTARÓÐ

KOMIN Í VERSLANIR!

sena

**JÓLAHAZAR**  
///NOELACTION  
at **GAUKUR á STÖNG**

**THURSDAY DEC 8<sup>TH</sup>**  
**REYKJAVÍK!**  
**GANG RELATED MUCK**  
1000 ISK - DOORS at 20.00

**SATURDAY DEC 10<sup>TH</sup>**  
**SNORRI HELGASON**  
**ÚLFUR NOLO**  
1000 ISK - DOORS at 21.00

ALBUMS and T-SHIRTS on SALE!!!

**KIMI records**

**HORNIÐ**  
Restaurant - Pizzeria



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

Lunch offers every day.  
Open every day from 11.00 to 23.30  
For reservations call 551-3340

# The Hunt for the Christmas Creatures

Icelandic folklore tells about many Christmas creatures, amongst them the thirteen Christmas lads, sons of ogres Grýla and Leppalúði, and the Christmas cat. They live in the mountains but come to town during Advent and perform all sorts of mischief.

Seven Christmas creatures are hiding around Reykjavík city centre and in Laugardalur Valley. Take part in the Reykjavík Christmas Competition 2011 by locating all of these strange beings and answering relevant questions about them on a special Christmas map by 24th December for a chance to win a prize.

More information on [visitreykjavik.is/December](http://visitreykjavik.is/December). Christmas maps available at the Reykjavík Tourist Information Centre, Aðalstræti 2 and in selected shops in Reykjavík city centre.



**Christmas Creatures  
of Reykjavík**

*Concept: HAF by Hafsteinn Juliússon  
Illustrations: Gunnar Karlsson  
Developed for:*

City of Reykjavík





# Iceland By Monster Wheels

*A day chock full of nature's wonders*



At the Reykjavík bus station BSÍ bright and early, I shook hands with our tour guide for the day, a large Nordic-looking man (read: Viking), who introduced himself as Gústi. Gústi quickly ushered me into a monstrous vehicle waiting just outside. In typical Icelandic fashion, this vehicle seemed to have unnecessarily large wheels, but as I later found out, these wheels were in fact very necessary indeed.

## THE MID-ATLANTIC RIDGE

We made our first stop at Þingvellir, where Iceland's first parliament—allegedly the oldest one in Europe—was established in 930 AD. However, this site is not of mere historical relevance; stepping out of the vehicle I was met by my first view of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge—jagged cliffs stretching out endlessly, flanking a no-man's land where the plates have been moving away at a steady two centimetres a year for, well, a very long time... We took some quick snaps before jumping back into the cocoon-like monster, and escaping the punishingly horizontal rain.

Then we drove across the no-man's land, unsupported by any tectonic plate, from North America to Europe. This was the first time that I was glad to have the massive tyres, as I imagined they reduced the chances of the land's crust giving way, plunging us into a fiery oblivion.

## A GOLDEN WATERFALL

Our second stop was the Gullfoss waterfall, a spectacular two-tiered waterfall where Gústi let us loose for an hour to wander about, take photos, and have some lunch. The waterfall is so powerful that a fine mist circulates well above the pool, surrounding the cliff paths around the site.

From one of the plaques, I read a story about a boy and a girl who lived on either side of the river, just upstream of the waterfall. One day, the girl beckons for the boy to join her on her side, and the absurdly brave boy wades across, somehow makes it, and they lived happily ever after. Having seen Gullfoss in all its glory, I can only conclude that the girl must have been really, really, ridiculously good looking (or at least well out of his league). The waterfall flows at a rate of up to 2000 m<sup>3</sup>/s, which, being English, some quick calculations reveal, equates to roughly 2 billion cups of (very cold) tea per second!

## AN ASH-BITTEN GLACIER

After eating some fortifying kjötsúpa, which imaginatively translates to 'meat soup,' we were off to take on the Langjökull glacier. After we put on our kindly

provided snowsuits, shoes, gloves and helmets and Gústi let some air out of the tyres "for extra grip," we descended the face of the glacier. Again I was glad to have the massive tyres, and probably for better reason. The very slow descent was extremely steep, and an intense rocking sensation was created in traverse of various unavoidable boulders.

After we got out of the vehicle and received some hand-waving instructions about how to use (and not use) our snowmobiles, we set off across the ash bitten ice. We drove for 25 minutes, in single file so as not to fall into any unseen crevasses, before stopping at the southern edge of the glacier. To the north, only the white-black expanse of glacier was visible, and to the south was the barren volcanic landscape of Iceland, which we photographed dutifully.

## A GEYSER CALLED STROKKUR

Next up was the great Geysir, from where all geysers take their name. However, Gústi informed us that Geysir is currently a little "grumpy," and no longer erupts. Eavesdropping on another tour, I learned that they used to dump gallons of soap into Geysir in order to encourage it to go off, a practice that is (sadly?) no longer used.

However, as Geysir's reliability has decreased over time, its little brother, Strokkur's, has increased, suggesting that they feed from the same thermal vent. Wandering over to Strokkur, which erupts every 10–15 minutes, there were many tourists with their cameras poised and ready. Fools, I thought, 10 minutes can be a long time to wait with your camera ready. But the impressionable eruption lasted for all of about 2 seconds, and I barely had time to unsheathe my camera before it was all over.

## A VOLCANIC CRATER

After driving through elf-inhabited rock land, we arrived at our last stop—a small, extinct volcano called Kerið (which last erupted 6,500 years ago). It was an exact scaled up model of a school science project volcano, being completely conical, with a vast crater in the centre. The crater was filled with crystal clear blue water that quite frankly looked almost too placid to be real.

After admiring it and taking some more necessary photos, we climbed back into the monster one last time and headed to Reykjavík. We had seen as many of nature's great wonders as one can take in a day, and I was looking forward to having a hot shower and a relaxing cup of tea. ☺



AIR ICELAND

Always best price online.  
Various online-offers to all Air Iceland's

[www.airiceland.is](http://www.airiceland.is)

[websales@airiceland.is](mailto:websales@airiceland.is) / tel. +354 570 3030



# Beyond The Middle Of Nowhere

*A miniature of Iceland explored in one day*



Given the variety of sights contained in a single place, it's no wonder that Snæfellsnes is sometimes called a miniature of Iceland. Surrounded by fjords, sea cliffs and beaches, this 90-km long peninsula in western Iceland has diverse landscapes, including lava fields, colourful rocks and sands. Not to mention, it features a mountain range dominated by the Snæfellsjökull glacier, which is believed to be a mystical place with a magical energy.

"We have everything that you could have in one place," our tour guide Hörður Harðarson says, explaining that a day trip is not enough to explore the whole peninsula, but it gives you an idea of what you can do there. "It is one of the hidden paradises in Iceland," he says.

## CHATTING WITH THE SEALS

After departing from Reykjavík bright and early, the tour to Snæfellsnes begins with a stop at Gerðuberg—a row of columnar rocks and basalt

formations. We get out and admire what looks to me like a huge unfinished building. And this is just the beginning of a great number of natural wonders.

Next we stop at Ytri Tunga, where Hörður tells us we are guaranteed to see seals, and he is definitely right. At first, it seems like we are simply looking at a bunch of rocks, but upon closer inspection, we can make out the seals, which blend in well with the rocks. They look at us for a while and it's like we are having a one-minute eye-conversation.

## BEING IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE

We continue along a road surrounded by lava fields, and the romantic scenery out of the window captivates me. One gets a sense of how sparsely populated Iceland really is. It's like being in the middle of nowhere and suddenly the beauty of nature just appears all around.

The Snæfellsjökull glacier and volcano seem

to follow us and Hörður says there is something about that glacier that is difficult to explain. It's like it's always pulling you, he tells us. "To be on the glacier during the midnight sun is like a standing on a top of the world," he adds. No wonder writers like Halldór Laxness and Jules Verne were inspired by it; Jules Verne's novel 'A Journey to the Centre of Earth' leads you right to the centre of it.

Our next stop brings us to Arnarstapi, a fishing village with an astonishing view. As you can imagine there are many rock formations along the coast and driving the steep cliffs is awe inspiring.

## ROCKS AND SEA

At nearby Djúpálónssandur, we continue to learn about fishing. There we find four lifting stones once used by fisherman to measure their strength. The weight of the heaviest one is 155 kilos and the smallest one, 23 kilos. You must concentrate, keep the stone close to you and use your whole body to lift them; otherwise you just can't

do it. Our group is only able to lift the smallest one, which would have been useless to the fishermen. Alas, it's time to go home and we leave the peninsula behind us and make our way back to the city.

One of the passengers, Ingrid from Latvia, tells me though she didn't understand everything the guide was saying, though she still enjoyed the tour where the nature speaks for itself.

Snæfellsnes proves to be dream-like, peaceful, and relaxing. With its mountains and volcanoes, it's a place where you reenergize yourself. "I've been coming to Snæfellsnes for many years," Hörður tells us, "and I never grow tired coming here because there is so much to see." 🇮🇸

[www.airiceland.is](http://www.airiceland.is)

destinations.



ISLENSKA SÍÐIS PÓL 09/2010



Contact Air Iceland or travel agent for reservation.



## Harpa Tours and Packages

**VISIT HARPA THIS WINTER.** Take a guided tour of the building and peak behind the scenes. Enjoy the glass facade, elegant halls and different floors of genius design.

Reykjavík was featured in the New York Times as amongst the top four places in the world to travel to in 2011, with Harpa as one of its main attractions. Harpa is definitely a must-see on any Iceland travel agenda.

### REGULAR GUIDED TOUR - daily this winter

Weekdays at 15.30. Price 1500 ISK ( Around 10 Euros).

Weekends at 11.00 and 15.30. Price 1500 ISK (Around 10 Euros).

### FESTIVE SEASON TOUR

Enjoy a tour of Harpa in December followed by Icelandic "piparkökur" (ginger biscuits) and a glass of warm mulled wine.

### GUIDED TOUR PACKAGES

Book a tour package for small or large groups, for example professional groups.

All tours can be booked at the box office desk, at [tours@harpa.is](mailto:tours@harpa.is) or via telephone +354 528 5009

Also in Harpa: VIDEO - a documentary on the Icelandic music scene by Árni Sveinsson shown Wednesdays at 17.00.



HARPA  
REYKJAVÍK  
CONCERT HALL AND  
CONCERT SQUARE

ICELANDAIR

At the Grill Market the seasons are in control of the menu with all the freshest ingredients available - from the sea, heaths, lakes, rivers and farms. In our cooking methods we go for the origin of the ingredient and use fire, smoke, wood and charcoal to achieve deep, rich, earthy flavors that we balance out with freshness. The result is an unexpected cuisine where Icelandic tradition and modern times come together.

## GRILLMARKAÐURINN

Mon – Wed: 11:30-14:00, 17:00-22:30  
Thurs – Fri: 11:30-14:00, 17:00-23:30  
Sat: 17:00 – 23:30 | Sun: 17:00-22:30

LÆKJARGATA 2A | 571 7777 | GRILLMARKADURINN.IS



### Snorri Helgason

#### Winter Sun

[www.snorrihelgason.com](http://www.snorrihelgason.com)

My friends in Nashville will love it

'Winter Sun' is a jukebox of starry warmth, nostalgic romance, and care-free fun. The album is acoustic simplicity mixed with reverb and celestial twinkles in a way that feels fresh and natural. Snorri has writing chops for days and composes tunes that made me want to watch fireflies from the back porch with a glass of lemonade. 'Winter Sun' is an album of soulful twang and vintage feel goodness that transported me back to my favourite Nashville hangout, surrounded by a room full of overalls, horn rimmed glasses and gingham. The arrangements are imaginative in texture and accompaniment, and the modern beats and atmospheric glitter add something unexpected and intriguing to Snorri's song-writing. 'Winter Sun' is an album of beautiful songs that sound like they belong together.

✚ - **JESSE ZIEBART**



### For a Minor Reflection

#### EP

[www.foraminorreflection.com](http://www.foraminorreflection.com)

Things could be so much better

This is a solid release that old and new fans alike will probably enjoy, but the production is preventing it from reaching its potential.

First off, some shifts between sections are uncomfortable (the songs were most likely recorded in sections rather than in one continuous take), which means the songs lose a sense of 'realness.' It doesn't sound like one continuous performance but instead like a composite of parts, cut and pasted together to make a Frankenstein monster of a song. Furthermore, the loud, rocking parts lack 'balls.' There is difference between loud and 'balls.' Y'see, loud is loud. 'Balls' is loud and gritty and overdriven and overblown and sounds like the fucking apocalypse. Why doesn't this sound like the apocalypse?!

And last but not least, the reverb on the drums in 'Revive' when the song 'explodes' makes them sound like a Phil Collins out-take from In The Air Tonight... Phil Collins god-dammit! I say, 'explodes' because this point in the song is like one unholy cluster-fuck of production problems. It goes off like a damp squib and struggles through its transition like a drunk trying to make it through their front door after a night on the town. C+. Must try harder.

✚ - **CLYDE BRADFORD**



### Lay Low

#### Brostinn strengur

[www.laylow.is](http://www.laylow.is)

Lay Low now rocks apparently. Good on her!

For her third album 'Brostinn strengur' ("Broken String"), Lay Low has supplied the music to words written by well known Icelandic female poets. After listening to the end result, I feel she should write tunes to other people's lyrics more often, for 'Brostinn Strengur' is musically Lay Low's strongest album to date.

As with her previous albums, there's still a pervasive influence of country and blues, but it's not as rote and one-dimensional as before. Both her music writing and production work now show a confidence and willingness to utilise a wider variety of styles and rhythms. One moment, she's quiet and hushed to simple electronic manipulations ("Kvöld í skógi"), the next she's rocking the fuck out ('Brostinn strengur'), which is definitely something you wouldn't have associated with her past solo work.

The real paydirt of the album though is listening to the dual coupling of 'Lífið'—a haunted wood of a song with its judicious use of reverb and unsettling organ and wind sounds—and 'Helganga,' with its perfectly timed, dynamic drum rolls and chilling choir accompaniment.

'Brostinn strengur' shows a growing maturity in Lay Low's sound and songwriting, which has produced an album that's a much more rewarding listening experience.

✚ - **BOB CLUNESS**



### Singapore Sling

#### For Weeks

[singaporesling](http://singaporesling)

Speak softly and they won't listen anyway

Oh ok then, Henrik Björnsson sounds like some kind of deadpan cynical cowboy fronting a hybrid Pet Shop Boys / drugged-up psychedelic shoe-gazey type bunch of reprobates and the sentiments are mostly downbeat or nihilistic.

But that don't mean it isn't good to chug along and indulge, neither. Oh no boy, there's much to be had in wallowing in love until you're insane in 'Freaks,' or 'Poison Ape,' which somehow thumps together Adam and the Ants, The Stooges and a merman's voice from beyond the grave. Not the easiest to dance to, but that's hardly the point. It really is pop with its guts turned inside out and re-spliced in nearly the same place.

✚ - **JOE SHOOMAN**



### Vicky

#### Cast A Light

[www.vickytheband.com](http://www.vickytheband.com)

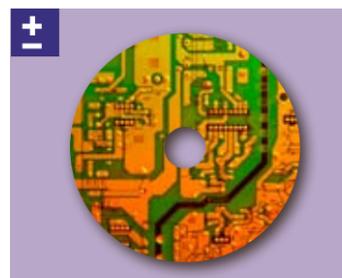
Girl Power With A Mohawk And A Male Drumme

Once upon a time there was an Icelandic band called Vicky Pollard that consisted of four girls in front of a male drummer. However, the 'Pollard' was dropped when the ladies and gentleman released their debut album 'Pull Hard' in 2008.

Vicky's sound is best described as poppy metal or dubbed metal pop. Just before delivering their second baby, a guitarist left the band. The quartet, three mothers and a proud, drumming father, now present to us a child born with a green mohawk: 'Cast A Light.' The kid was conceived and delivered at Tankurinn studios, Flateyri, in the far and icy Westfjords. The album was produced by the experienced Jason Allen from Blasting Room studios, and it tells. Singer Eygló Scheving's voice is getting stronger, and the riffs are well befitting the pile-driving drums.

This is a great album. The mellow openers are nice, and these are followed by a mix of hits and rockers. The band is at their best in the acoustic 'Gold,' and the album itself deserves some gold, too.

✚ - **DR. WIM VAN HOOSTE**



### Hjalmar

#### Órar

[hjalmarmusic](http://hjalmarmusic)

Forward movement, lacking in highlights

Hjalmar live a somewhat unchallenged existence as the kings of the Icelandic reggae scene (as there are barely any other reggae bands out here), and while they do a tip top job of creating a unique sound, blending the warmth of Jamaica with the eccentricity of Iceland, this isolation means that their progress musically is slow and difficult.

'Órar', their fifth album, is another step down the path that the band has been forging for the last seven years. This latest effort bears some of the fruits of this hard won progress and moves into a more funky sound, away from the same old, same old of the last three albums. Unfortunately, the album sorely lacks the very important element of a stand-out track. While they have produced something that seems to make moves in a new direction, it lacks a defining element to make it great.

✚ - **BERGRÚN ANNA HALLSTEINSDÓTTIR**

*Celebrate the  
New Year  
in Iceland  
with a Spanish twist*

Tapas barinn is open New Year's Eve  
and New Year's Day.

Experience a stylish fusion of traditional  
Spanish tapas prepared with the best  
Icelandic ingredients in a vibrant and  
friendly atmosphere.

For reservations call 551 2344  
or e-mail [tapas@tapas.is](mailto:tapas@tapas.is)



Vesturgata 3B | 101 Reykjavík | Sími 551 2344 | [www.tapas.is](http://www.tapas.is)

Traveller  
2009  
READERS' SPA AWARDS  
WINNER  
MEDICAL THERMAL SPA  
BLUE LAGOON  
ICELAND

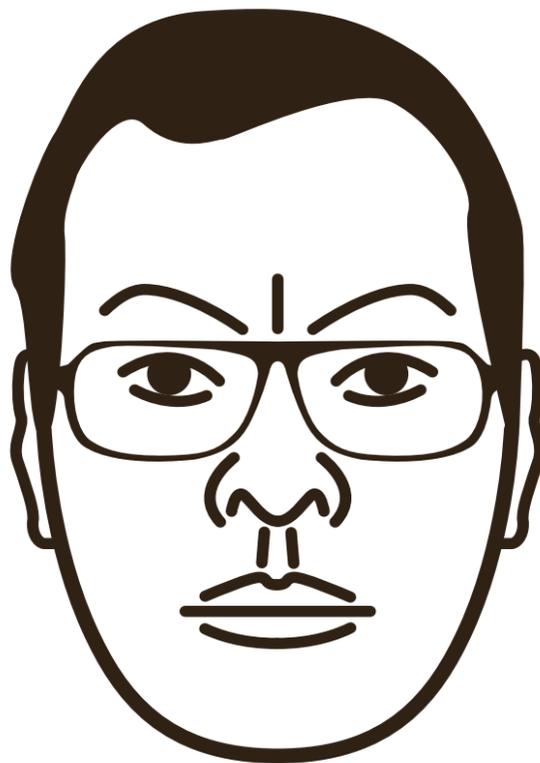
BLUE LAGOON  
ICELAND

Energy for life  
through forces of nature

Blue lagoon is open daily [www.bluelagoon.com](http://www.bluelagoon.com)

# X-MAS 2011

1980



2011

DECEMBER 20<sup>th</sup> IN KAPLAKRÍKI

[midi.is](http://midi.is) X<sup>97.7</sup>

# Grafarvogur Has A Hidden History And Some Treasure To Boot!

How Reykjavík got to be what it is, part III



As a kid I used to love visiting the district of Grafarvogur, mainly because Reykjavík's garbage dump was located there and, as everyone knows, garbage dumps are great for treasure-hunting. I still have old foreign coins I found there amidst stacks of expired lamb-meat and pieces of unwanted '60s furniture. The site of the dump is now covered with grass and provides the perfect place to run around soft, green, trash-based hills, Teletubby-style. However, you should note that there is a reason nothing has been built there; the area is full of methane gas and therefore highly flammable.

Aside from hosting the dumps, the neighbourhood of Grafarvogur has a history and lots more treasures to uncover. So let's take a look!

## Words

Gerður Jónsdóttir

## Photo

Reykjavíkurborg

## ARE YOU FAT ENOUGH TO BECOME FALCON-FEED?

From looking at a map of Grafarvogur, it might seem like your ordinary suburb built in the late 1980s and into the '90s, with decent amounts of speed bumps, basketball fields, and schools. But further perusal reveals that the area is rife with history, in fact our earliest sources of information date back to Iceland's first settlers.

In 1180, the area was found to be the perfect place to build a sanctuary, and a church dedicated to St. Mary was constructed right next to an old graveyard where many of the settlers are buried. None of these ruins can be seen today, as they are all covered with an inactive fertilizer factory, which ceased its production in 2002 after operating for fifty years, starting when Grafarvogur was still far away from the outskirts of the city (and not yet residential). A fire incident in 1990 instilled great community pressure to shut the factory down, both from Grafarvogur's residents and the city council. The factory's fate was finally determined in 2001, after a powerful explosion in its hydrogen and ammonia production facilities that shook houses in the neighbourhood and emitted

a pressure shock-wave that was felt far away.

Not far from this old factory lies a cape that in the eighteenth century was used to keep sheep. These animals had been marked to become fodder for the Danish King's precious falcons. Such falcons were used for hunting among royalty, and Icelandic falcons were considered among the best in the world. The falcons themselves were kept in downtown Reykjavík, before they were sent to the Danish King. The falcons sort of fell out of fashion in the beginning of the 19th century, however, and falcon-feed production in Grafarvogur subsequently came to a standstill.

## INTERESTING BUILDINGS AND EXOTIC PLANTS

In 1929, a farm called Korpúlfsstaðir was built in Grafarvogur. At that time it was the most technologically advanced dairy farm in any Nordic country, but it did not operate for long. Alas, in 1934 special laws on dairy production were implemented, and the country was divided into several areas, each with only one milk processing plant. Each plant held a monopoly of the market in its area, and milk prices were decided by

special committees. This caused many of the previously privately run dairy farms, such as Korpúlfsstaðir, to go out of business.

The 2,400 m<sup>2</sup> dairy farm still stands, however, currently used for artist residencies ([www.sim.is/sim-res/korpulfsstadir](http://www.sim.is/sim-res/korpulfsstadir)). It is among my most favourite buildings in Reykjavík, as it brings to mind the past, the future, and the search and the invention of what is "Icelandic."

But Korpúlfsstaðir is not the only interesting building in Grafarvogur. The neighbourhood also hosts the only building in Reykjavík's suburbs protected by the National Architectural Heritage Board. It was constructed in 1964 as a library for The Institute for Experimental Pathology, Keldur, and still serves the same purpose today. Those interested in the history of art can check out its library between 08:00 and 16:00 on weekdays. The building was designed by Hannes Davíðsson, the same architect who made Kjarvalsstaðir museum on Klambartún, and its interior was designed by the artists Þorvaldur Skúlason—one of the pioneers of abstract art in Iceland—and Sigurjón Ólafsson—who has his own art museum, The Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum in Reykjavík, located in Laugarnestangi.

Not far away from Keldur you'll find an area that was a fairly popular spot for summer cabins in the '60s and '70s (bear in mind that this is when Grafarvogur was still considered 'the countryside'). Today, you'll spot summer cabin ruins; floors made out of mosaic tiles, benches and even exotic plants that were imported from Asia sixty years ago.

## POLITICAL DEBATE, CELEBRITIES AND THE NORDIC COUNCIL LITERATURE PRIZE

Before the suburb of Grafarvogur was planned in 1982, it had been a source of political debate for some time. The left-wing parties wanted to expand the city to the east. These plans changed when the right wing Independence Party, led by the infamous Davíð Oddson, won the municipal elections in 1982 and the foundations were laid for Grafarvogur becoming what it is today.

Grafarvogur was Reykjavík's second suburb experiment, and never became the 'ghetto' some sceptical people anticipated at the time of planning. Grafarvogur has attracted a lot of talented

people and celebrities over the years. Two out of the three living Icelandic authors that have won the Nordic Council Literature Prize live in Grafarvogur (2011 recipient Gyrðir Elíasson and 1995 recipient Einar Már Guðmundsson. Musician Damon Albarn (Blur/Gorillaz) bought a house a couple of years ago not far away from Korpúlfsstaðir, and close by lies the biggest entertainment and sport hall in Iceland where, among others, Snoop Dogg, Duran Duran, Foo Fighters, Metallica, Queens of the Stone Age and Plácido Domingo have performed (unfortunately not together as a single act).

## THE GOLDEN BRIDGE AND MORE TREASURES

"The Golden Bridge" (Icelandic: Gullinbrú) was for a long time the only way to get into and out of the suburb of Grafarvogur. The bridge's name, along with some other names in Grafarvogur, are derived from poems by the poet Bjarni Thorarensen, who lived in the area in the beginning of the 19th century.

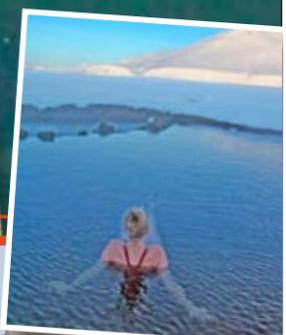
What I find fascinating about Grafarvogur is the area's nature. One does not have to have grown up in Grafarvogur to enjoy walking or running along its coastline. It is also a perfect place to take your kids or yourself to the beach to find treasures (children in Iceland go often to the beach but not dressed in swimsuits—they go dressed in wool and raincoats, armed with a bucket and a shovel). On the beach you'll find easily find shells in the black sand, crabs and beautifully shaped stones. And if you are very lucky, you may even find old foreign coins. ☺

# Mountaineers of Iceland

## SUPER JEEP & SNOWMOBILE TOURS

Mountaineers of Iceland • Skútuvogur 12E • 104 Reykjavík • Iceland  
Telephone: +354 580 9900 [Ice@mountaineers.is](mailto:Ice@mountaineers.is) • [www.mountaineers.is](http://www.mountaineers.is) • [www.activity.is](http://www.activity.is)

# PLAN YOUR ADVENTURE WITH US



## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- NEW.** > **GLACIER WALK - LOBSTER SOUP - NORTHERN LIGHTS**  
Glacier Walk and an Aurora Adventure 25.900 ISK
- NEW.** > **GOLDEN CIRCLE AND MAGICAL NIGHTS**  
Gullfoss - Geysir, Relaxing Nature Bath, Dinner and Northern Lights 29.900 ISK
- > **ESSENTIAL ICELAND**  
Viking Parliament, Glacier, Lava Cave, Hot Spring and Waterfalls 33.500 ISK

## INFORMATION AND BOOKING CENTER

**Icelandic Travel Market**  
Bankastræti 2 - Downtown  
Tel: +354 522 4979  
itm@itm.is - www.itm.is  
Open 9 - 19

**HOLIDAY OPENING HOURS:**  
24<sup>th</sup> of December 09.00 - 14.00  
25<sup>th</sup> **CLOSED**  
26<sup>th</sup> 09.00 - 16.00  
31<sup>st</sup> 09.00 - 16.00  
1<sup>st</sup> of January **CLOSED**



Scan QR code to locate ITM



Sporent



# PINGHOLT BAR

**2 FOR 1**  
ON ALL DRINKS  
EVERY DAY  
17:00-19:00  
PINGHOLTSTRÆTI 3



**PAGE 18**

“When I was first starting out, people were amazed. They couldn’t believe I was so good at playing guitar—for a girl!”

Lay Low is pretty awesome. Being a girl and all. Read our feature with her in it, it’s awesome too.

**PAGE 12**

“If there’s one thing we have in common with your mayor it’s the ability to say ‘we don’t know.’”

The victorious Berlin Pirates were in town...

**PAGE 10**

“Parliament has become an ivory tower whose occupants are afraid of those outside and refuse to speak to them. In general parliamentarians have contempt for the public and do not consider them as important as the special interest groups.”

Occupy Reykjavík’s brief stint in front of Alþingi explored!

**PAGE 26**

“In 1991 too, three young men from Seattle made themselves known to the world at large and bare chests, whether adjoined to leather trousers or stretchy pants, would not be as acceptable again for a long time.”

Oh, the ‘90s...

**PAGE 06**

“What is a bit troubling is that there are so few immigrants in the media. They are really seldom interviewed and there are very few articles written by immigrants”

The Grapevine attends the Integration and Immigrants’ Participation Conference

**PAGE 14**

“I told them that the country does not have an army. For my father and mother, who lived all their lives seeing guns in the streets and armed people and wars and bullets, it sounds very different and shocking to them in a good way when they hear that their son is in a place with no army.”

Palestinian poet and journalist Mazen Maarouf has been given sanctuary in Reykjavík

101 opening hours from  
15 December : 10 - 22:00

# Cool Yule!

Come on down...town!  
Reykjavik 101  
is where it's at



...with cozy boutiques, cafés & restaurants, unique design, fashion and giftware. See the beautifully lit & decorated center, culminating in Ingolfstorg’s Christmas Market.



Help locate the classic but newly animated Christmas Creatures on various downtown walls and buildings.  
You could win the Downtown Gift Card.



Maps available in specifically marked  
"Christmas Card" stores.

Please go to [midborgin.is](http://midborgin.is)  
or Facebook / Miðborgin okkar  
or [visitreykjavik.is](http://visitreykjavik.is) for further info.

Gjafakort Miðborgarinnar okkar  
available in all downtown bookstores.  
A perfect Christmas present.  
You decide the amount.

Choirs, brassbands, singing  
Christmas Creatures  
& a variety of musical entertainment.



BORGUN



## Living in Reykjavik?

- Information on city services
- Online service applications
- News and events

[www.reykjavik.is/english](http://www.reykjavik.is/english)



## Zycie w Reykjavíku?

- Informacja o usługach miejskich
- Złożenie wniosku on-line (komputerowo)
- Wiadomości i wydazienia

[www.reykjavik.is/polska](http://www.reykjavik.is/polska)



DZIECI  
BÓRN



ATRÁKCIJE  
AFÞREYING



DOROÐLI  
FULLORÐNIR



E-REYKJAVIK  
RAFRÆNNÞJÓNUSTA



MŁODZIEŻ  
UNGLINGAR



ADMINISTRACJA  
STJÓRNSÝSLA



# The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

# INFO



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

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL AND  
ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

Issue 18 - 2011

[www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is)



COMING UP:

**DRINKING!  
EXPLOSIONS!  
ABSOLUTION!**

Photo by Matthías Ásgeirsson - flickr.com/matthia

# The Christmas Stars



**Nolo**  
*Nology*

★★★★★ Fréttablaðið



**Reykjavík!**  
*Locust Sounds*

★★★★★ Morgunblaðið



**Snorri Helgason**  
*Winter Sun*

★★★★★ Fréttatíminn



**Sóley**  
*We Sink*

★★★★★ Morgunblaðið



**KIMI** records

# MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN NOV

PRESCRIBING WITH LOVE  
MUSIC FOR YOUR LIVE  
EXPERIENCE

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

## 2 FRI

**Bakkus**  
23:00 DJ Make Dance  
**Bar 11**  
22:00 DJ Omar  
**Barbara**  
23:00 DJ Kollster  
**Celtic Cross**  
22:00 Live music until 4:30, 2-1 Tuborgs  
**Dillon**  
22:00 Baku Baku  
**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music  
00:00 Live music upstairs until 4:00  
**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music  
**Esja**  
22:00 DJ Bogi/DJ Hlynur Mastermix  
**Faktory**  
23:00 Svínar: free concert with Emmsjé Gauti and more  
**Gaukur á Stöng**  
22:00 Bootlegs, In Memoriam, Bastard, Dark Harvest  
**Glaumbar**  
00:00 Live DJ  
**Harpa, Eldborg**  
19:30 Handel's MESSIAH, 2000 ISK - 6500 ISK  
**Harpa, Kaldalón**  
17:30 Undiraldan/undercurrent: Plastic Gods+Náttfari  
**Háskólabíó**  
21:00 Christmas Concert, 4900 ISK  
**Hressó**  
22:00 Böddy's and DJ Elli  
**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Reykjavík! + Lím Drím Tím DJs  
**Trúnó**  
23:00 DJ Manny  
**Vegamót**  
22:00 Benni  
**Pjóðmenningarhúsið**  
20:00 Kristjana Stefáns and Svavar Knútur, 2000 ISK

## 3 SAT

**Bakkus**  
23:00 DJ Hashi  
**Bar 11**  
22:00 Local DJ  
**Bar 46**  
18:00 The Old Spice: Classic Hits  
**Barbara**  
23:30 DJ Blue Screen  
**Café Haiti**  
21:00 Jussanam: Brazilian Jazz Sessions  
**Celtic Cross**  
00:00 Live music until 4:30, 2-1 Tuborgs  
**Dillon**  
22:00 Reykjavík!  
**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music  
00:00 Live band upstairs until 4:00  
**English Pub**  
21:30 Live Music  
**Esja**  
22:00 DJ Bogi/DJ Hlynur Mastermix  
**Faktory**  
23:00 RVK Soundsystem Reggae Night  
**Gaukur á Stöng**  
22:00 Mugison  
**Háskólabíó**  
21:00 Baggalútur Christmas Concert, 4900 ISK  
**Harpa, Eldborg**  
19:00 and 22:30 Frostroses: 10th Anniversary Concert  
6990-13990 ISK  
**Hressó**  
22:00 Timburmenn and DJ Elli  
**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Bogomil Font og öreigarnir + Gísli Galdur  
**Trúnó**  
23:00 DJ Early: Golden Oldies  
**Vegamót**  
22:00 DJ Símon

## 4 SUN

**Bakkus**  
19:00 ping pong, Guinness & Whiskey specials  
**Bar 46**  
18:00 Film screening  
**Barbara**  
21:00 Local writers read from their books  
**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Game Night, cards until 00:00

**Dillon**  
22:00 Advent Concert  
**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music  
**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music  
**Faktory**  
21:00 Live Jazz  
**Háskólabíó**  
21:00 Sigurður Guðmundsson, 4900 ISK  
**Harpa, Eldborg**  
15:00, 18:30, 22:00 Frostroses 10th Anniversary Concert  
6990-13990 ISK  
**Langholtskirkja**  
23:50 Mozart at Midnight, 4000 ISK  
**Trúnó**  
11:00 Hangover day. Offers on hangover food

## 5 MON

**Bakkus**  
21:00 Cinéma Bakkus  
**Barbara**  
Closed for private party.  
**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music  
**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music  
**Salurinn (Kopavogur)**  
12:30 Christmas ballet based on a story by Guðrun Helgadóttir  
1500 ISK  
**Trúnó**  
21:00 Manic Monday: Theme Night

## 6 TUE

**Barbara**  
21:00 L'acoustique: Guðrið Hansdóttir, Lay Low special prices on beer and wine.  
**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Game Night, cards until 00:00  
**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music  
**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music  
**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 DJ HalliValli  
**Trúnó**  
22:00 Chill-out Night

## 7 WED

**Barbara**  
20:00 Electro Night  
**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Svavar Knútur  
**Celtic Cross**  
9:30 Open Mic, offers on beer until 00:30  
**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music  
**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music  
**Esja**  
21:00 See your future with Heidar Jons  
**Gaukur á Stöng**  
22:00 Beck's Music Experience: Skúrinn á Rás 2 LIVE concert.  
**Harpa, Eldborg**  
19:30 Beethoven Cycle 1: Symphonies 1, 2 and 3  
2000-6500 ISK

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Valdimarionette Quartet, Rabbi Bananas, These Fists  
**Reykjavík Downtown Hostel**  
20:00 Ólafur Arnalds  
**Trúnó**  
21:00 Icelandic Theme Night

## 8 THU

**Bakkus**  
20:00 Pop quiz: 500 entry - Cash prize.  
DJ Einar Sonic  
**Bar 11**  
21:00 We Made God + DJ  
**Barbara**  
22:00 Live Music + DJ Glimmer  
**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Fabúla & hljómsveit  
**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00  
**Dillon**  
22:00 Rock Quiz + Trums  
**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music  
**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music  
**Faktory**  
22:00 DJ Pabbi  
**Gaukur á Stöng**  
22:00 Reykjavík! with special guests.  
**Hressó**  
22:00 Tag you're it!  
**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Kalli (Breakbeat.is)  
**Trúnó**  
22:00 Cocktail Night: Crazy Cocktail Offers  
**Vegamót**  
22:00 DJ Símon

## 9 FRI

**Bakkus**  
23:00 DJ KGB  
**Bar 11**  
22:00 Live Music  
**Barbara**  
22:00 DJ Early  
**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Latinband Tómasar R. Einarssonar: guest Ólafía Hrönn  
**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00  
**Dillon**  
22:00 Otto Katz Orchestra  
**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music  
00:00 Live band upstairs until 4:00  
**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music  
**Esja**  
22:00 DJ Bogi/DJ Hlynur Mastermix  
**Faktory**  
23:00 Lay Low + guests + DJ Atli Kanilsnúður  
**Gaukur á Stöng**  
21:00 Reptilicus & Stereo Hypnosis: Album Release Shows, 1700 ISK, drink included  
**Harpa, Eldborg**  
19:30 Beethoven Cycle 2: Symphonies 4 and 5, 2000-6500 ISK  
**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 DJ KGB  
**Trúnó**  
23:30 DJ Bluescreen

Reykjavik Museum of Photography

30th Anniversary 2011  
Exhibitions all year round  
ADMISSION FREE

30  
LJÓSMYNDASAFN  
REYKJAVÍKUR  
Reykjavik Museum of Photography  
1981-2011

GRÓFARHÚS 6th floor  
Tryggvagata 15, 101 Reykjavík  
Opening hours:  
12-19 mon-fri, 13-17 weekends  
[www.photomuseum.is](http://www.photomuseum.is)

**Vegamót**  
22:00 DJ Jónas

## 10 SAT

**Bakkus**  
23:00 DJ Kári

**Bar 11**  
22:00 Live music TBA and DJ Matti

**Barbara**  
23:30 DJ Veloci

**Café Haiti**  
21:00 Jussanam - Brazilian Jazz Sessions

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 1860

**Celtic Cross**  
00:00 Live music until 4:30, 2-1 Tuborgs

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music  
00:00 Live band upstairs until 4:00

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Esja**  
22:00 DJ Bogi/DJ Hlynur Mastermix

**Faktorý**  
23:00 DJ KGB

**Gaukur á Stöng**  
22:00 Jólahazar Kimi Records

**Hallgrímskirkja**  
14:00 Björn Steinar Sólbergsson,  
1500 ISK, free admission for children.

**Háskólabíó**  
19:00 KK and Ellen  
4900 ISK

**Harpa, Eldborg**  
16:00 and 20:00 Frostroses CLASSIC,  
6990-13990 ISK

**Hressó**  
22:00 Mars and DJ Fannar

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Árni Sveinsson

**NASA**  
22:00 Sálín

**Trúnó**  
22:00 DJ Glimmer

**Vegamót**  
22:00 DJ Benni

## 11 SUN

**Bakkus**  
22:00 ping pong, Guinness & Whiskey specials

**Barbara**  
21:00 Book readings + live musicians

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Jazzband Bödda

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Game Night, cards until 00:00

**Dillon**  
22:00 Third Advent Concert

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Faktorý**  
21:00 Live Jazz

**Háskólabíó**  
20:00 Christmas Concert: Sigga Beinteins, 4990 ISK

**Harpa, Eldborg**  
16:00 and 20:00 Frostroses CLASSIC,  
6990-13990 ISK

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Litoral

**Trúnó**  
11:00 Hangover Day. Offers on Hangover food.

## 12 MON

**Bakkus**  
21:00 Cinéma Bakkus, free

**Barbara**  
22:00 Dísá Hreiðarsdóttir and more

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Kammerkórinn

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Paul Evans

**Trúnó**  
22:00 Manic Monday

## 13 TUE

**Bakkus**  
21:00 Foosball competition, free entry beer prizes

**Barbara**  
21:00 L'acoustique: Elín ey, Low Roar, special prices on beer and wine

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Blúsband Pollýar

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Game Night, cards until 00:00

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music



## Reptilicus and Stereo Hypnosis Joint Release Concert

December 9 20:00

Gaukur á Stöng

Price 1500 ISK (includes a drink)

A celebration you say? Of two releases? By two big names in Iceland's burgeoning electronic music scene? Sounds good to us! So we'll be celebrating the release of Reptilicus' 'Initial Conditions' 7" and Stereo Hypnosis' 'Synopsis' album at Gaukur á Stöng then!

The evening is being put on by Electric Ethics, Yatra Arts (who are releasing 'Initial Conditions') and Extreme Chill. Reptilicus are true pioneers in Iceland's electronic music scene being that they started way back in 1988. And the evening itself promises to be something special for electronic music fans with a one-off collaboration from AMFJ & AUXPAN, performances from Þórunna Björnsdóttir (aka Trouble), Gjöll and Inside Bilderberg before Stereo Hypnosis and then Reptilicus take the stage to celebrate their respective releases. The show will also utilise visuals created by Guðmundur Bjargmundsson, Bjarki Markússon and Hafsteinn Michael Guðmundsson.

An all round experience. Don't say we didn't warn you!

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Atli Kanil

## 14 WED

**Barbara**  
22:00 Coming Out Stories  
22:30 DJ's Take Control

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Borgardætur

**Celtic Cross**  
9:30 Open mic, offers on beer until 00:30

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Extreme Chill

**Trúnó**  
22:00 Chill-out Night

## 15 THU

**Bakkus**  
22:00 Jólásækadélan 2011

**Bar 11**  
21:00 Beggi Smari, BB & The Bluebirds + DJ Orri

**Barbara**  
22:00 Skyndilega greip mig óstjórnleg löngun

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Borgardætur

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dillon**  
22:00 Rock Quiz + Fræflarnir

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Frikirkjan**  
20:30 Christmas Concert: Esther Jökulsdóttir tribute to Mahalia Jackson, 2900 ISK

**Gaukur á Stöng**  
22:00 Private Party

**Hressó**  
22:00 Timburmenn

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Maggi Legó

**Trúnó**  
15:00 Trúnó and Pink Iceland's Blood Drive  
20:00 Cocktail Night: Crazy Cocktail Offers

**Vegamót**  
22:00 Gorillafunk

## 16 FRI

**Bakkus**  
22:00 DJ KGB

**Bar 11**  
22:00 Rockabilly with Smutty Smiff  
Classic Bar 11 atmosphere with DJ Orri

**Barbara**  
23:30 DJ Magic Man

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Borgardætur

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dillon**  
21:30 Orafmagnað  
22:10 Rafmagnað

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Esja**  
22:00 DJ Bogi/DJ Hlynur Mastermix

**Faktorý**  
23:00 ReykVeek + DG KGB

**Frikirkjan**  
20:00 Herman van Veen: A Certain Tenderness  
2500 ISK

**Gaukur á Stöng**  
22:00 Land og Synir

**Harpa, Eldborg**  
17:00 Christmas Concert  
1700-2000 ISK

**Hressó**  
22:00 Silfur and DJ Fannar

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Taperecorder + Alfonx X

**Iónó**  
20:30 UNI CD release concert  
1500 ISK

**NASA**  
22:00 Jólalögg Records evening  
2011

**Trúnó**  
23:00 DJ Kvikindi: The One and Only

**Vegamót**  
22:00 DJ Símon

## 17 SAT

**Bakkus**  
22:00 DJ Hunk Of A Man

**Bar 11**  
22:00 Live DJ

**Barbara**  
21:00 15 years birthday party  
"Skýjum ofar": DJ Addi, DJ Eldar, DJ Reynir, DJ Plasmic, DJ Bjarki Sveins, DJ Huge Jeazz & more, 200 ISK

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Borgardætur

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dillon**  
22:00 Vintage Caravan

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Esja**  
22:00 DJ Bogi/DJ Hlynur Mastermix

**Háskólabíó**  
17:00 and 20:00 Christmas Concert,  
4900 ISK

**Harpa, Eldborg**  
14:00 and 17:00 Christmas Concert  
1700-2000 ISK

**Harpa, Norðurljós**  
20:00 Ólafur Arnalds, 2500 ISK

**Hressó**  
22:00 Böddy's and DJ Elli

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 DJ B Ruff + Gísli Galdur

**Trúnó**  
23:00 Dj Glimmer: Glitter, Glamour & Gayness . Everyone that wears glitter gets a shot at the bar!

**Vegamót**  
22:00 DJ Hannes and Dóri

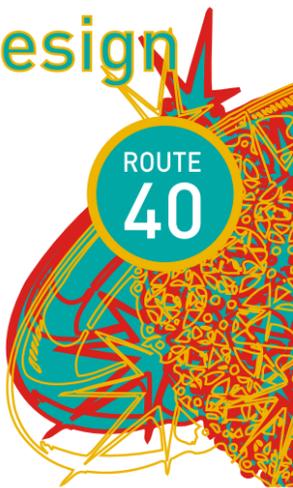
# Experience Icelandic Art and Design



**Kópavogur Art Museum-Gerðarsafn**  
Hamraborg 4, Kópavogur  
Tel. +354 570 0440  
Open every day 11-17 except Mondays  
[www.gerdarsafn.is](http://www.gerdarsafn.is)



**Hafnarborg The Hafnarfjörður Centre of Culture and Fine Art**  
Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður  
Tel. +354 585 5790  
Open every day 12-17 Thursdays 11-21  
Closed on Tuesdays  
[www.hafnarborg.is](http://www.hafnarborg.is)



**Hönnunarsafn Íslands Museum of Design and Applied Art**  
Garðatorg 1, Garðabær  
Tel. +354 512 1525  
Open every day 12-17 except Mondays  
[www.honnunarsafn.is](http://www.honnunarsafn.is)

To the Blue Lagoon

# MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN NOV

## 18 SUN

**Bakkus**  
22:00 ping pong, Guinness & Whiskey specials

**Barbara**  
21:00 Live music + Holiday movies

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Þórunn Pálína

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dillon**  
22:00 Fourth Advent Concert

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Faktorý**  
21:00 Live Jazz

**Harpa, Norðurljós**  
17:00 The Reykjavík Chamber Orchestra, Christmas Concert, 2900 ISK

**Trúnó**  
22:00 American Heartbreak Night

## 19 MON

**Bakkus**  
22:00 Cinéma Bakkus: Russian Christmas Theme

**Barbara**  
22:00 Stand up comedy with Maisol and the Magnificents

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Brother Grass

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 DJ Kári

**Trúnó**  
22:00 Manic Monday

## 20 TUE

**Barbara**  
21:00 L'acoustique: Skúli mennski, Smári, Ylja, special prices on beer and wine

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Brother Grass

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

## 21 WED

**Barbara**  
21:00 Naughty Holiday Pub Quiz with Hafdis Erla and Kristin Svava

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Hreindis & hjómsveit

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Bedroom Community Xmas Special

**Trúnó**  
22:00 Chill-out Night

## 22 THU

**Bakkus**  
20:00 Fönksveinar & kvistur, Dj Einar Sonic

**Bar 11**  
21:00 Live music TBA + DJ Matti

**Barbara**  
22:00 Dj Kvikindi & Dj Mokki. Ho-ho-homo holiday!

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Svavar Knútur: Christmas Concert

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dillon**  
22:00 Rock Quiz

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Faktorý**  
22:00 DJ Atli Kanilsnúður

**Gaukur á Stöng**  
22:00 Johnny & The Rest Xmas blues with special guests

**Hressó**  
22:00 Silfur Kaffibarinn  
22:00 Alfons X

**Trúnó**  
22:00 Cocktail Night: crazy Cocktail Offers  
22:00 DJ Unnur Andrea

**Vegamót**  
22:00 DJ Símon

## 23 FRI

**Bakkus**  
22:00 DJ Pilsner

**Bar 11**  
22:00 Local DJ

**Barbara**  
23:00 DJ Early aka Dj Jóla plays your favourite xmas tunes.

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 TBA

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dillon**  
22:00 Þorláksmessa

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Esja**  
22:00 Christmas preparation at Esja with hot chocolate and cookies!

**Háskólabíó**  
20:00 Bubbi Morthens, 3900 ISK

**Hressó**  
22:00 Timburmenn

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 HalliValli

**Trúnó**  
21:30 Live Music: Lay Low, Bjarni Snæbjörnsson & more

**Vegamót**  
22:00 Gorillafunk

## 26 MON

**Bakkus**  
22:00 DJ Hunk of A Man

**Barbara**  
23:00 DJ Lingerie fresh from New York

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Esja**  
22:00 DJ Bogi/DJ Hlynur Mastermix

**Hressó**  
22:00 Mars and DJ Elli

**Trúnó**  
22:00 DJ Unnur Andrea: Trúnótjútt

## 27 TUE

**Bar 11**  
21:00 Foosball competition Beer prizes. Champion of 2011 announced

**Barbara**  
21:00 L'acoustique: Sláturfélagið special prices on beer and wine

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Lay Low

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Trúnó**  
22:00 Chill-out Night

## 28 WED

**Barbara**  
22:00 Electro Night

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Sigga Thorlacius

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Gaukur á Stöng**  
22:00 Avenged Sevenfold Tribute concert.

**Hallgrímskirkja**  
20:00 Festive Christmas concert with beloved christmas carols sung in 8 different languages. 3900 ISK

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Alfons X

**Trúnó**  
22:00 Golden Oldies



## Lawdy, Lawdy, Stir Your Soul!

*Mahalia Jackson Tribute Concert*  
December 15, 20:30  
Frikirkjan  
2900 ISK

This year celebrates the one-hundredth birthday of Mahalia Jackson, one of the most important and influential gospel singers of all time. In her honour, Frikirkjan will feature local soul chanteuse Estherar Jökulsdóttir, singing songs from Mahalia Jackson's legendary 1962 gospel album 'Silent Night (Songs for Christmas)'. The opportunity to hear music from her Christmas album performed in a church at this time of year is nothing less than ideal. Estherar will also be backed by the Unique Men Quartet and a trio of drums, bass and Hammond organ. Mahalia Jackson is a defining voice of the gospel music genre and known all over the world as the Queen of Gospel. Even if you aren't into Christmas carols - or church, for that matter, this concert is sure to stir your soul.

## 29 THU

**Bakkus**  
22:00 DJ Gauti

**Bar 11**  
21:00 Live Music TBA + DJ

**Barbara**  
22:00 Resident DJ

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Sigga Thorlacius

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dillon**  
22:00 Rock Quiz

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live Music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live Music

**Faktorý**  
22:00 Hjaltaín + DJ Pabbi: entrance fee TBA

**Hallgrímskirkja**  
20:00 Festive Christmas concert with beloved christmas carols sung in 8 different languages. 3900 ISK

**Hressó**  
22:00 Silfur Kaffibarinn  
22:00 Natalie

**Trúnó**  
20:00 Cocktail Night: Crazy Cocktail Offers

**Vegamót**  
22:00 DJ Jónas

## 30 FRI

**Bakkus**  
22:00 Burlesque: 1500 ISK

**Bar 11**  
22:00 Live Music TBA + DJ

**Barbara**  
23:30 DJ Dick & Dyke

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Varsjárbandalagið

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dillon**  
22:00 Lay Low

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Esja**  
22:00 DJ Bogi/DJ Hlynur Mastermix

**Hressó**  
22:00 Böddy's and DJ Fúsi

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Már & Nielsen

**Dillon**  
Your local rock/whiskey bar

DID YOU KNOW?

That Dillon has over

40

brands of Whiskey from all over the world?



Laugavegi 30, 101 Reykjavík - [www.facebook.com/dillonrockbar](http://www.facebook.com/dillonrockbar)

**Trúnó**  
23:00 DJ Lingerine  
**Vegamót**  
22:00 DJ Símon

## 31 SAT

**Barbara**  
22:00 New Year's Eve Dance: DJ Óðæði

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dillon**  
22:00 Gámlárskvöld, Áramóta party, Andreu Jónsdóttir

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Esja**  
22:00 New Years party hosted by Jón Jónsson. Gus Gus dj's, Dj Margeir, Sexy Laser, human woman and many, many more...

**Faktory**  
22:00 Insane New Years Party

**Hallgrímskirkja**  
17:00 Famous festive music by Zelenka, Händel, Bach, Vivaldi and Albinoni.  
2.900 ISK

**Hressó**  
22:00 DJ Fúsi

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Maggi Lego

**Trúnó**  
22:00 New Year's Eve Dance, Resident DJ

## 01 SUN

**Barbara**  
22:00 DJ Lingerine

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dillon**  
22:00 Nýárskvöld

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 DJ Kári

**Trúnó**  
22:00 Masquerade Dance

## 02 MON

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

## 03 TUE

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 B. G. Baarregaard

## 04 WED

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Gaukur á Stöng**  
22:00 Beck's Music Experience: Skúrinn á Rás 2 LIVE concert

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Extreme Chill

## 05 THU

**Bar 11**  
22:00 Live Music TBA + DJ

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Einar Scheving

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live music

**Gaukur á Stöng**  
22:00 Live Concert

**Harpa, Eldborg**  
19:30 Viennese Favourites  
3000-7500 ISK

**Hressó**  
22:00 Rebekka and Egill

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Alfons X

## 06 FRI

**Café Rósenberg**  
22:00 Einar Scheving

**Celtic Cross**  
19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00  
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

**Dubliner**  
21:30 Live music

**Faktory**  
22:00 Svinari: free concert series, more information TBA

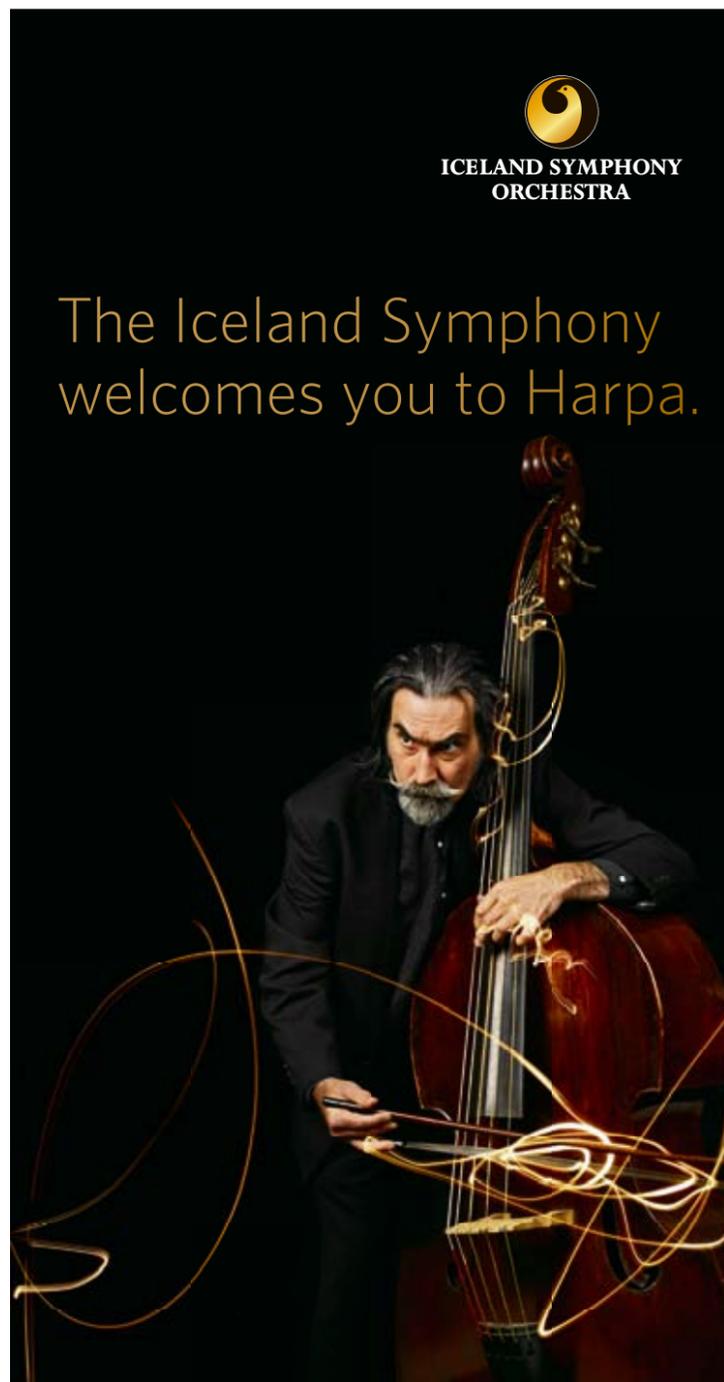
**Gaukur á Stöng**  
22:00 Live music

**Hressó**  
22:00 Böddy's and DJ Fúsi

**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 Gísli Galdur

## ONGOING

**Víkingakráin**  
20:00 Let's Talk Iceland: Comedy Show.  
22:00 ISK. Everyday



ICELAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Iceland Symphony welcomes you to Harpa.

# ART

IN DECEMBER

## COCKTAIL PLEASURES AND VISUAL STIMULATION

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

## OPENINGS

**Hafnarborg**  
**Compliance: Curator's Talk**  
December 29, 20:00  
Speaker: Ólöf K. Sigurðardóttir  
**Coherence: Curator's Talk**  
December 29, 15:00  
Speaker: Ólöf K. Sigurðardóttir

**Tjarnarbió**  
**"When I Was a Girl I Used To Scream And Shout"**  
December 5, 20:30  
Exhibit by Sharman Macdonald  
1500 ISK

**Gerðuberg**  
**Handicraft and coffee session - Parcel wrapping**  
December 7, 20:00  
Guests will have a chance to explore the possibilities of wrapping their Christmas parcels under the guidance of Megan Herbert, a writer, illustrator and designer  
Free

**Hafnarhús**  
December 2, 16:00  
**Performance of the dance Movements of Kites by Björk and Sigríður Soffía Nielsdóttir**  
December 8, 18:00  
**Artist's talk with Björk Viggósdóttir**

## ONGOING

**ASÍ Art Museum**  
**Sigtryggur Bjarni Baldvinsson**  
The exhibition revolves around the river Jökulsá á Fjöllum  
*Runs until December 4*

**The Culture House**  
**Child of Hope - Youth and Jón Sigurðsson**  
Exploring the life of Icelandic national hero Jón Sigurðsson, made especially accessible to children, families, and school groups  
*On permanent view*

**Medieval Manuscripts - Eddas and Sagas**  
Some of Iceland's medieval manuscripts on display. Guided tour in English on Mondays & Fridays at 15:00  
*On permanent view*

**Millennium - phase one**  
Selection of pieces from the collection of the National Gallery displaying a variety of works by Icelandic artists in the last two centuries.  
*On permanent view*

**The Library Room**  
The old reading room of the National Library. Displaying books of Icelandic cultural history dating from the 16th

## ÞÁ OG NÚ / THEN AND NOW

22.9. - 31.12. 2011



EXHIBITION ROOMS, GALLERY SHOP, EDUCATIONAL CENTER, LIBRARY  
OPEN DAILY 11 AM - 5 PM / CLOSED MONDAYS  
FREE ADMISSION ON WEDNESDAYS  
FRÍKIRKJUVEGI 7, 101 REYKJAVÍK, TEL. +354 515 9600  
LIST@LISTASAFN.IS, WWW.LISTASAFN.IS

LISTASAFN ÍSLANDS  
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND

# Den Danske Kro

## \* Mondays \*

Shot's night - all shots ISK 400.-

## \* Tuesdays \*

Live music and Beer Bingo night

## \* Wednesdays \*

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

## \* Thursdays \*

Live Music / Scandinavian nights

## \* Fridays \*

Live music / Sing-along nights

## \* Saturdays \*

Live music / Sing-along nights

## \* Sundays \*

Hangover & Live music night Really good prices on drinks



Ingólfsstræti 3 · 101 · Reykjavík  
[www.danski.is](http://www.danski.is)

# Café Loki

in front of Hallgrímskirkja

Icelandic traditional homemade food



open 10-18 mon-wen  
open 10-21 thu-sat  
open 11-17 sunday

# MAP

## Places We Like

### 1 Hressó

Austurstræti 20

You know, Hressó is basically the only place I go for coffee. Why? Their coffee is decent to excellent, but their forte is surely their wonderful patio, where you can enjoy the spring breeze in the sun, wrap yourself in a blanket beneath an electric heater in January and at all times: smoke.

### 2 Laundromat Café

Austurstræti 9

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

### 3 Reykjavík Backpackers

Laugavegur 28

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

### 4 Tapas

Vesturgata 3B

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

### 5 Dillon Rock Bar

Laugavegur 30

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

### 6 Den Danske Kro

Ingólfsstræti 3

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

### Useful numbers

Emergency number: **112**

Medical help: **1770**

Dental emergency: **575 0505**

Information: **118**

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

BSR: **561 0000**

### Tax Free Refund

**Iceland Refund**, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 564 6400

### Tourist information

**Arctic Adventures**, Laugavegur 11,

tel: 562 7000

**City Centre**, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 590 1550

**Iceland Excursions - Grayline Iceland**,



### 7 Barbara

Laugavegur 22

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

Hafnarstræti 20, tel: 540 1313

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

**Trip**, Laugavegur 54, tel: 433 8747

### Pharmacies

**Lyf og heilsa**, Egilsgata 3, tel: 563 1020

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

### Coach terminal

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

### Domestic airlines

**Air Iceland**, Reykjavíkflugvöllur, tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is

**Eagle Air**, Hótel Loftleiðir, tel: 562-4200

### 8 Café d'Haiti

Geirsgata 7b/Verbúð 2

Now in a spacious new location, Café d'Haiti is surely one of Reykjavík's best cafés (and this is no mean feat, as the city has some nice coffee on offer). Go there for an excellent cup whenever you feel like it, or indulge in beer and low-key concerts at night.

### Public transport

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

### Opening Hours

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

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

### 9 Mai Thai

Laugavegur 118

Located across from Hlemmur Bus Station, Mai Thai imports and sells all sorts of products from South East Asia, particularly Thailand and the Philippines. In short, a wide array of what are still considered rare and exotic treats in Reykjavík.

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

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

### Post Offices

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

Gljúfrasteinn  
LAXNESS MUSEUM  
Kakun

# Welcome

to the home of writer  
Halldór Laxness,  
winner of the  
Nobel Prize  
for Literature 1955

20 min from Reykjavik city centre -  
On the way to Thingvellir National Park

Be inspired by Laxness

Opening hours:  
Every day except  
Mondays from 10-17  
www.gljufasteinn.is

## ALL T-SHIRTS

# 3 for 2

LUNDINN

HAFNARSTRÆTI 5 & SKÓLAVÖRDUSTÍGUR 10

## THE ENGLISH PUB

AUSTURSTRÆTI 12 | TEL: 578 0400

ICELANDIC STYLE NEW YEARS EVE PARTY!  
FIREWORK SHOW FROM MIDNIGHT!  
CHAMPAGNE SPECIALS! FREE ADMISSION

LIVE MUSIC EVERY NIGHT

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

### OPENING HOURS IN DECEMBER

23rd Dec - 12:00 - 04:30	28th Dec - 12:00 - 01:00
24th Dec - Closed	29th Dec - 12:00 - 01:00
25th Dec - Closed	30th Dec - 12:00 - 04:30
26th Dec - 12:00 - 03:00	31st Dec - 12:00 - 04:30
27th Dec - 12:00 - 01:00	1st Jan - 14:00 - 01:00

**LEGEND**

# EATING # DRINKING # SHOPPING

For a map of outside downtown Reykjavík visit [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is) or the Icelandic phonebook website [www.ja.is](http://www.ja.is)

**13 NEW IN TOWN**



**Sushisamba**  
Þinghóltsstræti 5, 101

Sushisamba is a brand new Brazilian/Japanese sushi bar and restaurant that blends tropical Latin flavours with traditional Japanese ingredients. They offer imaginative takes on ceviche, sashimi, sushi, and steak (try saying that three times fast) and food is available for dine-in and take-out. The drink menu is a selection of imported sakes, beers, and Brazilian cachaça (aka sugar cane rum, aka the reason the caipirinha is the national drink of Brazil). Sushisamba is conveniently located right smack dab in the middle of downtown, so drop in and welcome them to the neighbourhood!



**A Day In The Life**  
**The Twelfth Yuletide Lad,**  
**Ketkrókur (Meat Hook)**

What's up, Ketkrókur?  
Hey what up! I'm good! I'm about to get real busy and it's my favourite time of year. The rest of the year I'm working as a consultant for one of the biggest hook manufacturers in the world (cos, well I've been hooking meat for years), but in December I'm out stealing meat. I'm drooling just thinking about it so you best keep an eye on your Christmas dinner!

**EARLY MORNING >**

Oh, I'm just getting in. I work best under the cover of darkness so I get in early in the A.M., store my night's haul in the freezer, clean my hooks and go for a little sleep.

**LUNCH >**

At lunchtime, I wake up and chose what to eat from my freezer. If I've had a good haul the night before, then it's always hard to decide what to have. A meat stew is always good when the weather is cold though. What the hell, as long as lunch has meat in it then it's going to be good! Sometimes the other Yuletide Lads come over and I'll cook for everyone.

**MID-DAY >**

Lunch is always followed by a quick nap. All this sneaking about is tiring; no rest for the wicked, as they say. When I wake I decide what sort of meat I'm going to steal that night. Then comes hook selection; say I want some beef...well then I want a stronger, larger hook or for lamb I want a smaller, light-weight hook and so on. There's a lot more to this meat-hooking game than you might think.

**AFTERNOON >**

Preparation time! I get my hooks all packed up and then I'll sit back and relax before I leave for the night. Sometimes it's nice to listen to some music or read. I started reading Peter Pan recently, but I don't really like where it's going...

**HEAT OF THE NIGHT >**

Now the party can begin! All that meat! Yum! Bye!

**Cleanliness is next to godliness**  
"John Wesley 1778"



**Now offering catering service!**

**sushibarinn**  
Laugavegur 2 101 Reykjavik tel: 552 4444

**HOTEL KEILIR**

Best located downtown hotel  
in Keflavik  
5 min from the airport

Special summer offers

contact us now  
tel: +354-4209800  
[www.airporthotel.is](http://www.airporthotel.is)

**10 Cintamani**  
Bankastræti 7

Cintamani stocks Icelandic quality 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.

**Public phones**

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

**Internet Access**

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

**11 Lundinn**  
Skólavörðustígur 10, Hafnarstræti 5

Lundinn on Skólavörðustígur is easily recognisable by the giant puffin standing guard outside the shop. Once inside, you may purchase a plethora of touristy items, including countless variations on puffin. And you know what—Lundinn actually means "The Puffin."

**Swimming Pools**

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

**12 ÁTVR (Liquor store)**  
Austurstræti 10a

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

**Public Toilets**

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



**SHALIMAR**  
PAKISTANI TANDOORI & CURRY CUISINE  
AUSTURSTRÆTI 4, 101 REYKJAVÍK  
☎ 551 0292 WWW.SHALIMAR.IS

PUNJABI LUNCH & PUNJABI DINNER every day  
ICELANDIC Fish, Lamb & Chicken in original PAKISTANI curries, TANDOORI dishes, TANDOORI Nan breads, Kebabs, Samosas & Vegetarian specialities



# Elding Whale Watching

from Reykjavik all year round



Call us on  
**(+354) 555 3565**  
or book online at  
[www.elding.is](http://www.elding.is)

## Holiday Whale Watching

December time is when the Elding team gets into the holiday mood and welcomes you on board our boats in Reykjavik Old Harbour. We offer **daily whale watching tours at 13:00** with the exception of 25 December and 1 January when we will be closed. In the holiday spirit we offer you:

- Free entry to the Whale Watching Centre
- Complimentary holiday punch and traditional Icelandic biscuits
- Warm overalls and blankets free of charge on board

## The winter island Viðey

Viðey welcomes guests all year round and the holiday spirit is evident on this peaceful island. The ferry departs from Skarfabakk harbour on Saturdays and Sundays with the exception of 24, 25, 31 December and 1 January. In December you can also join:

- Traditional Christmas buffet on Friday and Saturday evenings until 17 December.
- Imagine Peace Tours daily at 20:00 until 8 December, at 18:00 on 22, 23 and 27 December and at 16:00 on 31 December.

Notice weather permitting tours



ENEMMI / SKA / NMA8703

[elding.is](http://elding.is)

century to the present. Works include oldest published versions of the Sagas, Eddic Poems, and more  
*On permanent view*

### Einar Jónsson Museum

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

### Gerðuberg

**Stone – scissors – paper and the keys to heaven**  
An exhibition in the Collectors' Corner  
*Runs until June 22, 2012*

### Proverbs in Focus

Focus, an amateur photographers' society, exhibits photos that are based on Icelandic proverbs.  
*Runs until January 8, 2012*

### Pearls

"Gymnastics for women should be feminine." Magdalena Margrét Kjartansdóttir exhibits woodcuts, linocuts and printing on Japanese paper. The subject matter is a mélange of poetry and reality: the female body from childhood to the last moments.  
*Runs until January 8, 2012, Free*

### Óbið

Bjarnheiður Bjarnadóttir og Óli Róbert Hediddeche exhibit acrylics and oil paintings in the cafeteria. Two artists take part; some of the works are joint productions.  
*Runs until January 15, 2012*

### Vanished world

Exhibition of acrylic and mixed-media works by Magnús Halldórsson in the Boginn exhibition area.  
*Runs until January 2, 2012, Free*

### Hafnarborg

#### Hildur Bjarnadóttir & Guðjón Ketilsson

Handcraft works by two Icelandic artists who are known for their ideology based on traditional craft methodology. Bjarnadóttir often uses old traditional textile art and stories of women as an inspiration in her work, however Ketilsson uses found furniture to create sculptures that have reference to old tools as a way of describing the condition of man.  
*Runs until December 30*

### Coherence

The artists Hildur Bjarnadóttir and Guðjón Ketilsson channel their ideas through pieces where coherence and unity of form and content draw the viewer into the artists' own footsteps.  
*Runs until December 30.*

### Metamorphosis

Metamorphosis, light is shed onto the collaboration between Hildur Yeoman, fashion designer and fashion illustrator, and Saga Sigurðardóttir, photographer, who both have received well-earned attention for their work in their short carriers. Their exhibition in Sverrissalur combines Hildur's colourful design and Saga's magical photographs in an expressive and vibrant installation.  
*Runs until December 30*

### Knitting Iceland

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

### Latin Dance Studio, Faxafen 12 Guided Practica

Argentine tango, Register by phone 821 6929 or email [tangoadventure@gmail.com](mailto:tangoadventure@gmail.com), 500 ISK for students, 800 ISK for others. Six week courses are also available

*Sundays from 17:30-19:30*

### The Living Art Museum

**Helgi Þórsson Solo Show**  
His compositions of found objects, sculptures and paintings create distinctive surroundings in his installations, where he turns his exhibition spaces into psychedelic clubs with joyful decorations and music automates.  
*Runs until December 22, 2011*

### National Gallery of Iceland

**Strides**  
Changes in Icelandic painting from the late 1800s to the 2000s  
*Runs until December 31, 2012*

### Then And Now

The exhibition is an attempt to emphasise the main features of Icelandic Modern and Contemporary art. The exhibit is in connection with 'History of Icelandic Art, from late 19th century to the beginning of the 21st century, being published by the National Gallery of Iceland and Forlagið Publishers  
*Runs until December 31*

### DCA: DIGITISING CONTEMPORARY ART

*Runs until December 31*

### The National Museum

#### The Making of a Nation - Heritage and History in Iceland

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

#### BE YE WELCOME, MY GOOD FRIENDS!

Collection of carved Nordic drinking horns  
*Runs until December 31*

### The Nordic House

#### The Library

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

### Reykjavik Art Museum

#### Ásmundarsafn

#### From Sketch to Sculpture - Drawings by Ásmundur Sveinsson

The exhibition offers a first insight into the rich collection of drawings by the sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson, as the Reykjavik Art Museum has recently completed the digital registration of about 2000 drawings that the artist bequeathed to the Museum.  
*Runs until April 22, 2012*

#### Magnús Árnason - Homage

Árnason's works, whether in his sound-pieces, sculptures or performances, stand on a vague line between the real and unreal, fiction and facts. In his recent work, he has worked with nature and natural history; moving away from the mythological references seen in his earlier work.  
*Runs until April 22, 2012*

### Hafnarhús

#### Erró - Drawings

The exhibition consists of 180 drawings Erró has done since 1944 until the present day  
*Runs until August 26, 2012*

**NAUTHÓLL**  
Bistro

we are **#10 of 120** restaurants in Reykjavik

[www.nautholl.is](http://www.nautholl.is) | [www.facebook.com/nautholl](http://www.facebook.com/nautholl) | [nautholl@nautholl.is](mailto:nautholl@nautholl.is) | tel.: 599 6660

**GRILLED FISH, MEAT AND VEGATABLES.**  
GÚSTAV AXEL GUNNLAUGSSON, CHEF OF THE YEAR 2010, HAS OPENED A NEW RESTAURANT IN THE HEART OF REYKJAVÍK.

**SJÁVARGRILLIÐ**  
SEAFOOD GRILL

SKÓLAVÖRÐUSTÍG 14 - 101 REYKJAVÍK - ÍSLAND - 571 1100 - [WWW.SJAVARGRILLID.IS](http://WWW.SJAVARGRILLID.IS)



## Get Out Of Town!

### Hafnarfjörður Christmas Village

*Nov 29 through December; open Saturdays and Sundays from 13:00 - 18:00*

*Hafnarfjörður (20 minutes from Reykjavik, bus #1 from Reykjavik City Centre) Price Free*

Every December Hafnarfjörður dives head first into the Christmas spirit transforming the town centre into a colourful Christmas Village full of shopping and activities for the whole family. Millions of multi-coloured lights splash colour on the homes and streets of Hafnarfjörður, and downtown is abuzz with musical performances and purveyors of Christmas decorations, unique handmade crafts and yummy food items. If you're lucky you will spy the 13 Yuletide Lads, who are said to bring gifts and mischief to children during the holidays. Viking-age banquets and psychic-guided walks through elven communities, and horseback riding can also be booked in advance. Pack up the kids, do a little shopping and go revel in the holiday festivities!

For more information call 585 5775 or visit [www.Hafnarfjorður.is](http://www.Hafnarfjorður.is)



## Present Wrapping and Coffee

December 7, 20.00

Gerðuberg

Free

You probably haven't noticed, but it's Christmas pretty soon. In fact, it is just days away! For most of us this probably means a mad scramble on December 23 to find something vaguely approaching suitable for our nearest and dearest. However you might want to go that little bit further and impress not only with your choice of gift, but also with the care and attention you've put into wrapping the parcel. Under the guidance of Megan Hebert, an illustrator and designer, you can do just that. December's Craft and Coffee session at Gerðuberg allows you to explore the possibilities of wrapping Christmas parcels and helps you go that extra mile. Ready, set... WRAP!

### A Drawing Competition

Reykjavik Art Museum announces a two fold drawing competition in connection with its exhibition Erró - Drawings. The competition consists of two categories, one for children in 7th to 10th grade in Icelandic compulsory schools and the other for the citizens of Iceland in general. Thirty of the best drawings will be selected for an exhibition at Hafnarhús, and generous prizes will be awarded for the best drawing in each category.

Runs until January 1, 2012

### Faster and Slower Lines

From the Collection of Pétur Arason and Ragna Róbertsdóttir. The exhibition explores the extensive element of the drawing through a selection of two- and three dimensional works by fifty Icelandic and international artists.

Runs until January 1, 2012

### Tiger Butter - Ósk Vilhjálmsdóttir

In this exhibition Ósk Vilhjálmsdóttir criticizes both the society, and generally accepted values and the demand for a steady stream of progress. She exposes the tension and anger that has been seething in Icelandic society since the collapse in 2008.

Runs until January 1, 2012

### D22 Björk Viggósdóttir - Kite

Björk works with colors, emotions, signs and other things from the everyday, which she brings to other dimensions by creating for them new perspectives and settings.

Runs until January 8, 2012

### Kjarvalsstaðir

#### Jóhannes S. Kjarval - Key Works

Reykjavik Art Museum draws on its extensive collection of works by Jóhannes S. Kjarval for ongoing exhibitions at Kjarvalsstaðir. The exhibition in the Kjarval Gallery features key works from the museum's collection.

Runs until January 15, 2012

#### On the Trail of Odysseus

- Daði Guðbjörnsson  
The paintings are like the Odyssey, a manifest of delusions. The exhibition features works from 1998 to the present.

Runs until December 30, 2011

#### Kjarval Moves Me

Young people get to know Kjarval - A group of secondary school students will be offered an insight into the challenging task of curating an exhibition through a new programme that engages the students with the Museum's collection. The students get to pick paintings and drawings by Kjarval and decide on a name for the exhibition.

Runs until December 30

#### Kjarval's oddITIES - An Untold Story

The workshop is in the form of odd stories about the legendary acts and activities of the well-known Icelandic artist Jóhannes S. Kjarval.

Runs until December 30.

### Reykjavik City Museum

#### Reykjavik 871 +/- 2 (The Settlement Exhibition)

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

On permanent view

### Reykjavik Maritime Museum

### From Poverty to Abundance

Photos documenting Icelandic fishermen at the turn of the 20th century  
On permanent view

### The History of Sailing

Iceland's maritime history and the growth of the Reykjavik Harbour  
On permanent view

### The Coast Guard Vessel Óðinn

Display of vessel that took part in all three Cod Wars  
On permanent view

### Baiting Bright Fishhooks

Exhibition about the Little Fishing Book by Jón Sigurðsson, containing guidelines to fishing equipment and processing.

Runs until December 31

### The Call of Sagas

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

Ongoing

### Kling and Bang gallery

#### PERPETUUM MOBILE - The Driving Human Force

The auto starter is the same for all, but the movement takes each of us to a different place. This audiovisual composition shows the relationships between the seen and the indicated (unseen) effortlessly and naturally, just as when a person breathes, a person however does not attain this without motion; without roads which do not meet - and shows how to make use of that vanishing in one's life philosophy. Open Thursday-Sunday from 14:00-18:00.

Runs until December 15

### Reykjavik Museum of Photography

#### 50 Years Of Photography

An exhibition of photograph Marc Riboud spanning 50 years of his career as a photo journalist. His work has appeared in Life, Géo, National Geographic, Paris Match and Stern

Runs until January 8, 2012

### Skafffell, Seyðisfjörður

Check [www.skafffell.is](http://www.skafffell.is) for latest shows

### Sláturhúsið, Egilsstaðir

Check [www.slaturhusid.is](http://www.slaturhusid.is) for latest shows

Step in to the warmth

Austur signature waffle, perhaps the best in Iceland

Kr. 590.-

Great price

Cappuccino	kr. 320.-
Cafe Latte	kr. 320.-
Cafe Latte double	kr. 380.-
Espresso	kr. 280.-
Swiss mocca	kr. 380.-
Hot chocolate	kr. 380.-

**AUSTUR**  
AUSTURSTRÆTI 7 - 101 REYKJAVÍK

Austurstræti 7 - Tel. 568 1907 - Open from 11:30 every day

Quality coffee roasted on the premises

"We tried this place purely on the back of its excellent review on Tripadvisor and weren't disappointed."

CAFE HAITI by the Old Harbour  
Geirsgata 7b, 101 Reykjavik  
tel: 661 5621 / 588 8484  
Opening hours: 8.00 - 23.00

FRESH ICELANDIC SPECIALITIES

www.geysirbistro.is

**GEYSIR**  
Bistro

Aðalstræti 2  
101 Reykjavík  
Tel 517 4300

QUALITY TIME IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

One of Reykjavik's finest, the chic 1919 Restaurant features top international and neo-Nordic cuisine. The trendy 1919 Lounge provides a variety of cocktails and the perfect atmosphere for you to relax in and enjoy timeless luxury.

**1919**  
RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE

Radisson Blu 1919 Hotel, Pósthússtræti 2, 101 Reykjavík, Tel: 599 1000

**THE BEST THAI FOOD**  
**YEAR 2009, 2010 AND 2011**  
**Best goddamn restaurant 2011**  
**1/10 of The Best Restaurant in Iceland**  
 DV. 17.06.11

**BANTHAI**  
 Laugavegur 130

**OPEN HOURS**  
**18.00 - 22.00 EVERY DAY**

**1af10 Bestu veitingastöðum á Íslandi**  
 DV. 17 júní 11  
**Ekta tailensk upplifun**  
 Fréttablaðið 10.11.05

**www.banthai.name**  
 TEL : 55-22-444, 692-0564  
**Laugavegur 130 ofan við Hlemm**



**A genuine Nordic 3 course feast**  
**starting from 4.900,-**

**restaurant silfur**  
 Nordic Cuisine  
 Pósthússtræti 11 101 Reykjavík Tel: 578 2008 www.silfur.is

**BJARNI FEL**  
 Austurstræti 20  
 101 Reykjavík  
 561-2240

We have combined some of the latest in audio & visual technology with a genuine personal service in food, drink & entertainment. Operating in one of the oldest houses downtown - new & fresh on the block but with plenty of soul & character

**F O O D**

*FOR YOUR MIND, BODY AND SOUL*



**Rudolph the Medium Rare Reindeer**

**Fjalakötturinn**  
 Aðalstræti 16  
 G G G G G

**What We Think:** A well put-together Christmas menu. Well balanced, knows when to keep it simple, professional, tight. Could be more innovative  
**Flavour:** Yuletide flavours this time around but generally quite partial to new Nordic. Locally sourced. Tubers, lamb, ling, langoustine...you know the dill (pun intended)  
**Ambiance:** Calm and classy. Could have been a little more lively on a Friday night  
**Service:** Waiter was top notch. Phone service too

Fjalakötturinn is Hotel Centrum's corrugated conjoined twin. Despite the faux-antique exterior, the buildings are riddled with cultural heritage within and without. The hotel and restaurant at Aðalstræti 16 stand by the oldest street in Reykjavík, Aðalstræti literally translates to "Main Street." One house over is the oldest house in downtown Reykjavík, which has served as a seat of private enterprise since the 18th century and once housed a pulsating gay club named after our "founding father" Jón Sigurðsson who supposedly stayed there during a period (imagine a gay club in Abraham Lincoln's cabin named "Abe's Sweatlodge"). But those days are gone; it now belongs to Kraum, a well-considered Icelandic design hub catering to a blossoming

tourist industry.  
 Fjalakötturinn offers another example of how Icelanders are trying to leave behind their haphazard handling of historical heritage, the restaurant taking its name from what had been the oldest known cinema in the world when it was demolished in 1985 during the reign of Mayor Davíð Oddsson.  
 Beneath the floorboards of Fjalakötturinn are, what may be, the ruins of the first settlement in Iceland, where Ingólfur Arnarson landed 1130 years ago after wandering up north to escape Norwegian taxation.  
 Fjalakötturinn is us trying to do it right this time, brush over the recent past and make a direct connection with the romantic past. And there's an interesting mojo to that corner of Reykjavík, a place where the needs of private enterprise and our shared cultural heritage are interwoven—where we are learning how to broadcast our history to the outside world and ourselves.  
 With all that in mind, we started with a Xanté Crush from the bar—pear liquor with large wedges of pears. Refreshing and still seasonal enough.  
 I chose the Advent menu (10.900 ISK w/wine) and wifey couldn't decide between the langoustine (6.290 ISK) and the lobster soup (1.990 ISK) so she had both.  
 A pre-menu taster from the kitchen: morsels of smoked salmon, beef tongue, pickled herring and pâté—not often enough you get to see beef tongue in Icelandic restaurants.  
 The Advent menu started with seabuckthorn (really?) and yellow beets, a nice combination but the langoustine had quite a strong fish sauce smell to it, which wasn't entirely unpleasant but a

little unsettling.  
 Next was a dense, lightly smoked eel with cauliflower that had been crumbled into couscous, surprisingly tasty, especially since I'm no fan of the cauliflower.  
 Wifey had her lobster soup, very decent although a little heavy on the saffron. The waiter who had been providing a great service was temporarily replaced by a waitress that poured a red wine into our white wine glasses and managed to make the simplest things sound vaguely threatening.  
 For the main course, wifey's lobster was excellent, a large portion, simply but perfectly cooked and not a ladle of garlic butter in sight.  
 On the Advent menu, I had the choice between the reindeer or the duck breast, and I knew I made the right choice when I saw red beetroot, pinkish red onions, lightly pickled red cabbage and small, dark purple potatoes with reindeer draped over them, red and maroon like waste-rich blood and with the same metallic aftertaste. List that under "Things I'm always happy to see on my plate".  
 The dessert is called "Chocolate six ways." And as the name (sort of) implies, it is white, milk and dark chocolate presented in three different ways. A truffle, a mousse and a sauce. Too heavy for a last course and didn't really leave much of an impression aside from an extra hole in my belt. But I also noticed a celery granite on the menu, which sounded a lot more interesting and I will have to try that next time.

**RAGNAR EGILSSON**  
**HVALREKI**

**Grapevine Grassroots #34**  
 concert series

**COSMOS**  
**SINNER BEAN**  
**GANG RELATED**

@hemmi&valdi,  
 Friday 16th, 21:00

**TÓNASTÖÐIN** **THULE** **OFUR**  
 Allir fyrir tónlistarmanninn

**WHERE'S THE BEEF?**

Hi. I want to try something new here in the Grapevine food segment. It occurred to me that some of you might have some questions about food in Iceland. So if there's anything you're curious about, how to find specific ingredients, restaurant information, history of local traditions, recipes for Icelandic dishes, vegetarian or free-range tips or whatever else, I will pick one and try to answer it or ask someone who can."

**A NOTE ON OUR RATINGS SYSTEM:**

Ratings run from zero to five Gs and reflect the overall experience of the reviewer. A fast food place will be compared to other fast food places and rated accordingly. Note that 2.5 Gs is not a failing grade—it means 'average'. A solid 5 Gs means 'as good as it gets'. Zero means food poisoning. You get the idea.

# REVIEWS



## UNDER THE PAVING STONES, THE FISH

### Sjávarkjallarinn

Aðalstræti 2



**What We Think:** Sjávarkjallarinn is still a major force to be reckoned with.

**Flavour:** Gorgeous Icelandic-French

**Ambiance:** Dim and comfy Gallery-like without being surgical

**Service:** Can't find better

"It is well understood that fish is less nourishing than meat, because it contains no osmazome, because it is lighter in weight, and contains less weight in the same volume. Shell-fish, and especially oysters, furnish little nutrition, so that one can eat a great many without injury."

-*The Physiology of Taste (Brillat-Savarin)*

Down the block from Fjalakötturinn, below street-level, through the Geysir building, nestles Sjávarkjallarinn ("The Seafood Cellar"), formerly of fusion but newly of the new Nordic seasonal bandwagon.

Sjávarkjallarinn has built quite a reputation in the years since it opened. That reputation has formed around an approach to fine dining that is marked by playfulness and surprise.

In the last couple of years the tide may have turned against the Blumen-thals of the world—people getting cynical about restaurants manipulating steaks into vapours and presenting them on teaspoons made of frozen

guava (btw, feel free to use that). But it's worth keeping in mind that even when this experimentation goes off the rails, then at least it's in the service of advancing their art.

There have been many revolutionary ideas in gastronomy over last decade and that's a wonderful thing. After all, we are all snobby about something—everyone has some obscure field of interest where they are willing to pay exorbitant amounts for a level of quality that is imperceptible to outsiders (how are those gold audio cables working out?).

The interior is dim and moderately modern. Stone and black wood, a narrow beam of light over each table. We came in early, so we had the place almost to ourselves.

We both ordered the five course Christmas menu with wine (a hearty 15,900 ISK per person) because I have a gut and, unlike those men in their 30s who are only now putting on weight, I have had time to get settled into my fat and I like feeding it.

First on offer was a taster of a double-smoked lamb tartare with walnut mayo which we nibbled at while wifey washed down, what she claimed, was the best margarita she had had.

The first course was a frozen monkfish with celery and vinegary celeriac. A sharp and shimmering starter, perfectly matched with a grapefruit and almost sparkling Sauvignon blanc from Chile.

This was followed by a pickled herring with skate and tiny laufabrauð (traditional Icelandic Christmas food—crispy, thin, deep-fried cakes sometimes flavoured with caraway). Again, perfectly matched with the Stekkjastaur seasonal brown ale. It also came with

a shot of the birch-flavoured liquor, which I don't feel worked as well.

The third course came with a nice dry Italian wine. Salted halibut cheeks with leeks and angelica. The cheeks were chewy as they usually are, the dish was a little too salty and creamy but the leeks lifted it up, rekindled my love for the leek.

We went splitsies on the main course—wifey had the slow-cooked blue ling with brussel sprouts and I had the wild goose with red cabbage, fried apples and smoked potatoes. With it I got a glass of the lovely Memoro special edition wine from Piccini.

The ling was firmer thanks to the sous-vide process but jumped off the plate. But as good as it was, I would definitely recommend the goose simply because it brought tears of joy to my eye. I wanted to roll myself up in a ball and live on that plate. That was one tasty goose.

Dessert was a frozen rice pud with caramel ice cream and elderberry jam. Rice pudding is one of those universal treats which you will find on every single continent with mild variation. But I prefer mine unfrozen as the dessert left me quite cold.

A fantastic dining experience and we lucked out by having Gunnar Rafn as our waiter for most of the evening, someone who is easily one of the best waiters I have had.

✍️ RAGNAR EGILSSON  
📍 HVALREKI

*Shark Lamb Whale Puffin Wild-game  
and ALL the icelandic beers*

**Traditional  
Icelandic cooking  
with a modern flair.**

**Íslenski barinn**  
Behind the times and proud of it!

Tel 578 2020  
www.icelandicbar.is  
Pósthússtræti 9 101 Reykjavík

**SLEIGH RIDE  
AROUND ICELAND**

**ICELANDIC CHRISTMAS**  
3 course LUNCH MENU - 3900 krónur

**SLEIGH RIDE AROUND ICELAND.**  
Take your taste buds on a SLEIGH RIDE through the winter wonderland of Iceland's hills and valleys, discovering the true taste of Icelandic Christmas. Your tour guide on this quest are our chefs and a flock of the smallest elf's and tallest giants in the kitchen, ensuring you can enjoy a trip AROUND ICELAND that starts at your table at the Fish Company in the center of Reykjavik City.

**(the SLEIGH RIDE starts on the 17th november)**

**Open 31. december and 1. january for dinner**

Pioneer in delivering organic products for 25 years

If you want to  
**shop organic in Iceland**  
Yggdrasil is the place to go

Yggdrasil offers a wide range of premium quality, certified organic products, including a variety of organic fruits and vegetables. We are located downtown, next to "Hlemmur", one of the two main bus terminals in Reykjavik.



Yggdrasil • Rauðarárstíg 10  
Phone: 562 4082 • Fax: 561 9299  
e-mail: shop@yggdrasil.is

# LAUGARDALUR CHRISTMAS VALLEY IN DECEMBER

EVERYONE CAN HAVE FUN IN LAUGARDALUR WHERE LIGHTS AND DECORATIONS SET THE MOOD FOR CHRISTMAS. PREPARE FOR A DAY OUT: VISIT THE ANIMALS IN REYKJAVIK ZOO, SKATE AROUND A CHRISTMAS TREE AT THE SKATING HALL AND VISIT THE BOTANIC GARDEN AND STOP BY CAFÉ FLORA.

IN THE VALLEY YOU MAY EXPECT TO RUN INTO THE YULE CAT – ONE OF MANY ICELANDIC CHRISTMAS CREATURES. THE CAT RESIDES IN REYKJAVÍK ZOO BUT SNEAKS AROUND IN THE VALLEY. LISTEN OUT FOR A QUIET MEOW AND LOOK OUT FOR TRACKS...



**Reykjavik Zoo**  
**Botanic Garden**  
**Skating Hall**



Reykjavíkurborg

# The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

Issue 18

The Encyclopaedia  
of Icelandic Holidays  
Spúttnik Fashion Spread!

THE GRAPEVINE  
CHRISTMAS BEER-OFF

Your own Nordic  
House poster!

FIREWORKS  
EXTRAVAGANZA

Holiday Opening Hours

+ let's more!



11

[www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is)

Curious about these figures? See page 4!



# The Encyclopaedia of Icelandic Holidays

The A-Ö of the Icelandic holiday season

By Haukur S Magnússon

With additional reporting from Paul Fontaine, Sveinn Birgir Björnsson, Páll Hilmarsson and Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir

Illustrations by Inga Maria Brynjarsdóttir

## AÐFANGADAGUR

(Ath-founga-dager)

December 24th, Aðfangadagur, is the day Icelanders celebrate Christmas (as opposed to December 25th in most countries). The first half of the day usually goes towards finishing off all of the last minute preparations, making food, wrapping presents, bathing and putting on nice clothes. Children are often occupied by the television set, as most stations broadcast a non-stop programme of cartoons throughout the day.

Six o' clock marks the official start of Christmas in Iceland, and this is when most households sit down to enjoy a pleasant holiday meal. After dinner, most people commence opening their presents. They then hang out and indulge until bedtime.

## AÐVENTA

(Ath-venta)

Adventan, or the Advent, is the month leading up to Christmas. Icelanders celebrate each Sunday of the Advent (starting on the fourth Sunday prior to Christmas) by lighting candles on an Advent Wreath ("Aðventukrans"), which is usually a four-candle (one for each Sunday of the Advent) evergreen wreath. The first Sunday of Advent marks the time most Icelanders start decorating for the holidays and preparing in general.



## AÐVENTUKRANS

(Ath-ventou-kraans)

See: Adventa.

## AÐVENTULJÓS

(Ath-ventou-lyows)

Aðventuljós, or Advent light, is a decorative object somewhat unique to Iceland. This seven-armed electric candlestick is found in at least one window of almost every Icelandic home throughout the holiday season. See our Xmas guide for more info.

## ANNAR Í JÓLUM

(Aann-arr ee yo!-luwm)

December 26th, the second day of Christmas, is the designated party day of the holiday season (New Year's notwithstanding). The day itself usually entails heavy lounging and attending a family Christmas party or two, but the evening has most of the action, with bars and clubs opening for business around midnight. Revellers like to go out at that time, decked in their fancy holiday attire and re-connecting with friends and acquaintances that they haven't seen for all of three days.

## ÁRAMÓT

(our-a-mowt)

See: Gamlársdagur/Gamlárskvöld.

## ÁRAMÓTAANNÁLL

(our-a-mowt-a-annoull)

Icelanders are fond of watching television on New Year's Eve, with most of the day's programming dedicated to detailing the fast fading year's events. Second to the Áramótaskaup in popularity is the Áramótaannáll on RÚV, a collage of the year's TV news stories with commentary from the news team. An international version and a local one run back to back. Check newspapers' TV listings for more info.

## ÁRAMÓTASKAUPIÐ

(our-a-mowt-a-skoj-pith)

Gathering around the TV on New Year's Eve to watch the Áramótaskaup comedy special on RÚV is an old and honoured Icelandic tradition—in fact the streets fall completely silent during its broadcast time of 22:30-23:30. The show itself is a comedy revue featuring many of Iceland's best-loved actors that parodies the year's events in sketches and song. The quality differs from year to year, but Icelanders love even the especially bad ones (because then they can complain to each other about how much it sucked). It is not subtitled, so the fun

is likely lost on non-Icelandic speakers. It's worth checking out, though, you can always make fun of Icelandic TV's low production standards.

## ATTIRE

Icelanders like to dress smart and snazzy over the holidays. Formal attire is usually expected in the parties of the 24th and 25th, on other days go for neat casual outfits.

## CHRISTMAS MUSIC

Iceland doesn't have a lot of original Xmas songs, although there are a few to be found. Mostly the tunes meant to get you into the holiday spirit are translations of international Xmas ones (some of them don't have anything whatsoever to do with Xmas), so the stuff blaring from the radio in the knick-knack shop should sound familiar. There are some popular local songs, however, the most infamous one being Sniglabandið's Jólaljól ("Christmas bike").



## CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS

See also: Jólásveinar, Santa Claus

The Christmas stockings tradition is celebrated in Iceland, although it differs greatly from what you might be used to. As explained elsewhere, there are thirteen Yuletide lads in Iceland, and each one comes down from the mountains on a designated day before Christmas bearing gifts for children to be placed in their shoe or stocking left by an open window. It should be noted that well-behaved children receive something of value, whereas ill-behaved children usually receive a rotten potato.

## COMMERCE

See also: Þorláksmessa

Like elsewhere, Christmas and commerce have very close ties in Iceland. Stores stay open until 11 PM on Þorláksmessa, the 23rd of December, and until noon on the day of Christmas Eve. This is done in a mutual agreement between late shoppers and greedy shop owners who want to make sure that no króna is left behind.

## DANCING

See also: Jólaboð, jólaball, jólatré

Dancing around the Christmas tree is still a widespread fad at Christmas dances in children's schools around the country, but the tradition is slowly dying out as a practice in homes. It involves holding hands around the tree and walking repeatedly in circles whilst singing Christmas carols. Hours of fun.



## DECORATING

See also: Aðventa, Aðventuljós

Icelanders like to decorate their houses a lot in time for Christmas, with the start of Advent usually marking the official 'OK time' for decking the halls. Decorations are similar to what may be found in the rest of the Christmas-celebrating world: pine branches, light sets, Santa-related effigies and various knick-knacks and doodads. American style lighting monstrosities are uncommon, but not unheard of.

## DRINKING

See also: Annar í jólum, Gamlársdagur/Gamlárskvöld

Heavy drinking is generally not condoned on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day—although indulging in a glass of wine or two isn't frowned upon—as the days' festivities are generally reserved for family activities. The 26th, 31st and New Year's Day are popular for binge drinking and partying, however, as are any weekend days that fall between the two days.

## EATING OUT

See also: Christmas buffets, commerce

Icelanders generally don't like to eat out during the holiday season. If you are visiting, and you plan on dining at a restaurant during the holidays (see our special Xmas listings for details), chances are you'll be dining with some fellow tourists. However, attending special Xmas buffets is a popular activity over the advent.

## FAMILY

Icelandic Christmas is all about one's family, extended and otherwise. Generally speaking, most Icelanders will be busy spending time with their families from December 24th until the eve of the 26th, so don't expect that hot boy (or girl) you hook up with on the 23rd to be available for any immediate follow-up sessions (you should still try, though).



## FLUGELDAR

(flug-oeld-arrrrr)

See also: Gamlársdagur/Gamlárskvöld

Flugeldar ("fireworks") are an essential part of the Icelandic New Year's Eve experience, in fact, the sale and deployment of fireworks is only legal

in Iceland between December 28—January 6. Like everything else Icelanders are fond of, they take their fireworks seriously—most of those who have witnessed the mass employment of fireworks at New Year's will agree that the act is far beyond over-the-top. But most will also attest that the display is striking and beautiful. An added bonus is that most of the places selling them are doing so for charity, or to fund rescue teams.

Expect small blasts here and there as of December 27th, culminating in an all-out orgy of explosions around midnight of New Year's Eve.

## GAMLÁRSDAGUR/GAMLÁRSKVÖLD

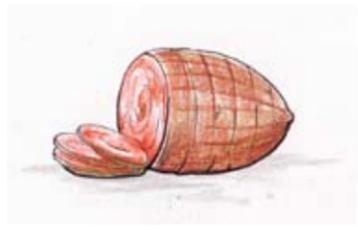
(gaaml-ouwr-daager / kvöld)

See also: Fireworks, drinking, Áramótaskaup, Áramótaannáll, Áramótabrenna [Note: Gamlársdagur refers to New Year's Eve's Day, and Gamlárskvöld refers to New Year's Eve itself]

The coming of the New Year is celebrated pretty heavily in Iceland. Drinks are drunk, fireworks are lit and vomit is, eventually, spewed. Although there is no rule, most folks like to gather for a nice dinner feast with family and/or friends at the start of the evening (or late in the afternoon). They hang out, drink drinks, play board games and watch the TV recap of the preceding year. Many head out to their local New Year's bonfire, a complete list of which is published in local newspapers on the days leading up to the 31st.

After watching the Áramótaskaup comedy revue and lighting some fireworks, most will head to a rowdier, less family oriented gathering and stay there 'til dawn.

A note about the word "áramót": like many Icelandic words, it is impressively and descriptively sensible, and it does not have a counterpart in the English language. Quite literally, "áramót" translates as "the meeting of years". Makes sense, doesn't it?



## HANGIKJÖT

(Hownge-kjoet)

See also: Jólamatú

Hangikjöt—literally meaning "hung meat"—is smoked Icelandic lamb which takes its name from the old tradition of smoking food in order to preserve it by hanging it from the rafters of a smoking shed. Hangikjöt is traditional Christmas meat, often served with potatoes in a sweet white sauce and pickled red cabbage. It's pretty awesome.

## HAMBORGARHRYGGUR

(Haam-bouwrger-hreggurrrr)

See also: Dining

A traditional Christmas food eaten on the 24th at six o'clock. It is pork, usually with a honey glazing and pineapple, cooked in an oven for a few hours. This is a pretty heavy meal, resulting in the number of heart attacks increasing around Xmas when people who re-

ally shouldn't eat fatty meat gorge themselves almost to death.



## HEITT SÚKKULAÐI

(hate sooqou-laethi)

Indulging in a cup of freshly made heitt súkulaði ("hot chocolate") is an essential part of the Icelandic holiday experience. The classic recipe is thus: melt one plate of 'Suðusúkkulaði' (available everywhere one might buy chocolate) in a double boiler with 1–2 cups of water. In a separate container, heat one litre of milk to the boiling point. Slowly stir melted chocolate into boiling milk. Enjoy.

## JÓLABALL

(yo!-la-boll)

See also: Jólaboð

The jólaball, or Christmas dance, is a long-standing tradition where children are herded by their parents or schools to hang out, eat cake and candy and dance around a decorated tree while singing some classic Christmas tunes. More often than not, one or more of the Yule lads will make an appearance and disburse small gifts of candies.

## JÓLABOÐ

(yo!-la-boeth)

The Icelandic Xmas party—jólaboð—is traditionally a family gathering that involves copious amounts of eating Christmas fare such as hangikjöt and cookies, drinking coffee and chocolate, talking about the weather and engaging in the latest board games (although Trivial Pursuit is always a classic).

## JÓLADAGATAL

(yo!-la-dae-ga-tael)

The jóladagatal ("Christmas calendar") is used to count down the days from December 1st until the 24th and is a must for children of all ages—some adults like to indulge as well. The most common variety has a differently shaped piece of chocolate for each day, although some of the crappier ones just have dumb, holiday related pictures. Some families like to craft their own, wrapping small gifts for each day.

## JÓLADAGUR

(yo!-la-daguer)

See also: Jólaboð

Jóladagur—Christmas Day—is the big day for family gatherings and Christmas parties. Many like to sleep in and relax before putting on formal attire and heading out to a friend's house to indulge in some hangikjöt or hot chocolate. Everything is closed. A very relaxed day, for most.



## JÓLAGLÖGG

(yo!-la-gludge)

See also: Jólahlæðborð, drinking

A hot beverage consisting of red wine, vodka, and spices. Often served with raisins. The word can also just mean a party of friends around Christmas time who get together under the pretext that they will drink Jólaglökk, when all they really want to do is drink anything with alcohol in it. You know, because of the dark.

## JÓLAHLÆÐBORÐ

(yo!-la-hlaeth-boerth)

See also: Christmas dining, eating out, Hamborgarhryggur

A fairly new tradition in Iceland, connected to the number of restaurants increasing in

later years. A Jólahlæðborð is a Christmas buffet that people attend in groups, usually co-workers go together for a night of eating, but mostly drinking. Many a marriage has been put to a serious strain after a drunken night at a Jólahlæðborð. Something about Christmas brings out the adulterers in some people.



## JÓLAKORT

(yo!-la-kowrt)

Many Icelanders choose to parlay greetings to their friends and loved ones over the holidays via the mailing of Christmas cards, or jólakort. They will most often feature a generic Christmassy motif and some standard well wishes, although some use the opportunities to send along pictures of the family.



## JÓLAKÖTTURINN

(yo!-la-koett-ur-enn)

To avoid, as the saying goes, "going to the Christmas cat," children are required to receive at least one piece of new clothing in time for Christmas each year. Otherwise, the cat will eat them.

## JÓLAMATUR

(yo!-la-maw-tuer)

See also: Christmas buffets, rjúpur, kæst skata, hangikjöt, jólaöl, jólasmákökur  
Like in most other places, nourishing oneself over the holidays is all about indulgence. When it comes to jólamatú ("Christmas food"): the richer, sweeter, fattier and saltier, the better.



## JÓLAÖL

(yo!-la-oe)

See also: Christmas dining

The ultimate Christmas drink, jólaöl (or: "Christmas ale") is created by mixing an elusive ratio of Malt and Appelsín orange soda. Although you can now buy this drink premixed, it's way more fun to mix it yourself, according to taste. Note that it contains no alcohol. Which is nice for a change.

## JÓLASMÁKÖKUR

(yo!-la-smouw-koek-er)

See also: Dining

Jólasmákökur ("Christmas cookies") are an essential part of the Icelandic holiday experience. Most households bake their own cookies in the weeks leading up to Christmas, making an average of 3–5 different types. They are then consumed at Christmas gatherings or while lounging about with ones new presents. Some classic types include: Piparkökur (ginger snaps), Mómmukökur (ginger snap-type cookies sandwiched around white frosting), súkkulaðiþitakökur (chocolate chip cookies) and hálfmánar (rhubarb preserves wrapped in dough), although the varieties are endless.



## JÓLATRÉ

(yo!-la-tr-yeah!)

See also: Þorláksmessa, Christmas presents

Icelanders' Christmas trees are usually installed on December

23rd, with the actual decorating taking place on the 24th (although this does differ between households). Various organisations, such as the local rescue squads, sell live trees to fund their operations, although private companies also partake. Fake plastic trees aren't very popular, although some folks prefer them.



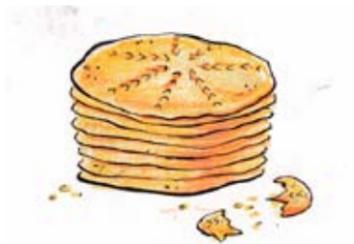
### KÆST SKATA

(kjæe-st skaaa-taaa)

See also: Þorláksmessa

The consumption of kæst skata, or rotted skate, on the 23rd of December is a holiday tradition derived from the West fjords of Iceland. The dish—which many swear by, and others find especially foul—is most often imbibed at special skate gatherings around noon on the 23rd, and is often served along with potatoes, butter, rye bread and shots of brennivín (most West Fjords experts recommend drinking milk with the skate, as the fish is “intoxicating in and of itself”).

The skate is a chondrichyte, and therefore ferments when allowed to rot, as its urine is distributed through its flesh and goes through a chemical change over time. They are in fact poisonous if eaten before the fermentation process is complete. It is fermented by throwing it in a box and letting it lie for three weeks.



### LAUFBRAUÐ

(loi-fa-brau-eth)

See also: Adventan

The making of laufbrauð, or “leaf-bread,” is usually a family-affair taking place early in December. People gather together to cut intricate patterns into this deep-fried, thin flatbread, which is then enjoyed as a tasty snack to accompany any Christmas event or meal. It goes exceedingly well with butter.

### NÝARSDAGUR

(knee-ouwr-s-da-guer)

See also: Drinking

Icelanders like to spend most of New Year's Day feeling hung-over and sorry for themselves. As the evening approaches, many will start pulling themselves together and dressing up for New Year's Day banquets or parties that have grown popular lately. Others will stay in watching DVDs or something.

### OPENING HOURS

See also: Commerce, eating out

If you are touring in Iceland for the holiday season, we can only hope someone told you of Iceland's antiquated opening hours for that time. You will not have much luck locating open restaurants—or open anything-else—during Christmas or on New Year's. Check out our holiday listings guide for info on places that are actually open and happy to serve you.



### PRESENTS

See also: Commerce, Aðfangadagur, jólatré

Of course Xmas is all about the presents, and a lot of debt is incurred during the season, even though we've yet to discern completely how the act of spreading goodwill through gifts is affected by the full impact of the Kreppa. There are no specific guidelines for Xmas gift giving in Iceland, but a good rule of thumb is to avoid being extravagant in your gift choices,

unless maybe something extravagant is called for or expected on the other end.

Generally most folks tend to stick with bestowing presents upon their immediate family and loved ones, although some like to spread the joy to their entire group of friends. In any case, there's nothing wrong with asking. Xmas presents are stored under the Xmas tree until they're due to be opened.



### RELIGION AND CHURCH

Even though around 80% of them are enrolled in the State Church, Icelanders have never been known

to be particularly enthusiastic churchgoers or observers of religious customs. Indeed, Christmas isn't a particularly religious holiday in Iceland. However, many folks like to attend Church services and concerts during the holidays, particularly on the 24th and the 31st. Check with your tourist information centre for complete church listings.

The ringing of the church bells of Reykjavík's Lutheran Cathedral is broadcast on all major television and radio stations throughout the country promptly at 18:00 on Christmas Eve, at which point everyone wishes each other a Merry Christmas and sits down to eat.

### RETURNING GIFTS

See also: Commerce

Exchanging one's Xmas gifts in lieu of something more desirable is a common practice in Iceland. Most stores will accept returns until the second week of January, although policies differ.



### RJÚPUR

(ryooe-purr)

See also: Jólámatgur

Wild fowl rjúpur, or ptarmigan, are a popular main course for many families Christmas meals. The small birds can be delicious if handled properly, and have a rich, gamey sort of taste. The Grapevine recommends trying some if you have the chance.

### SANTA CLAUS

See also: Jólasveinar

We have no need for your international big, fat, jolly, capitalist greed-mongering Coca Cola Santa Claus in Iceland, as we have thirteen of our own that are much cooler. He still makes an appearance from time to time. Oh we like him fine enough, he's a jolly good fellow and all.

### VACATIONS

Icelanders usually take pretty hefty Xmas vacations, with December 24, 25 and 26 all being legal holidays, as well as December 31st and January 1st. A lot of folks actually take Dec 23–Jan 2 off entirely—so don't expect a lot to get done during the Xmas season.

### ÞORLÁKSMESSA

(thoe-rloowks-mess-a)

See also: Kæst skata, commerce

In celebration of one of only two Icelandic saints, St. Þorlákur, Icelanders eat fermented skate, which preferably is swallowed with copious amounts of Icelandic Brennivín schnapps. Then, they will traditionally gather on the shopping street Laugavegur to do some last minute shopping (although some do the bulk of their shopping on that day), drink Christmas beer or hot chocolate and have a merry ol' time. Also, this is traditionally the day that children are allowed to decorate the Christmas tree.

### ÞRETTÁNDINN

(thu-rhett-ouwn-din-n)

January 6 is Þrettándinn (“the thirteenth”), the thirteenth and final day of Christmas according to Icelandic tradition. The event is celebrated with torch processions, bonfires, fireworks, and the king and queen of the hidden people traditionally join the festivities. Back in olden times, it was a scary time to be out and about, as the hidden people can be surprisingly sinister. ☹



## Xmas | Opening Hours

# Holiday Opening Hours

## Your Grapevine Guide

By Clyde Bradford, Eimear Fitzgerald, Jesse Ziebart and Monika Domeniková

Since many of you reading this may be tourists stranded in Iceland over the coming Holiday season, we decided to compile a little list for you detailing what's open, and when. Seeing as how most of the country pretty much shuts down during the Holidays, it can be tricky enough to find places to eat and things to do, but hopefully this guide will keep you fed, watered and entertained. We tried to make it as comprehensive as we could, but apologies if we've missed something.

A good rule of thumb to go by when planning any of your Holiday activities is to assume that most shops and restaurants are closed, and just call up the ones you're interested in checking out. This should help avoid any disappointments. The Official Tourist Information Centre has the most up-to-date information so be sure to pay them a visit, or check out [www.visitreykjavik.is](http://www.visitreykjavik.is).

### Public transport

#### City Buses

24: Saturday service until 14:00

25: No service

26: Sunday service until 12:00

31: Saturday service until 14:00

1: No service

Bus Information: Call 540 2700



### Tours

The Official Tourist Information Centre (The Centre)

24: 09:00–12:00

25: Closed

26, 31: 10:00–14:00

7: 09:00–18:00

#### Reykjavík Excursions:

24: Golden Circle, Gullfoss Direct, Northern Lights (weather permitting), Horseback riding, Whale watching.

25: Golden Circle, City, South shore, Gullfoss, Northern Lights (weather permitting), Snowmobiling, Super jeep.

Normal schedule from December 26 onward including New Year's day.

See: [www.re.is](http://www.re.is)

#### Iceland Excursions:

24: Golden Circle Classic, Greater Area Reykjavík Sightseeing, The Blue Lagoon and Keflavík.

25: The Golden Circle Afternoon, Iceland from Below, Iceland from Below & The Blue Lagoon, The Blue Lagoon.

31: All tours operating except: Blue Lagoon/Viking Horse, Blue Lagoon at 16:15 and 16:30 and Northern Lights at 20:00.

There is a special New Years Eve tour entitled Bonfire and Fireworks at 20:00. Other days are operated according to program and schedule.

See: [www.grayline.is](http://www.grayline.is)



### Pools

#### The Blue Lagoon

23: 10:00–17:00

24: 10:00–13:00 (restaurant closed)

25: 10:00–15:00 (restaurant closed)

26: 10:00–20:00

31: 10:00–16:00

7: Regular opening hours

#### Sundhöll Reykjavíkur:

24: 08:00–12:30

25: Closed

26: 10:00–18:00

31: 08:00–12:30

7: Closed

Árbæjarlaug: 567 3933

#### Breiðholtslaug:

24: 09:00–12:30

25: Closed

26: Closed

31: 09:00–12:30

7: Closed

Grafarvogslaug: 510 4600

Laugardalslaug: 553 4039

Vesturbæjarlaug: 411 5150

24: 08:00–12:00

25: Closed



### Museums and galleries

24, 25, 26, 31, 7:

ASÍ Art Museum, Nordic House, Kling & Bang, Saga Museum in Perlan, Hitt Húsið, Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum, Gjúfrasteinn Museum, Gerðuberg Cultural Center : Closed.

#### Gallerí Ágúst

24–7: open on appointment

2 onwards: Friday, Saturday, Sunday:

13:00–17:00

#### The Culture House

24: 11:00–14:00

25: Closed

26 (and all other days): 11:00–17:00

31: 11:00–14:00

7: 11:00–14:00

#### The National Gallery

24, 25, 26, 31, 7: Closed

#### The Reykjavík Art Museum, Hafnarhús

24, 25: Closed

26–30: 13:00–17:00

31: 10:00–14:00

7: 13:00–17:00

#### Kjarvalsstaðir

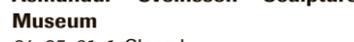
Open daily 10:00–17:00

24, 25, 31, 7: Closed

26: 13:00–17:00

#### Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum

24, 25, 31, 7: Closed



### Stores

#### Kringlan Shopping Mall:

23: 10:00–23:00

24: 10:00–13:00

25, 26: Closed

31: 10:00–13:00

7: Closed

#### Vínbúðin (Liquor store) Austurstræti

23: 11:00–22:00

24: 10:00–13:00

25, 26: Closed

30: 11:00–20:00

31: 10:00–13:00

7: Closed

#### Vínbúðin (Liquor store) in other places

24: 10:00–13:00

25, 26: Closed

31: 10:00–13:00

7: Closed



### Bars that got back to us

#### English Pub

23: 12:00–04:30

24, 25: Closed

26: 11:00–03:00 live football at 12:30

31: 12:00–04:30

#### Esja

24, 25: Closed

26: 16:00–03:00

27, 28, 29, 30, 31: Regular opening hours

#### Satt Bar:

24: 10:00–23:00

25: 10:00–00:00

26, 27, 28, 29, 30: 11:00–01:00

31: 10:00–01:00

7: 10:00–01:00

#### Trúnó

23: 11:00–03:00

24, 25: Closed

26: 18:00–03:00

27, 28, 29: 11:00–01:00

30: 11:00–04:30

31: 01:00–very late

7: 18:00–01:00

#### Barbara

23: 17:00–03:00

24, 25: Closed

26: 20:00–03:00

27, 28, 29: 20:00–01:00

30: 20:00–04:30

31: 01:00–very late

7: 18:00–01:00

#### Vox Lobby Bar

24: 10:00–23:00

25: 10:00–00:00

26, 27, 28, 29: 10:00–01:00

30: 10:00–02:00

31, 1: 10:00–01:00



### Restaurants that got back to us

#### Bistró Vox: Hotel Nordica

Open every day 11:30–22:30, except for:

24: 11:30–20:00

26: 11:30–15:00

#### Vox Restaurant:

Open Wednesdays to Saturdays 18:30–22:30, except on 24, 25, 1:

a special Festive 4 course Christmas dinner served between 18:00 and 20:00

#### Satt Restaurant:

Open every day 11:00–22:00:

24: Lunch 12:00–14:00;

Dinner 18:00–20:30

25: Lunch 12:00–14:00;

Dinner 17:30–20:30

31: Lunch 12:00–14:00;

Dinner 18:00–21:00

7: Lunch 12:00–14:00;

Dinner 18:00–21:00

26–30: Five course menu á la Satt Restaurant will be served, 11:00–22:00

#### Café Paris

24, 25: closed

31: 9:00–18:00

7: 11:00–01:00

#### Fiskfélagið/The Fish Company

24, 25: Closed

23, 26, 31, 7: Open

#### Geysir Bistro Bar

24, 25, 26: Closed

31: Closed

7: 17:00–22:00

#### Grillhúsið

24, 25, 26, 31: Closed

Xmas | Beer!

# THE GRAPEVINE CHRISTMAS BEER-OFF

Taste-makers: David Paul Peter Nickel and Ragnar Egilsson

Photography by Hvalreki

## JÓLA BOCK 6.2%

Víking Ölgerð/Vífilfell

From the distributors of Coca-Cola. Those are the people that brought you Santa™, you'd expect something a little more Christmassy. A traditional bock, quite bitter, pleasantly malty, not bad but lacks body and quite dull. Local reviewers have apparently been very happy with it though. Good, not exceptional.

3.5/5

## MALT JÓLABJÓR 5.6%

Egils

Basically Malt Extract (if you're North or South-American—think Malta) with an alcohol volume. A sweet stout, very thick and malty and contains liquorice.

**DN:** Full-bodied, can enjoy with or without a meal, especially around Christmas and especially with the heavy salted, fatty food.

**RE:** Like the design of the label the beer was a bit overloaded. Too sweet and too much. But it gets points for being unique and I'm curious if it would go well in orange soda (a traditional non-alcoholic Icelandic Christmas drink is made with Malt Extract and orange soda). Might even be awesome.

**DN:** In a world where Egill's Gull wins a prize as the best standard lager in the



world, anything is possible.  
4/5

## EINSTÖK ICELANDIC DOBBEL-BOCK 6.7%

Einstök Brewery

From Akureyri, brainchild of Baldur Kárason brewmaster at Víking Ölgerð. What the bock is up with all those bocks?

**RE:** Christmas beers are strong, I'm getting tipsy.

**DN:** What the hell is up with this label! Vikings did not wear horns! Let alone antlers!

**RE:** I like the green colour on the bottle. Very soothing.

**DN:** The beer is not very demanding. It doesn't speak for itself.

**RE:** You're just pissed off about the label. It's a fantastic beer, tastes like spruce and chocolate. Full-flavoured and works on its own or with a meal.

4.0/5 for beer -1 for label

## LEPPALÚÐI 7.5%

Named after the lazy husband of Grýla, the child-devouring ogress of Icelandic Christmas mythology.

**DP:** It has a woody...greenwood smell to it. First taste is like sour hey, new milk...manure.

**RE:** Tastes like shit?

**DP:** Not quite but it is under-aged.

**RE:** They recommend it with venison or game. Maybe, I don't have any lying around.

**DP:** Can't think of a meal this would go with. Would work well as a marinade for something like sausages.

**RE:** Overall this is a beer that should have been sold in a smaller bottle, they were going for barley wine but I'm getting an Old English vibe—boozy and cheap.

2.5/5

## JÓLA KALDI 5.4%

Bruggsmiðjan

Dry ale, hint of orange zest, nuts and rye, dark reddish amber.

**DP:** It talks a big game with three types of Czech malts. I like the normal Kaldi better. It doesn't really impress. Remains too long in the aftertaste and too carbonated.

**RE:** Sheesh, you're hard to impress. I would call this the best season beer out

of the bunch. I can't really see what's so Christmas-like about it, though, other than it being heavy on the caramel like the rest.

3.5/5

## STEEKJASTAUR NR. 7

Borg brugghús

**RE:** Fantastic red-brown ale, sweet & spicey and everything nicey. Tastes of oats. Kills with a double-smoked lamb, can vouch for it. Also goes great with the first four Metallica albums.

**DP:** I'm plastered. I'm calling this a night.

The best beer with a meal of the ones tasted. Very solid beer.

4.5/5

We regret to say we did not get around to tasting Egils Jólágull, Gæðingur Jólabjór or Viking Jólabjór this year due to time-, budget- and liver-constraints.



Xmas | xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx!

# Reykjavík Christmas City

By Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir

Photography Alisa Kalyanova



If there's one cause to which the perpetual dusk of Icelandic winter is sympathetic, it's that of Christmas decorations. Indeed, no lights are quite as lustrous as those delicate orbs of white lining the trees, the streets, the buildings downtown.

This year the city of Reykjavík is taking advantage of this fact, bolstered it seems—according to a speech made by Mayor Jón Gnarr—by being named the top Christmas destination on CNN's affiliate CNNgo last year; the city is eager to live up to its reputation as a must-see Christmas travel destination and has introduced seven 'Christmas creatures' around the city—animated characters from Icelandic folklore that will adorn various houses through the holiday season.

Across from Sólon on the corner of Bankastræti and Ingólfsstræti lurks Grýla, a troll and mother to the

thirteen Santas—the Yule Lads—who around Christmastime descend from the mountains in search of misbehaved children...to eat. Along with her cat—the Christmas cat, rumored to be projected somewhere in the City Zoo—Grýla likes to feast on said naughty children, although her and the feline's appetites are whetted a little differently: the Christmas cat eats only those unfortunate individuals who are badly equipped for the winter weather; those who are not gifted any clothing for Christmas "go to the Christmas cat."

The "Christmas Creatures" concept was designed by Hafsteinn Júlíusson, and drawn and animated by Gunnar Karlsson.

Along with animations of five of the Lads, the cat, and mama troll, the project also includes a digital snowfall projected onto the side of the Cathedral, an animation that can be downloaded

on the Visit Reykjavík website and projected by one and all at will on walls, indoor and outdoor.

The idea is delightfully simple; as designer Hafsteinn describes it: "It's just an idea projected onto a wall. We're not having to building anything." As we inch closer to December 21, the shortest day of the year in Iceland, the darkness remains charming, for now. While the lights are on, we hardly notice the window of light steadily dwindling... at its worst, down to about two hours a day.

Says Mayor Jón Gnarr: "This goes strictly against the promises of Besti Flokkurinn to consolidate all the Santas into one. But at Christmas, we paint our devils on the wall; our worst fears projected onto the architecture: Consume more clothing! Consume more food! Think of the children!"

**NORDIC STORE**

Icelandic Wool Sweaters in the heart of Reykjavík

Nordic Store • Lækjargata 2 • 101 Reykjavík • nordicstore.com

Xmas | Spiritual!

# Celebrating December

By Paul Fontaine

**For those of you visiting Reykjavík over the holidays who want to attend a Christmas mass, there are a couple options available to you.**

When thinking of witnessing a **Lutheran** Christmas mass in town, probably the first place that springs to mind is Hallgrímskirkja. They'll be holding two masses on Christmas Eve, at 18:00 and then a midnight mass at 23:30. On Christmas Day, there's a mass at 14:00. Boxing Day features masses in Icelandic and English, at 14:00 and 16:00 respectively. If you're still in town, you can also attend mass on New Year's Eve at 18:00 and on New Year's Day at 14:00.

For a national church setting that's a little more cosy, you can also attend Christmas services at the Dómskirkjan cathedral, located right next to parliament, and they have foreigners in mind for some of these times. On December 18, they'll be holding Christmas masses in Danish at 11:00, in German at 13:30, and in Icelandic at 20:00. You can catch Danish mass again on December 24 at 18:00, with a midnight mass in Icelandic starting at 23:30. On Christmas Day and Boxing Day, Icelandic masses are both at 11:00. If you're still in town after the New Year, the bishop leads a mass on January 1 at 11:00. As this will be his last New Year's Day mass, it might be worth checking out.

Not all Lutheran churches in Iceland

belong to the national church—Fríkirkjan (located Fríkirkjuvegur 5, right across the street from the Tjörnin pond) is an independent Lutheran church, and they'll be having Christmas masses of their own. On Christmas Eve, there's a mass at 18:00, but at 23:30 they'll be holding a midnight mass, where Páll Óskar will perform. Their Christmas Day mass is held at 14:00, and they'll also be having a New Year's Eve mass at 18:00.

The **Catholics** are also approaching the holidays multiculturally. On St. Þorlákur's Day—December 23—they have masses at 8:00 and 16:00. They'll also be having their midnight mass, at midnight on Christmas Eve, with a children's version at 16:30. On Christmas Day, they will hold Christmas mass in English at 10:30, with Icelandic mass at 18:00. Boxing Day mass will be held at 10:30. The Catholic church is located at Landakot, at the corner of Túngata and Ægisdaga.

Did you know the English word "yule" stems from a celebration that predates the arrival of Christianity to northern Europe? It's also where the Icelandic word for Christmas, jól, comes from. There are people who still celebrate this old faith, the **Ásatrú**, and their Yuletide celebration—the jólablót—is open to the general public. You can witness this old and frankly moving ceremony at Öskjuhlíð on December 22 at 18:00. At 19:00, they move the celebrations over to Mörkin 6, for food,



drinks and music. The general public is also welcome to attend this dinner, but you need to book in advance. This can be done through their website, [www.asatru.is](http://www.asatru.is).

While the **Baha'i** in Iceland do not celebrate Christmas (except with family members), they do have a comparable holiday called the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, which is held on November 12. This festival celebrates the founder of the Baha'i faith. This is a day for communities and families to come together, and gift giving is involved.

Although there are no synagogues in Iceland and **Judaism** is not one of the State-recognized religions, Rabbi Berel Pewzner told Visir that he has a list of more than ninety Jewish people living in Iceland.

However, Sigal Harmeshi says the Jewish community in Iceland is very small and there is nothing organized for Hanukkah, but they will likely be have a celebration one of the nights. Jew-

ish visitors to Reykjavík can contact: [sigal@simnet.is](mailto:sigal@simnet.is).

**Muslims** have a holiday later in the year, too, called Ashura. Again, not related to Christmas or Yule, this is a day of fasting of special importance to Shia Muslims as the peak day of the Remembrance of Muharram. However, Sunnis also celebrate this holiday through fasting, only they do so in remembrance of the day Moses fasted to give thanks to God for freeing the Israelites from Egypt. While its date changes every year, it is held this year on December 5.

All around, the winter holidays can be rung in a number of ways in Iceland, catering to many faiths and languages.



## Our New Neighbours, The Johnsons

By Jesse Ziebart

*The Iceland Phallogical Museum opens in Reykjavík*

The Johnsons just moved to town! One thousand ISK and a sense of humour grants you entrance to the Icelandic Phallogical Museum, which relocated from the north of Iceland to Reykjavík this winter. A visit to the penis museum is of course an ideal holiday activity for the whole family!

Large, itty-bitty, and just plain MASSIVE phallic curio from 92 different species of mammals cover every surface of the museum. Some larger specimens are mounted like big game trophies, but most are preserved in jars.

The museum has a collection of 272 specimens...including human. The human penis was donated to the museum just this year, and more are on the way. Certified letters of intent from future human donors are framed and hanging on the walls for visitors to read.

Do not miss: phallograms, and penises of Sea Monster and Hidden Man. From stained glass wall hangings, to household items and bronze casts, Johnsons are everywhere...and now they are in Reykjavík! Go introduce yourself to your new neighbours, why don't you?

Visit [www.phallus.is](http://www.phallus.is) for more information.

**Where:** Laugavegur 116

**When:** Open, 11:00 to 18:00, daily

**How Much:** 1000 ISK, free for kids under 12

# Europcar



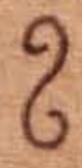
## ENJOY FREEDOM OF MOBILITY



Feel free for less • Great rates and large variety of new and well equipped four-wheel-drive cars • Simply call and we pick you up!  
Europcar Reykjavík Reservations: +(354) 568 6915 • [holdur@holdur.is](mailto:holdur@holdur.is) • [www.holdur.is](http://www.holdur.is) • Reliable customer service at 15 Rental locations around Iceland.



# The Nordic House Christmas Calendar



**Name:**  
Hallfríður Þóra Tryggvadóttir,  
**Age:**  
21  
**Occupation:**  
Actress  
*On my Christmas wish list...*  
...I dream about getting an  
extraordinary fur coat, leather  
pants and big chunky jewelry.



Winter 2011



I



**Name:**  
Sigrún Skafta  
**Age:**  
23  
**Occupation:**  
DJ, student and a sales  
associate at Spútnik,  
Kringlan  
**Favourite musician:**  
Oh Land and Joni Mitchell.

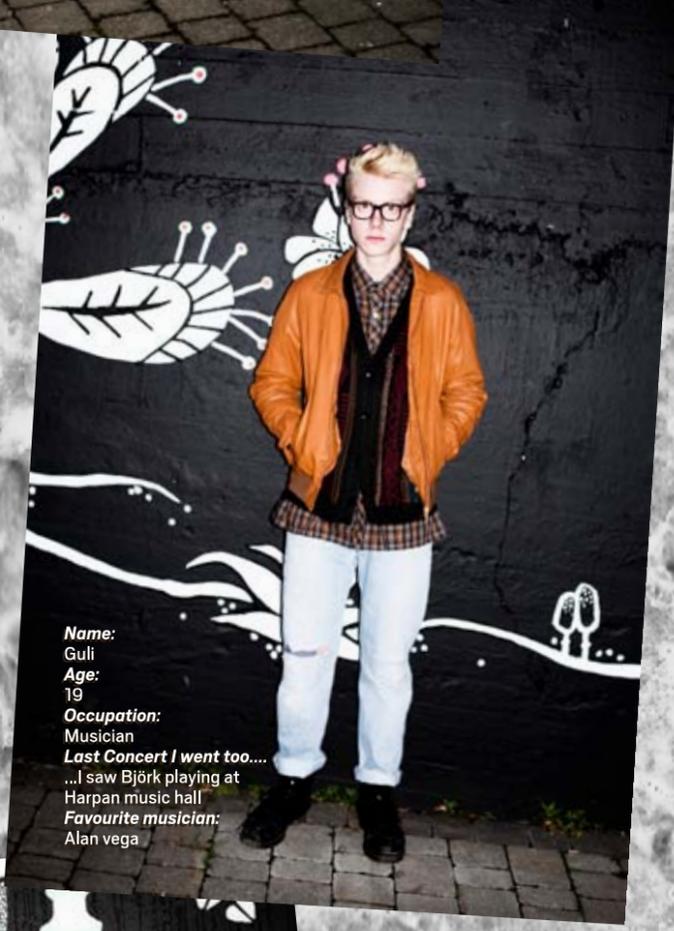


**Name:**  
Kormákur Örn Axelsson  
**Age:**  
21  
**Occupation:**  
Law student at the  
University of Iceland.  
**On my Christmas wish list...**  
...Is a sweater to keep me  
warm during the cold winter or  
a nice shirt to wear to the  
Christmas parties

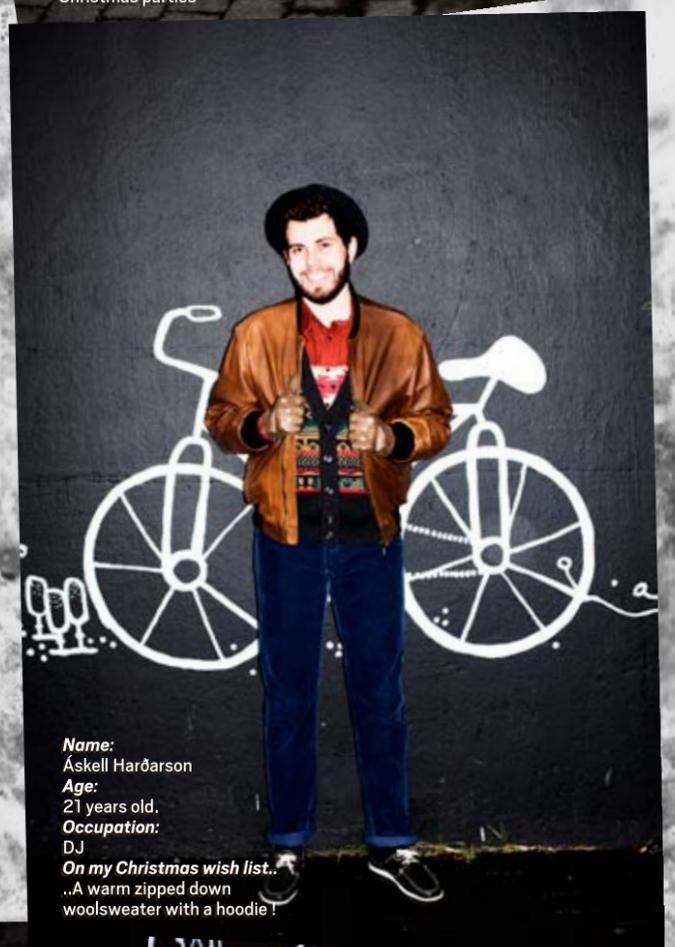
||

O

∞



**Name:**  
Guli  
**Age:**  
19  
**Occupation:**  
Musician  
**Last Concert I went too....**  
...I saw Björk playing at  
Harpan music hall  
**Favourite musician:**  
Alan vega



**Name:**  
Áskell Hardarson  
**Age:**  
21 years old.  
**Occupation:**  
DJ  
**On my Christmas wish list..**  
..A warm zipped down  
woolsweater with a hoodie !

←



**Name:**  
Elsa Jónsdóttir  
**Age:**  
21  
**Occupation:**  
Graphic design student in The  
Iceland Academy of the Arts.  
**On my christmas wish list...**  
...some awesome jewelry  
from Spútnik



**Name:**  
Alex  
**Age:**  
21  
**Occupation:**  
Graphic design student in The  
Iceland Academy of the Arts.  
**Favourite musicians:**  
At the moment it's Massive  
Attack and Nicholas Jaar



**Name:**  
Kristjana Sæunn  
Ólafsdóttir.  
**Age:**  
20  
**Favourite musician:**  
Hercules And Love Affair,  
among a few other great bands!

♂



**Name:**  
Agnes Björt Andradóttir  
**Age:**  
20  
**Occupation:**  
Sales associate at Spúútnik and a singer in the band Sykur.  
**On my Christmas wish list...**  
...Warm winter shoes from Spúútnik and some nice jewelries



**Name:**  
Arnar Rósenkranz Hilmarsson  
**Age:**  
24  
**Occupation:**  
Musician/drummer in the bands Of Monsters and Men and Cliff Clavin.  
**Favourite musician:**  
Right now it's the Last Shadow Puppets but that could change tomorrow...



**Name:**  
Stefán Finnbogason  
**Age:**  
29 years old  
**Occupation:**  
Musician and a sales associate at Spúútnik on Laugavegur  
**The last concert I went to...**  
...was the Icelandic band Nóló playing at Gaukur á Stöng



**Name:**  
Sif baldursdóttir,  
**Age:**  
24 years old  
**Occupation:**  
Store Manager, Spúútnik on Laugavegur  
**On my Christmas wish list...**  
...A silk kimono from Nostalgia or a nice fur coat from Spúútnik



**Name:**  
Björn Traustason  
**Age:**  
22  
**Occupation:**  
studying tailoring  
**Favourite musician?**  
I really like the band Bishop Morocco from Canada.



**Name:**  
Marta Matthíasdóttir  
**Age:**  
18  
**Occupation:**  
Student and a sales associate  
**During the weekends I go...**  
...and meet nice people that make me happy and study my ass off!

E

H

P

E

U

F

H

G

R



**Name:** Rakel Unnur Thorlacius.  
**Age:** 22  
**Occupation:** Store Manager at Spútnik, Kringlan  
**On my Christmas wish list...**  
...some crazy fur coat or a cool army jacket

R

Q



**Name:** Björk Hrafnisdóttir  
**Age:** 18  
**Occupation:** Student and a sales associate at Spútnik  
**During the weekends I go...**  
...dancing with my friends!



**Name:** Úlfar Loga  
**Age:** 20  
**Occupation:** A student and a photographer  
**On my Christmas wish list...**  
...some nice stuff for my camera and clothes.

8

8

8



**Name:** Hrafnkell Flóki Kaktus Einarsson  
**Age:** 19  
**Occupation:** Musician  
**During the weekends I...**  
...do the same as every other day, have fun with my friends and listen to some nice techno music

X



**Name:** Indy Alda Saouda Yansan  
**Age:** 17  
**Occupation:** Student and a dancer who focuses on enjoying life!  
**On my christmas wish list...**  
...a big black fur coat and a juicy big necklace from Spútnik

+



**Name:** Anna Jia  
**Age:** 19  
**Occupation:** Student and a sales associate at Spútnik  
**During the weekends I...**  
...take a stroll downtown, meet my lovely friends for a coffee and do a bit of vintage shopping and then dance the night away!

3

W

Spútnik

Laugarvegur 28 / Kringlan  
Check us out on Facebook: [facebook.com/Spuutnik](https://facebook.com/Spuutnik)



1-23 December  
12:34

Norraena húsið - Sturlugata 5 - 101 Reykjavík - s. 5517030 - www.norraenahusid.is - nh@nordice.is

Xmas | Shopping!

# Let's Go Shopping At Christmastime!

*Our best present picks for your near and dear (and totally feared!)*

By Rebecca Louder

Photography by Hvalreki

Winter has tumbled from the sky and the holidays are nearly upon us. Soon the tree will be up and stockings will require stuffing. Families will be rounded up and you'll be schmoozing at Christmas parties with bosses you barely know. And presents are tough to buy! Who the hell knows what to buy for their spouse's uncle? We have come up with a bunch of helpful suggestions to make your shopping experience a bit easier and give you a push to not leave it to the last minute. (Yeah, right!)

## WOOLLY WONDERS

Nothing says Christmas like some snazzy knitwear and when it comes to rocking both function and fashion, Icelandic designers do it pretty damn right. The handmade birds-of-Iceland sweaters at Minja (29.900 ISK, Skólavörðustígur 12) have caught our eye this year; light and cosy and adorned with the winged fowl of your choice. A great selection of handmade lopapeysa sweaters at various prices can always be found at the Kolaportið flea market on weekends (Tryggvagata). In case you're rolling in dough this year, definitely treat yourself or someone you love to one of Vík Prjónsdóttir's wonderfully off-kilter designs (13.500-72.000 ISK at SPARK Design Space, Klapparstígur 33 or [www.sparkdesignspace.com](http://www.sparkdesignspace.com)).

## DECK THE HALLS

Gifts don't have to be big or cost a lot to get great fun and a long life out of. A deck of cards is something no respectable human being should be without. Cards carry more weight when they're received as a gift anyway! Just make sure not to break out those bad boys to play before midnight on December 25, or else you'll be bringing yourself bad luck—Icelandic folklore says you'll find five Jacks and one of them is THE DEVIL (under 2.000 ISK, any book or tourist shop).

## LIGHT UP

The dark winter calls for nothing better than covering your entire apartment in candles. They are warm and romantic and make versatile gifts for both close ones and fresh acquaintances. There is a great selection of locally designed candles and candleholders at Minja on Skólavörðustígur, shaped or decorated with themes from Icelandic folklore and nature. Check out the particularly cool Lady of the Mountain candles in the national colours (3.000 ISK).



## EAT, DRINK AND SPLIT YOUR PANTS

If you're really at a loss for ideas or don't know the recipient of your present beyond what cubicle they sit in, you can't go too wrong with forking over a bunch of chocolate and/or booze! Christmas beer (Jólabjór) is a particularly loved seasonal treat and a nice bottle of red wine or two does well to make some hot, mulled wine (Jólaglögg). Top it off with an assorted box of Nóa Sírus chocolates and chocolate covered espresso beans from Te & Kaffi? Decadent!

## THE KEY TO THE CITY

If optimal and repeated use is what you have in mind for the presents you give, the gift of activity goes a long way! Great things come in tiny packages with the City Culture Card (3.000-5.000 ISK, [menningarkort.is](http://menningarkort.is)) giving a year's access to the Reykjavík Art Museum, the Reykjavík City Library and the Iceland Settlement Centre. Throw in a yearly pass to every pool in town (34.000 ISK, at any pool location) and your giftee will be sitting pretty and warm!

## AND WE'LL ALL FLOAT ON

If your giftee is already covered with their own pool card, or at least the kind of pool-goer who does less swimming and more slumping, help them stay safe and lazy with the stylish new FLOAT swimcap by designer Unnur Valdís Kristjánsdóttir (13.900, SPARK Design Space). It does exactly what the name implies, comes in three sizes and is equally fun to use at the pool, in the ocean or just at home in the tub!



## TOTALLY ROCKING TUNES

After mandatory quiet family time on Christmas Day, it's time to kick the party off again in a big way and tear the shrink-wrap off some new compact discs. The past year has been re-

ally good for new local releases, like for instance Gang Related's 'Stunts & Rituals', Of Monsters And Men's 'My Head Is An Animal', Nóló's 'Nology' and of course the indispensable new album by HAM, 'Svik, harmur og dauði'.

If someone you know doesn't have one of these, stop by one of your local independent record shops and pick them up!

# Treasure chest



Reykjavík  
**871**±2

Landnámssýningin  
The Settlement  
Exhibition

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.

 Reykjavík  
City Museum

Aðalstræti 16  
[www.reykjavik871.is](http://www.reykjavik871.is)

WE TAKE OUR WATERPROOF TESTING VERY SERIOUSLY



**Our Master Watchmaker never loses his concentration.** With his 45 years of experience our Master Watchmaker ensures that we take our waterproofing very seriously. Gilbert O. Gudjonsson, our Master Watchmaker and renowned craftsman, inspects every single timepiece before it leaves our workshop. As a privately owned and operated company, we have the opportunity and duty to give all our timepieces the personal attention they deserve.



*J&S Watch co.*  
REYKJAVIK  
www.jswatch.com

**GILBERT**  
ÚRSMIDUR  
Laugavegi 62 - sími: 551-4100  
www.gilbert.is



kiOSK

Laugavegur 65. s:4453269



eyglo  
gowithjan  
hlin reykdal  
klukka  
rey  
shadow creatures  
skaparinn  
thelma  
yr

Xmas | Jewelry

## Don't Have To Wait Until Christmas

*If it were up to Aurum's jewellery designer Guðbjörg Kristín Ingvarsdóttir, it would be Christmas all year round*

By Sari Peltonen

Photography by Hvalreki



**When Guðbjörg Kristín Ingvarsdóttir opened Aurum in a small backhouse off the main street Laugavegur in 1999, her nature-inspired designs were like a breath of fresh air to the local jewellery racks.**

Today, Aurum is one of the most celebrated entities of Icelandic design, but Guðbjörg is not one to sit on her laurels—with her tableware collection and cool new concept store, she will soon accessorise both us and our homes, too.

**How did you end up as a jewellery designer?**

I went to high school in Bainbridge Island in the US when I was 18. It is a little island, you take a boat from Seattle. I stayed for a year and took all the art classes. I didn't have them at home in Ísafjörður. I took a course in jewellery, too, and fell for it. When I returned home, I started to look for a practical place.

**After studying and working in Denmark, you returned home and opened your own workshop and label in 1999. What is the Aurum ideology?**

I felt I could show Icelanders something new. The jewellery I was doing was nothing like what was available here back then, I work very three-dimensionally with clear, feminine forms.

And I want to make jewellery that women can come and buy themselves. I wanted them to afford to just come and pick a pair of nice earrings to go with the dress, to not have to wait until Christmas.

**How has your work developed through the years?**

My graduation pieces were dark and heavy, black and made of iron. When I got pregnant with my first daughter, my work got lighter and more feminine.

I am always developing and pushing myself to make new things.

**You introduce new collections twice a year, one during the annual design festival DesignMarch and one before Christmas. What is new?**

'Bríet,' 'Dröfn' and 'Dís.' 'Bríet' is made of copper and has a vintage feel to it, and 'Dís' is inspired by dragonflies. The idea for 'Dröfn' comes from corals I found on the beach in the west of Iceland. We have a summerhouse there. It doesn't have electricity, there are no cars driving by, it is just out in the middle of nowhere. There, I have everything I need—the sea, the mountain and the glacier. I get a lot of my ideas there.

**Icelandic design is often said to be inspired by nature. Does this ever bore you?**

We have this fantastic nature around us, with so many things to be inspired by. It is difficult not to be inspired by it. There are endless things to pick out and work with. No—we should not be bored with it.

**What constitutes good jewellery design for you?**

I always think about the human body and its lines. When you make a painting, it goes on the wall. When you design jewellery, it goes on the body. Jewellery should be nice to carry.

**You have recently extended your work beyond jewellery, haven't you?**

Yes, I launched a collection of ceramics tableware based on the 'Dögg' and 'Hekla' patterns previously used in my jewellery in collaboration with the Finnish Elinno. There are more things like that on the way.

**And the store, too, has changed?**

Yes, we got this space next door to our workshop a year and a half ago.

It is a lifestyle store with lots of different things handpicked from all over the world, things that you won't find elsewhere in Iceland, labels like Donna Wilson, Design House Stockholm and a lot of children's art equipment. We also stock some local design, such as the NotKnot pillows by Umemi. Just a lot of things that I like myself! ♡

### SOME COOL GIFT IDEAS FROM AURUM

#### Unisex Jewels

Known for her feminine form language, Guðbjörg Kristín Ingvarsdóttir has designed a new unisex collection 'Dröfn,' inspired by corals she found on the west coast of Iceland.

#### Bird Bone Pendant

In addition to Guðbjörg's own designs, Aurum also stocks Sami jewellery from Swedish Lapland and another local label, Kría (Icelandic for Arctic tern), with pieces inspired by and resembling the bird's bones and claws.

#### French Fragrance

The latest addition to Aurum's lifestyle brands is French L'Artisan Parfumeur. From forest to flowers, absinthe to amber, the range covers perfumes, candles, room scents and amber balls.

#### Merry Monkey Business

The responsible choice for a Christmas gift, MonkeyBiz is a non-profit project that empowers women in bead art in South Africa. Each of the quirky, colourful pieces is unique and comes signed by the artist who made it.

*Aurum is located on Bankastræti 4, 101 Reykjavík*

Xmas | Lads!

## Jólasveinar

(yo!-la-svain-er)

By Paul Fontaine

Illustration by Inga María Brynjarsdóttir



The Icelandic Jólasveinar (Yule Lads) have little to do with the international Santa Claus. They are descended from trolls, and were originally bogeymen who scared children. During this century they have mellowed, and sometimes don red suits. Their number varied in old times from one region of Iceland to another. The number thirteen was first seen in a poem about Grýla (the Lads' mother) in the 18th century, and their names were published by Jón Árnason in his folklore collection in 1862.

On December 12, the Yuletide Lads begin to come to town one by one on each of the 13 days before Christmas.

The first is **Stekkjastaur** (Sheepfold Stick), who tries to drink the milk from the farmers' ewes.

On December 13, **Giljagaur** (Gully Oaf) arrives. Before the days of milking machines, he would sneak into the cowshed and skim the froth off the pails of milk.

Next comes **Stúfur** (Shorty) on December 14. His name implies that he is on the small side. He is also known as **Pönnuskefill** (pan-scraper), as he scraped scraps of food off the pans.

On December 15, **Pvörusleikur** (Spoon-licker) comes down from the mountains. He steals wooden spoons that have been used for stirring. When he visits the National Museum, he goes looking for wooden spoons.

On December 16, **Pottasleikur** (Pot-licker) comes visiting. He tries to snatch pots that have not been washed, and licks the scraps from them.

**Askasleikur** (Bowl-licker) arrives on December 17. He hides under beds and if someone puts his wooden food-bowl on the floor, he grabs it and licks it clean.

**Hurðaskellir** (Door-slammer) comes on December 18. He is an awfully noisy fellow, who is always slamming doors and keeping people awake.

The Lad who is expected on December 19 is called **Skyrgámur**

(Curd Glutton), because he loves skyr (milk curd) so much that he sneaks into the pantry and gobbles up all the skyr from the tub there.

**Bjúgnakrækir** (Sausage Pilferer) comes on December 20. He loves sausages of all kinds, and steals them whenever he can.

On December 21, **Gluggagægir** (Peepers) arrives. He is not as greedy as some of his brothers, but awfully nosy, peeping through windows and even stealing toys he likes the looks of.

On December 22 **Gáttaþefur** (Sniffer) comes calling. He has a big nose, and loves the smell of cakes being baked for Christmas. He often tries to snatch a cake or two for himself.

December 22 is sometimes called **hlakkandi** (looking forward), because the children had started looking forward to Christmas.

On December 23, St. Þorlákur's Day, **Ketkrókur** (Meat Hook) arrives. He adores all meat. In olden days he would lower a hook down the kitchen chimney and pull up a leg of lamb hanging from a rafter, or a bit of smoked lamb from a pan, as smoked lamb was traditionally cooked on St. Þorlákur's Day.

**Kertasníkir** (Candle Beggar) comes on Christmas Eve, December 24. In olden times, candlelight was the brightest light available. Candles were so rare and precious that it was a treat for children to be given a candle at Christmas. And poor Candle Beggar wanted one too.

During the thirteen days before Christmas, the National Museum presents actors dressed as the old-school Jólasveinar. They show up around 11 AM each day. National Museum, Suðurgata 41, 101 Reykjavík. Tel. 530 2200.

*Originally appeared in issue 16/2005.*

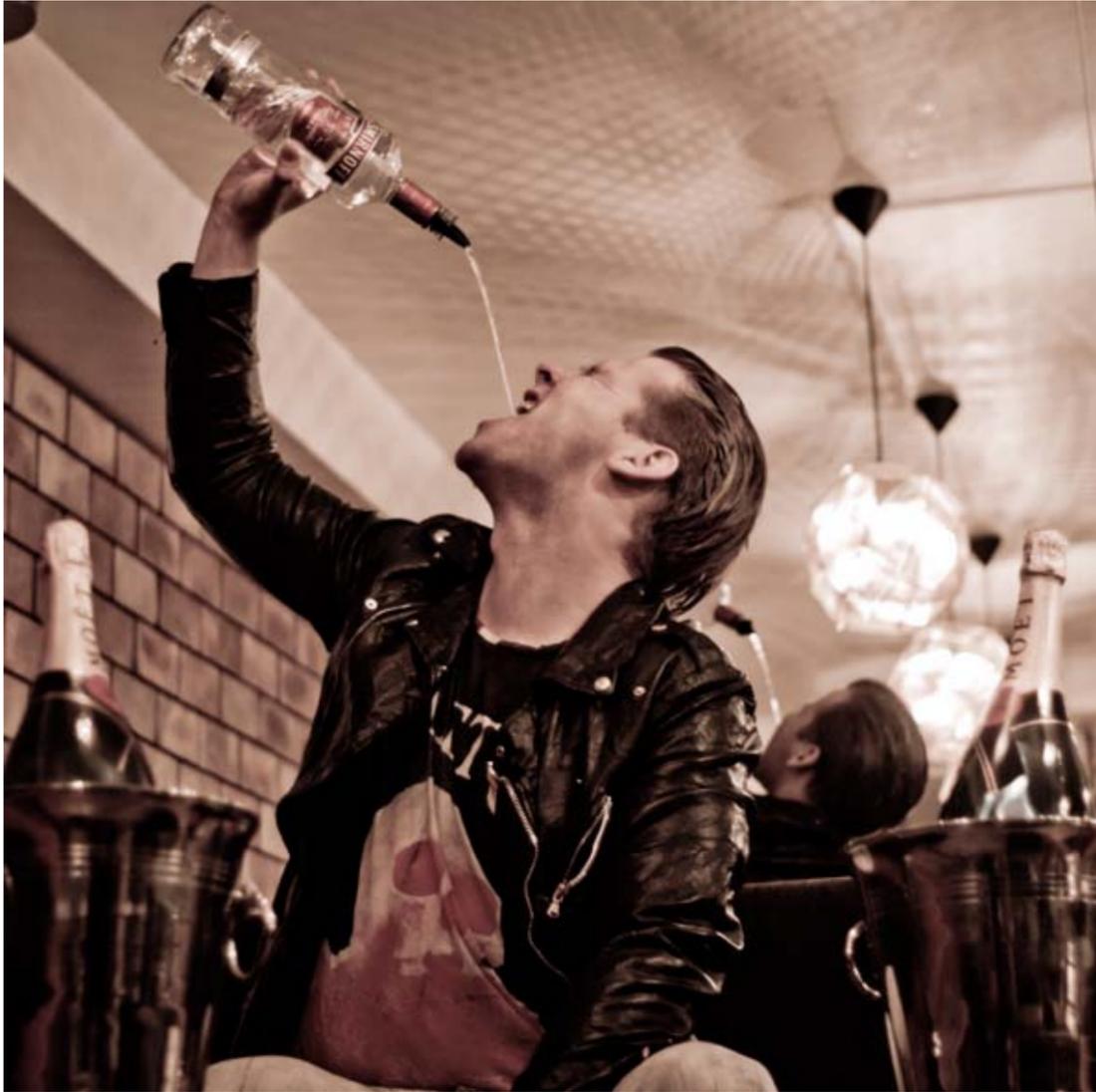
New Year | PARTY!

# Reykjavík On The Rocks

How to party like a pro

By Clyde Bradford

Photography by Hvalreki



**Unnar Helgi Daníelsson is the owner and operator of Reykjavík Rocks, which is a nightlife 'helper' company. They claim to know a thing or two about partying in Reykjavík, and they sell their purported knowledge and alleged nightlife skills to tourists who wish to explore the full spectrum of Reykjavík's partying options. They say they'll find you the best clubs on any given night and make sure you have a gargantuan time. So we figured: when it comes to the biggest party of the year, GAMLÁRSKVÖLD (AKA New Year's Eve) who better to ask?**

**It is someone's first experience of an Icelandic New Year. Everyone knows that the way you bring in the New Year sets the tone for the rest of the year, so how should this person make New Year's Eve a great night?**

Definitely to Hallgrímskirkja at midnight and watch the fireworks, maybe bring a champagne or something nice, pop open the bottle and watch the fireworks. With New Year's Eve, the police give a little bit more room for debauchery. The license for bars and clubs is until 4.30am, but nobody is out until about two in the morning—probably because of fireworks and home partying—so they [the police] give us all a break to keep the party going. Most clubs are open until around six in the morning...

**THE WHOLE CITY PARTYING THEIR ASS OFF**

**Every place has its own New Year's rituals and routines; give us the lowdown on Iceland's!**

The fireworks and the whole city partying their ass off!

**So it's basically like a typical Friday or Saturday night, but with fireworks...**

Yeah!

**How does it differ, though?**

People start their drinking earlier, so the downtown crowd is drunker than usual. It's crazier than the weekend. People party, watch the fireworks, etc. And most popular bands and DJs are booked to play for New Year's.

**THE HIGH COST OF DRINKING**

**Iceland is pretty damn expensive when it comes to alcohol. What happens on New Year's regarding the cost of drinks? And what about other costs, like taxis and getting into venues?**

Drinks cost the same, the bars are just busier. That's the bad thing about New

Year's. It's really busy and hard to get drinks. For the taxis, it is twice the price compared to normal. The venues are of course more expensive. But there is more value also; there are more things to do and more attractions at each venue.

**What sort of people go where?**

Esja is a good lounge bar to start the night. All sorts of people there. b5 and Austur have a mainstream look and girls are dressed really sexy. So it's perfect for bachelor groups, but they are really crowded. Bakkus is kind of an 'artist bar' and has really nice dubstep music at late night. Prikið is for the hip hop people and Kaffibarinn has actors and people in the film/music industry go there.

**JUST DRINK MORE THEN**

**Not all people are into partying. What if someone wants something a little more gentle but still wants a good time?**

That's quite a hard question. Most people are drinking. You have to put up with it, because that's just Reykjavík. There are still the fireworks though!

**Finally, how might a person survive the next day and the almost inevitable hangover? And is there anything special people should be doing or going to see?**

There is more partying...it's the first day of the year! For most people, the day itself is spent being hungover. Then meeting friends, having food, drinking.

New Year | Snap, crackle and pop!

# THE FIREWORKS EXTRAVAGANZA

*It's perhaps a little bit ironic, but it's for a good cause!*

By Anna Andersen

Photography by Matthías Ásgeirsson



**To celebrate the New Year, Icelanders buy hundreds of tonnes of fireworks and shoot them off in a completely haphazard fashion. You can imagine that it makes for one hell of a dazzling fireworks show.**

In fact, Kiefer Sutherland—who once took down a Christmas tree in a Reykjavík hotel lobby—claims that he has never witnessed a more extraordinary fireworks display than when he was in Iceland on New Years.

But who knows how many fireworks displays he's witnessed or remembers witnessing, and the numbers speak for themselves. Icelanders reportedly set off 500 tonnes of fireworks last year, which is equivalent to almost two kilos of TNT per person.

While the fireworks show has become somewhat renowned, it is perhaps a lesser-known fact outside of Iceland that the country's volunteer rescue team ICE-SAR is behind the bulk of these fireworks sales.

For thirty some odd years, ICE-SAR has been importing fireworks primarily from China, and selling them during the allotted four day window, between December 28 and December 31, to fund their operations.

While the teams are made up of volunteers, the rescues can be expensive and the fireworks sales have become critical to their operations. "For many rescue teams, fireworks sales make up ninety percent of the budget," ICE-SAR representative Jón Ingi says. "So it's very important."

The organisation has 100 rescue teams and 40 accident prevention teams around the island, and it gets roughly 14,000 callouts per year, which ICE-SAR representative Jón Ingi Sigvaldason says translates to an annual 640,000 man-hours of work.

"We get all kinds of calls," he says, "from rescuing people in snow storms to looking for people who are

reported missing—such as patients with Alzheimer's—which happens more often than people know."

Every year, the rescue team is also sent to look for tourists who venture off into Iceland's often-unforgiving nature without being properly equipped. Last month, there was the case of a Swedish photographer who lost his way on a glacier. In total, five hundred people from the rescue team participated in his search, ultimately finding him in a crevasse, regrettably dead.

Thus purchasing fireworks from ICE-SAR is definitely supporting a good cause and the fireworks show is, yes, amazing. At the same time, you can imagine that it results in a ton of pollution and a number of accidents too. If you mix hundreds of thousands of inebriated Icelanders with hundreds of tonnes of fireworks, it's bound to happen.

To this end, Jón Ingi says the organisation does its best to prevent accidents. "We spend a lot of money trying to prevent accidents," he says, "giving out 150,000 pairs of safety goggles every year."

In any case, the show will go on and it will be spectacular, so you might as well enjoy it and support ICE-SAR while you're at it. Just remember to be careful and don't forget to wear your safety goggles because as great as it is, it will never be worth losing an eye!



## YULETIDE IS UPON US ONCE AGAIN

As the season of elevated blood pressure and gift-giving guilt approaches, we encourage you to stay relaxed and treat yourself.

Jazz and candle lights. Irish Coffee and eggnog. Almonds and hazelnuts. Christmas punch and all the music you can handle in December.

### December 1<sup>ST</sup> – Eggnog Week

If you're not wearing a reindeer vest while drinking your eggnog, you're doing something very wrong. But don't worry, in our eyes everyone's wearing a reindeer vest during Eggnog week.

### December 7<sup>TH</sup> – Irish Coffee Week

Irish coffee is the luck of the human race. The gold pot at the end of mankind. The accent in taste. The personality of smell. Stay warm this week and Irish it up...coffee style!

### December 14<sup>TH</sup> – Christmas Punch Week

Let us knock you out this week with the delicious taste of Christmas Punch.

Don't let the name fool you though. The only ingredients of this brawl are having fun and enjoying each other's company.

## UPCOMING ACTS IN DECEMBER

### Jakob Frímánn Magnússon & Þórunn Valdimarsdóttir

The mid-town mayor and all around art mogul reads passages from his newly published biography, written by Þórunn Valdimarsdóttir.

### Náttfari

After their ten-year hiatus, the band Náttfari has just released the album Töf and are ready to post-rock it up!

### Óttar Norðfjörð

Get ready for dramatic twists and unforeseen turns as the young yet brilliant novelist reads from his crime mystery The Lier.

### ADHD

With a sound of creamy jazz/rock fusion, they ironically hold your attention in perfect order.

### Hallgrímur Helgason

Everything concerns Hallgrímur Helgason. Poet, writer, painter and playwright. If it's an HH production, you know it's good.

### Lóa Hlín Hjálmtýsdóttir & Hugleikur Dagsson

The dynamic duo read us passages from their newly published books. Illustrations are a big part of their work and "something different" definitely refers to their style.

### Nolo

Sitting steady on your chair, you can be sure the electronic duo will take you on a trip outside of earth's hemisphere. Perfectly suited for our relaxed December.

### Sóley

They say it's an indie kid world, and we're just living in it. Right or wrong, nothing is stopping Sóley from Indie-ing it up at KEX. Let's keep on relaxing.

### Lay Low

Her music combines elements of blues, folk and alternative country. United with the relaxed sound of her unique voice it makes her the perfect fit for relaxed December.

### Pollapönk

From hard rock they switch to school rock with ease. Bring the kids for a memorable evening the whole family can enjoy this KEXmas.

OPEN AND SERVING DINNER THROUGHOUT THE HOLIDAYS!

KEX HOSTEL • SKÚLAGATA 28 • 101 REYKJAVÍK  
TEL +354 561 60 60 • WWW.KEXHOSTEL.IS  
KEXHOSTEL@KEXHOSTEL.IS

