

THE **G**

Issue 11

2021

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REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

SONGS FROM THE BLACK SAND

Damon Albarn—
songwriter,
musician and
Icelandic citizen—talks
about his love
affair with the
country and the
landscape that
inspired his
new album

Drugged Drinks

News: The problem that never
went away

Laufey Lin

Culture: A modern spin on
jazz and classical

Aion

Art: When dance meets the
symphony orchestra

Lava Circle

Travel: Follow Iceland's lava
from mantle to sea



COVER ART:

Photo by Steve Gullich.

On the cover: Damon Albarn contemplates the awesome majesty of Icelandic mountains. Read his interview with Andie Sophia Fontaine on page 8.

First



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07: How Poetry Was Invented



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EDITORIAL

We're Slowly Getting There

COVID-19 is far from over—contrary to my rather matter-of-fact declaration in an editorial some months ago, (hey I'm optimistic by nature)—but it appears to be moving slowly in the right direction. The culture sector is getting back on its feet, though the cancellation of Iceland Airwaves was definitely a shock, and perhaps a reality check for us optimists. In hindsight, it feels as though the festival could have possibly gone ahead, although not in the same format as in the pre-pandemic era. But hindsight is 20/20, right?

While the sector is rebounding, culture itself is booming. New music is still coming out, and new talents are emerging, like fantastic jazz-prodigy **Laufey Lin**, who we interview in our culture feature on **page 12**. **Árný Margrét** is also one to watch. She was supposed to perform at Iceland Airwaves, but will instead appear during **Live From Reykjavík** on November 6th. Check out our interview with Árný on **page 18**, and look her up on YouTube to let her incredible voice fill your soul.

The Icelandic Dance Company, with **Erna Ómarsdóttir** at the helm, and composer **Anna Þorvaldsdóttir** performed

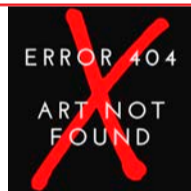
an amazing piece in Harpa at the end of October. You can find our review of the unique performance on **page 20**. And the one and only **Björk** put on a fantastic concert series that was televised by RÚV. She showed us that she has not only not forgotten anything, but is still incredibly inventive in her performance. We dived into the TV performance and wrote about it for you on **page 22**.

In short, the magazine is filled with all aspects of the vibrant Icelandic culture that have emerged from the anxiety and fear of the pandemic. It reminds us that—no matter how hard things get—art and culture always prevail, and humanity always emerges from its depths. ♥

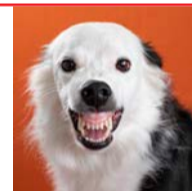
Valur Grettisson
Editor-in-chief



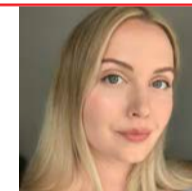
John Pearson is a Reykjavik resident who combines journalism with professional backgrounds in music, broadcasting, scuba diving, engineering and underwater photography. He loves puns, alliteration and lists that have three things in them.



Art Bicnick, the Grapevine's video magician and photographer, is himself unphotographable. This is due to the fact that he consists mainly of stardust; a handy characteristic that enables him to float smoothly across rocky volcanic terrain, and through apparently solid objects.



Polly is a hard-working journalist by day and an enthusiastic ball-catcher by night. A four-year-old dachshund mix with an IQ of a five-year-old human, Polly has been the official Chief Of Morale at the Grapevine for eight months and is a regular contributor to the Grapevine Newscast on YouTube. Woof.



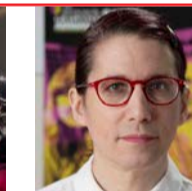
Desirai Thompson is an American graduate who made her second home in Sweden before picking up and moving to Iceland. Having studied psychology and human rights, she's now flexing her journalistic muscle at the Grapevine. She spends her spare time secretly watching reality TV and dreaming of getting a dog.



Catharine Fulton is a writer who has been involved with the Grapevine for many years—possibly too many—serving as journalist, food editor and news editor before settling on copy editor. When not wielding her red pen she's often found opining on Canadian politics (professionally), and bitching about Icelandic politics (for fun).



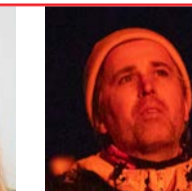
Shuruthi Basappa is one of Iceland's most knowledgeable foodies. She's covered local restaurants for years and has also been involved in various food competitions in Iceland, such as Food & Fun and more. By day, she works as an architect at Sei Studio.



Andie Sophia Fontaine has lived in Iceland since 1999 and has been reporting since 2003. They were the first foreign-born member of the Icelandic Parliament, an experience they recommend for anyone who wants to experience a workplace where colleagues work tirelessly to undermine each other.

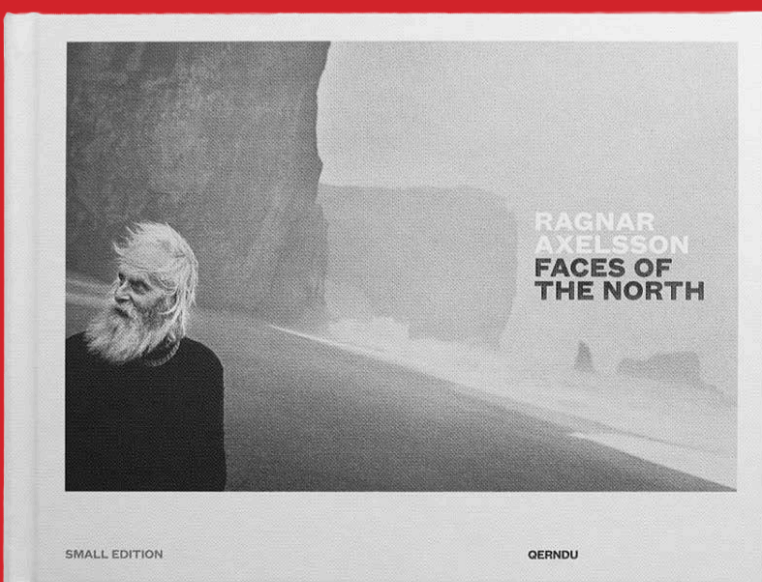


Reetta Huhta is a Finnish student who moved to Iceland to become an au pair, and decided to never fully leave the country. She aspires to become a journalist, and what would be a better place to start than Grapevine? You can probably spot her at Kaffi Vest, where she spends most of her free time.



Valur Grettisson is an award-winning journalist, author and playwright. He has been writing for Icelandic media since 2005. He was also a theatre critic and one of the hosts of the cultural program, 'Djöflaeyjan' on RÚV. Valur is not to be confused with the dreadful football club that bears the same name.

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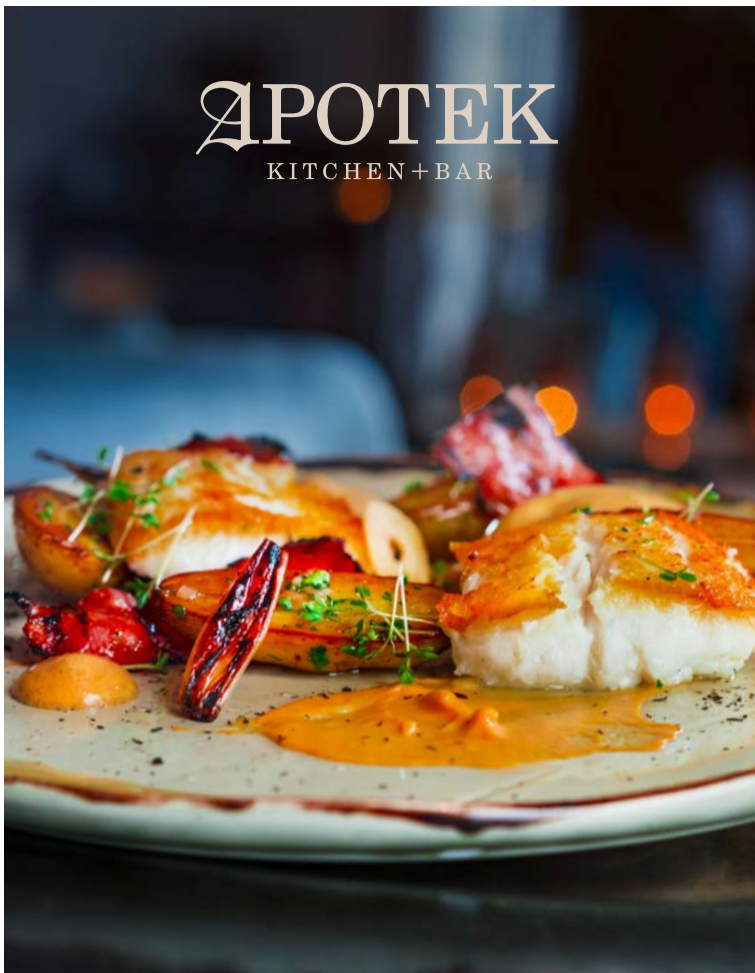
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Sad, but a natural part of Icelandic life

What Are Icelanders Talking About?

All the headlines that nobody reads further than

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine** Photos: **Art Bicnick**

NEWS Boy, do we have a surprise for you: the big story this past month has been **the coronavirus pandemic**. A big shock, we know. It's been quite the rollercoaster since October 19th, when Minister of Health Svandís Svavarsdóttir announced that all mask requirements were being lifted, the social gathering limit was being raised to 2,000 people, and that all domestic restrictions would be lifted in four weeks' time. The coronavirus apparently took this personally, as daily domestic cases began to rise rapidly. We got put back in the "red zone" on the EDC's map of Europe, hospitals began to swell, and we reached daily infection rates we hadn't seen since August. Chief epidemiologist Þórólfur Guðnason expressed concerns that we may need to re-think this whole "no domestic restrictions" thing, and even Svandís is starting to have her doubts. Stay tuned—there may be changes on the horizon.

October ended with a **fin whale beaching itself in South Iceland**. Whales beach themselves all the time in Iceland—in fact, 83 whales of different species have beached themselves on our shores so far this year—but this was a special

case. First of all, because fin whales are enormous. Second, because it happened to wash up just a stone's throw from a golf course near Ölfus, making it trivially easy for people to visit the carcass. Free parking included! The dead whale proved so popular an attraction that the municipality of Ölfus issued a statement October 29th encouraging people to go see the whale before its planned burial in the first week of November. And check it out they did, as the Grapevine discovered when we paid a visit ourselves, as at least two dozen people had brought their

children to witness the unfortunate creature.

Remember the elections? Well, **we still don't have a new government**. "But hang on, that was five whole weeks ago," you say? Indeed it was, but keep two things in mind: it takes a while for three different parties to hammer out a joint platform, even if they've spent the past four years working together, and also, the Northwest District's handling of the ballot count is still being investigated by parliamentary committee and wow, do the hits keep coming in that case. Many of the ballots were left unsealed after the count, left unattended in open boxes, counting may have begun before the polls were even closed, and in some cases, perfectly valid ballots were discovered in bins reserved for blank ballots. As this could mean a second recount, or even new elections, the new government is currently on hold. 🍷



Now where did I put those ballots? I had them a minute ago...



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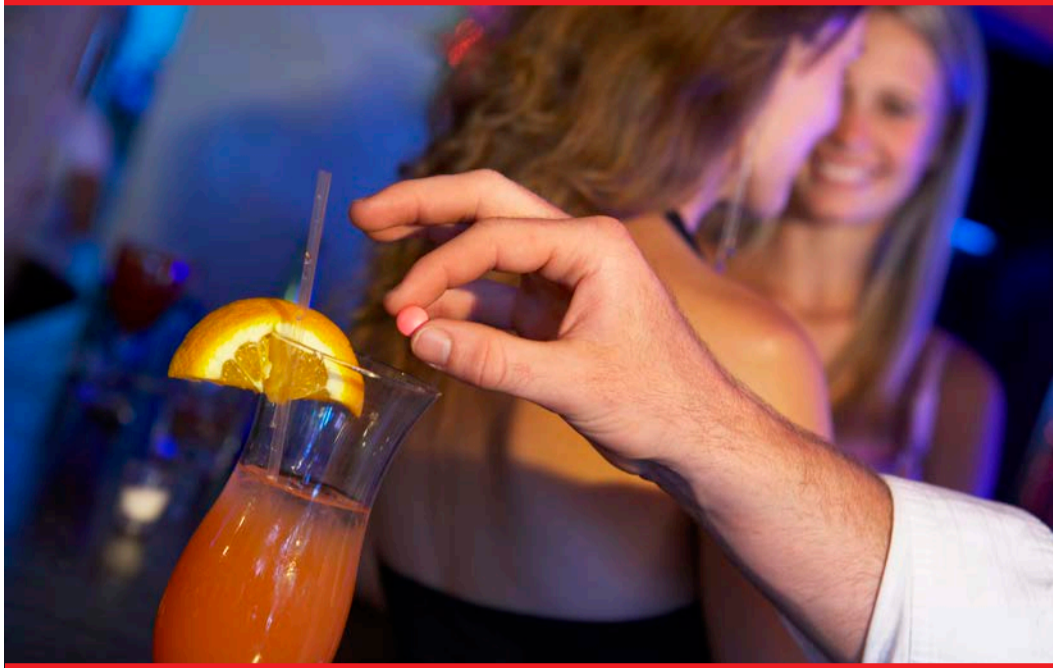
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Don't be this guy

Drugging For Sexual Assault Growing Concern

The problem never went away, but attention is increasing

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine**

Photo: **Adobe Stock**

When a person who goes to the emergency room after a sexual assault, a blood test for potential drugging is not conducted unless a criminal investigation has been launched, Hrönn Stefánsdóttir, the project manager for sexual assault emergency services, told RÚV. Upon closer examination of the issue, it was also discovered that the police are not aware of a single conviction being

made for drugging someone, and that systemic changes are clearly needed to tackle the problem.

No known convictions

Hrönn says that part of the problem is that the symptoms of having been drugged unknowingly are often similar to the effects of alcohol. "So we can't say

at the emergency room—you have been drugged. We can't take a blood test for this unless an investigation has been launched."

Article 194 of the General Penal Code, which concerns sexual assault, does state in part that depriving of someone of consent can include drugging someone.

On that subject, Ævar Pálmi Pálma-son, the assistant chief of police for the sexual assault department, told reporters, "I do not know of any conviction, at least at first glance, where someone has been convicted of having drugged someone. But it has come up and been mentioned in the processing of a case that this is suspected and such."

Systemic changes are needed

The subject of those who have been drugged for the purposes of sexual assault has been prominent amongst Icelanders on social media lately, with Öfgar, a feminist activist group, active in the discussion. Ninna Karla Katrínardóttir, one member of Öfgar, told reporters that systemic changes are needed.

"We need to tackle the police, the health care system, mainly the emergency services, to change their work practices in this area," she told reporters. "There are no laws concerning this, but in order for the law to work, other areas must first be sorted." 🍷

ASK AN

Expert

Q: Why is natural wine so popular in Iceland?

Words: **Desirai Thompson**
Photo: **Art Bicnick**



The popularity of natural wine—the product of farming organic grapes and allowing for the natural fermentation process to proceed without additives or unnecessary intervention—has been sweeping across Europe and the world in recent years. The word on the street is that natural wine gives you less of a hangover due to the lack of sulphates—but is that true? The Grapevine had a conversation with bartenders from two of Reykjavik's favourite natural wine bars—Anna Weronika Zdrojewska from Vinstúkan Tju Sopar and Natalia Grociak from Bodega—to find out.

Anna believes that the popularity of natural wine in Iceland is due not only to the influence of international trends, but also a natural extension of a growing focus on what people eat and how they eat. She explains, "People are thinking more and more 'I don't want to drink things that make me feel bad, that are packed with a whole bunch of chemicals and preservatives.' People are also more aware of the impact on the environment. That's why a lot of people choose to not eat meat."

It's likely this lack of additives that leaves natural wine drinkers feeling slightly less hungover than their commercial-wine-consuming counterparts, however there's no definitive answer to this question yet.

Regardless, it's clear that natural wine is making its mark in Iceland—and for good reason. "There's a way to find something for everyone," Anna muses. "It makes wine much less posh and much more approachable. With natural wines, it's much easier to introduce people to new things."

"My favourite thing about natural wine is the unpredictability of it," Natalia shares. "When you open a bottle of commercial wine, you know exactly what you're going to get, but with natural wine it's always an adventure. It's always different." 🍷

LOST IN GOOGLE TRANSLATION

Reminiscing Past Eruptions

Apparently, the ongoing volcanic eruption at Geldingadalur has turned people's minds to the past. According to a recent Morgunblaðið headline, the eruption is reminiscent of old times.

As a reader of the news, you prepare yourself for interviews with the elderly, who have seen one eruption after another during their time on the earth. You're intrigued by their experiences: out of all the past eruptions they have witnessed, of which one does the current lava flow remind them?

You doubt it's the infamous eruption at Eyjafjallajökull, since that only just occurred in 2010—not old times. Besides, the eruption at Eyjafjallajökull made things difficult for the people wanting to visit Iceland by disrupting air travel across Europe. The eruption at Geldingadalur has been nowhere

as troublesome. If anything, the number of tourists has grown due to interest in the eruption.

Perhaps they are referring to the Eldfell eruption of 1973, which happened without warning? Thousands of people needed to be evacuated from the Westman Islands within a few hours after the eruption. But how would that be similar to the current one?

Reading beyond the headline, it turns out there's been another misunderstanding by our trusty friend, Google Translate. The news has nothing to do with eruptions, although the mistake is understandable. In Icelandic, the word 'gos' means both eruption and soda. The article is in fact about the latter option: a new soft drink called Kremulaði. RH 🍷

Domestic | Morgunblaðið | 5.10.2021 | 21:26

An eruption reminiscent of old times



Dr. Gunn and Sturlaugur, the eruption master, toasted in Kremulaði. Photo / Hari

"Kremulaði is golden in color but smells and tastes of vanilla- and orange-toned creamy flavors at the same time. This version is our first version of stored but not forgotten."

Innlent | Morgunblaðið | 5.10.2021 | 21:26

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GODS OF ICELAND

How long is it since you shaved, Vanir?

Gods Of Iceland: Kvasir

Poetic Justice, Put It In A Saga

Words: Long ago, the Æsir and the Vanir—two groups of Norse gods—were at war with one another. When peace was at long last achieved, these two sides did the only reasonable thing: chewed up some berries and spat the resulting juice into one pot. From this melange of half-chewed berries and god spit arose the hero of this story, Kvasir.

Image: [Wikimedia](#)

Kvasir quickly gained a reputation for being a very wise dude. He would travel the lands, and people would hit him up with problems they were struggling with and, like some kind of Norse

Anthony Fauci, Kvasir would give them the solutions to how best to confront their struggles.

It wasn't long before his reputation began to precede him. Just as is the case now, the ancients also had their anti-intellectuals who were distrustful of academics. Two such people in this story are Fjalar and Galar, dwarves who were disdainful of Kvasir. So they killed him. But they didn't stop there, as they took the unorthodox step of draining his blood into another pot, mixing it with honey, and creating the

Mead of Poetry—an elixir that would give anyone the gift of wordsmithy to anyone who drank it.

While Kvasir's story ends at this point, the Norse gods' love of poetry continued on, so we largely have Kvasir to thank for all the sick bars dropped by these ancient deities. Respect! 🍷

Superpowers:
Signalled peace between two warring sides, very wise

Weaknesses:
Thirsty dwarves

Modern Analogy:
Anthony Fauci



„Why One Mask, When You Can Wear Two?“

Masking the mask, miming the meme. (Or something.)

JUST SAYINGS

The saying „Tvær grimur renna á einhvörn“ originated from our home-boy, the absolute psychopath, Grettir (the strong) Ásmundarson, and is to be found in Grettis Saga dating to the 12th century. The saying literally translates to “two masks slide on someone.” It means that you are startled or realise that the situation has changed drastically.

Scholars have tried to find the origin of this saying, and there are a few theories. The most interesting one is that it refers to the Roman god, Janus, who had two faces and could see ahead of and

behind himself simultaneously.

What this phrase actually means is up to debate. It's a fitting expression for this stage of the pandemic, when you're not sure if you should wear one mask or two or none at all. Or if you're not wearing a mask, but everyone else is, then two masks slide on your face and you realised that you messed up. 🍷 🍷

NEW MUSIC PICKS



Ólafur Arnalds
“Partisans/Epilogue”

Composer and all-round master musician Ólafur Arnalds recently released this dreamlike couplet of tracks, both plucked from his 'Invisible EP'. Sweeping slowly over you, “Partisans” builds in a way that’s thoughtful, delicate and full of suspense. “Epilogue,” on the other hand, is sweet, forgiving and measured. Taken together, the songs evoke a moment of awakening, of a difficult decision, of a dream remembered. And once you’ve allowed them to wash over you, it feels like the sun is shining again. **DT**



Stereo Hypnosis
“Hvolf”

Icelandic chillout maestros Stereo Hypnosis were quietly at work through 2020, creating this gorgeously understated album which they thoughtfully held back to soundtrack the northern hemisphere’s gentle drift into winter. According to the band—Óskar Thorarensen, Pan Thorarensen and Porkell Atlason—the album “speaks of Iceland’s rich natural world, beautiful open spaces, myth and mystery, long winters and patience.” **JP**



Of Monsters And Men
“Phantom”

This November, Of Monsters And Men celebrate the 10-year anniversary of their first album, 'My Head Is An Animal'. The song “Phantom” was a mainstay for the band back when they were making that record, but for one reason or another it didn't make it onto the album. However this gorgeous track has been rescued, recorded and added to the celebratory re-release. It's what you'd expect from Iceland's most famous indie darlings, all soothing guitar riffs, smooth vocals and gentle hooks. If you're experiencing stress, you may find “Phantom” to be a fantastically calming influence. **RH**



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THE VIEW FROM

DAMON ALBARN'S LOVE AFFAIR WITH ICELAND

The musician discusses his new album, social justice, and Esja as inspiration

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine**
Photos: **Einar Snorri**

I'm at the Reykjavik home of Damon Albarn of Blur and Gorillaz fame, sitting in his living room—an enormous space whose defining feature is the window spanning the entirety of one wall, offering a view of a more untouched part of Reykjavik harbour: black sand beaches, a small nearby island, the imposing figure of Mt. Esja rising into the clouds, and the expanse of slate-grey water that stretches to the horizon. Standing just inches from the window is an upright piano, its back to the breathtaking panorama.

AT THE PIANO:

It's in this room where Albarn's newest album, 'The Nearer The Fountain, More Pure The Stream Flows', was composed. In fact, the view itself guides the harmonies and melodies on this album in a novel way.

"I've spent years just sitting at the piano and staring," Damon says. "Once you start it's like—," he begins, but is suddenly distracted by the view from the window. "Oh my god, there's a rainbow, there's everything."

He stands, picks up his tablet, and walks to the window to take some photos of the rainbow in question, singing softly as he does: "Rainboooooow... rainbowwww!" I remark that it's admirable he hasn't grown jaded to this country's features after more than 20 years of making Iceland a part of his life.

"It's hard to get jaded to that," he says, gesturing to the window. "It's volatile. And the mood—it's just crazy."

Over the course of our conversation, Damon talks about how this view inspired his new album, his views on social justice, and how he fell in love with Iceland.

Flying over black sand beaches

"I had a very specific introduction to Iceland," Damon says. "I used to have a recurring dream as a child, of flying over black sand. It wasn't connected to anything, but I would always find myself, at night, in my dreams, flying over black sand. I kept having that dream for a long time. Then I became a young adult and forgot about the dream for a bit. Much later I was lying in a hotel room somewhere, on tour, and watched a National Geographic programme that happened to be about Iceland. Suddenly, I realised that Iceland was full of black sand beaches."

The timing of making this connection was fortuitous for Damon, as the experience of fame was beginning to take its toll.

"It was at a moment in my life where I'd become far more famous than I'd ever anticipated or even imagined," he says. "It

gets beyond a point where your imagination can go, it becomes deeply psychological, its effect on you. It dawns on you that this is not straightforward, and it's not the thing that you imagined as a kid, religiously watching Top Of The Pops. It's way more than that, and way darker than that. I felt I needed to get out somewhere where no one would know me."

This led to his first trip to Iceland, with a typewriter and guitar in tow, and re-connecting with the only person he knew in the country: musician, visual artist and former Sugarcubes vocalist Einar Örn Benediktsson, whom he previously met in Boston. Damon describes Einar as "my guide, really, into the world of Reykjavik." The two soon became fast friends, and Damon began frequenting the downtown pub Kaffibarinn, which he would later, and temporarily, become part owner of. During this time, Damon fell hard for Iceland.

"I started waxing lyrical in every interview about how I'd found this place and how wonderful it was," he says. "It spiraled out of control, really, and for 15 years after, there were huge amounts of people coming over just to go to my bar as one of the things they were going to do. That was a bit depressing, really, as I no longer had anything to do with that. I was only very briefly a co-owner of that place."

Citizen Albarn

Earlier this year, Damon Albarn was granted Icelandic citizenship, some 24 years after first coming here. It's something that he's still quite excited about, as he eagerly shows me his Icelandic passport when I ask if he has one.

"What I'm really excited about is going back into the UK with this," he says. "I only got this one. I didn't bring my British one, just to see how far I could get with it. Going back to England, it's going to be funny, because they always recognise me. They're either going to think it's cool or think I'm an asshole. Which is kind of how it is in my country."

He pauses for a moment, reflecting on his home country. "I'm not everyone's cup of tea, but fuck 'em," Damon says. "What you have to reconcile with yourself in life is that you're not going to be able to please everyone all the time.

"It was at a moment in my life where I'd become far more famous than I'd ever anticipated or even imagined."

It's impossible. And if you are, you're doing something terribly wrong. It used to hurt me so much when I was younger. 'Why don't they like me? I'm really good, I work really hard, and they're so mean about me, certain people.' Even when I've done something really good, they're mean, and I know it's because they just don't like me."

What did we gain from the Iraq War?

Damon has always had a strong sense of social justice, and has never shied away from taking a stand. He downplays this, saying it's "just from being brought up by socially aware, liberal parents. In part coming from a Quaker background, pacifist, you're hard wired into that straight away," but even with such a background, it's not a given that someone who's been suddenly catapulted to fame will retain these values. One of the causes he was most outspoken about was his opposition to the then-impending invasion of Iraq, something he still feels strongly about to this day.

"It does astound me, and obviously you're far more sensitive to your own folks' bad decisions, but with the whole Iraq thing," he says. "There were two million people who marched. It felt on that day like no way will Tony Blair be able to deal with this. This is a very physical expression of public opinion. Especially back then; this was pre-Twitter and everything. And yet it was just dismissed."

In retrospect, he believes, simply marching wasn't going far enough.

"If I was Captain Hindsight, I'd have been able to tell everyone that we can't just march on this Saturday; we have to stay in London, all of us camp in Hyde Park, and just stay there," he says. "It's quite extraordinary, really, the power of the state to just undermine everything. And for what? What did anyone gain out of the Iraq War? Massive refugees, the Taliban, ISIS. None of that's gone away. But what did we gain? I suppose if you're right wing and support Brexit, you got what you wanted, because you scared everybody."

Ultimately, it's the cruelty at the heart of it all that astounds him.

"I just look at them and think, why are you like this?" he says. "What sort of world do

you live in where you think it's agreeable to be aggressive and negative to other people? However much I walk around these things, I always come back to 'no, we have to keep trying to educate people.' We're all exactly the same. We're just little specks of dust, and nothing any of us say is actually of any importance. But collectively..." he trails off, leaving the possibilities open-ended, up to the imagination.

The journey from the sea to the island

On the topic of the new album, I mention a press release that quoted him as saying the album was a result, in part, of a "dark journey" he had taken.

"Sometimes I say things and they get frozen in time and come back to me," he remarks. "It's related in part to what we're all going through, but I suppose when you get to 50, it's the first time when you become really aware of people dying and getting ill, because you're on the radar of all of that. It's just a realisation that it is finite."

To say that Iceland inspired the album, though, is an understatement. Some of the songs were literally written from the inspiration right outside his livingroom window.

"Someone came to me and said, 'What would you like to do?' And I said, 'I'd love to make a record staring out my window in Iceland, with a group of orchestral musicians.'" Damon explains. "I wasn't going to write anything down; just get to some very simple harmonic destinations. But basically, we used to come here with everything all set up. Someone would be in charge of the clouds, someone would be in charge of the outline of Esja, someone would be on waves, and birds, and golf carts. We'd spend hours just playing, playing, playing. And once you take it out of

"There were all these things I'd accumulated while being here, and they became the bedrock of how I wrote the album."

“What did anyone gain out of the Iraq war? Massive refugees, the Taliban, ISIS. None of that's gone away.”

the moment and the environment, you have a really great audio memory of what's just happened, and immediately it becomes very abstract. You can really work with that. It was a great process. But then quite far into that process, the pandemic started, and I was kind of severed from my timeline to make this orchestral piece.”

Esja, the giantess

From there, it was back to the UK, to try and piece together what he had recorded into something more coherent.

“I went back to London, then I went back to the countryside, down by the sea, and left it for about eight months,” he says. “Then I thought, ‘I really want to articulate this somehow.’ All I had was rehearsal recordings of the orchestral stuff so it wasn't a huge amount of use, but I was able to salvage some of it. A lot of the melodic ideas I came up with I played around with in this room. The lyrical ideas, for example in a song like ‘Royal Morning Blue,’ are literally playing and then rain turning into snow, it's as simple as that. Esja is very much my confidante. I imagine a giantess laying on its side. So ‘the road was its snow,’

I mean, once you abstract that, it can mean anything, which is what songwriting's all about, really.”

This living room we're chatting in is, it turns out, the key to understanding the entire process of creating the album.

“You get a very good sense of how it was made being in this room,” he says. “I had these fragments of words and melodies that had come in situ here. So I just turned them into something that felt coherent. For example, the song ‘Particles,’ that came out of flying here and being put next to a very chatty old lady. At first I was like ‘oh god, she's going to talk to me the whole of the

flight.’ Which is my idea of hell, because at some point they're going to ask me what I do, and then I just hate that. I hate the journey of that conversation because it's not something that you can put simply into a conversation. If they don't know who you are it requires a detailed explanation.

“But she was fantastic, she turned out to be a rabbi from Winnipeg who lived in Montreal. We started talking about life on an atomic scale, and how there are certain particles in the universe that will find you, and you cannot avoid them. That was something I really wanted to articulate.”

After arriving again in Iceland, the inspiration continued, sometimes in the most unlikely ways.

“There were all these things I'd accumulated while being here, and they became the bedrock of how I wrote the album,” he says. “Like the song ‘Daft Wader’ was from me and my friends one summer night, at low tide like this. It looked possible to get [to the small island offshore], we were drinking, and then Einar Snorrasson, who's a break dancer of some repute, he decided he wanted to do some naked break dancing. So he started off, and I joined him, and some other people got involved, and we had this big Viking break dancing. Then we decided to go down to the island. That was the start of ‘Daft Wader’, but it ended up in Iran.



sometimes unexpectedly, but it's never not entertaining.

When discussing the Quakers, I bring up that I was born in Pennsylvania, a state rich in Quaker heritage. Damon knows Pennsylvania because of the Amish, though, and proceeds to describe a train journey he took from Boston to Chicago.

“It was amazing really, for two reasons,” he says. “Firstly, I was suddenly introduced, from a nice perspective, to the city of Albany. That's a whole different kind of America, isn't it? All the Amish out at the train station with their horse-drawn-carts. In that context they'd seem like straddling two realities. Secondly, the guard who was

running the night cabins happened to be a massive Gorillaz fan and lost it when he came to my little cabin, and ended up letting me go and smoke weed in the mail car with the doors opened up in the middle of the night. So I'm just sitting on the side, with my legs dangling down, smoking weed and it was a really bright moon, going through the forest. That's sort of the thing about America, all those expanses that you see in movies, I felt like I was in that for a moment.”

This leads to: “It's a real shame we don't have trains here. You could really sort so much stuff out here just by getting a train, an electric train that's run by geothermal energy.” Like most Icelanders, the lack of trains means Damon gets around primarily by car, which is a new experience for him.

Expressing the freedom that having a car brings, he admits that he now rides his bike less and feels guilty about it. When I point out how much emphasis is placed on our individual choices while polluting corporations are let off the hook, he says, “That's capitalism for you. Where did all that start? I guess it's not fair to blame America, because the Victorians were arch-capitalists, weren't they?”

Our interview is cut short by Einar. There are more reporters coming that day, and one is on his way at the moment. With that, we say our goodbyes, and I head out into the wind and rain—a feature that, while usually unpleasant, somehow now has a certain charm after an hour spent with an artist so deeply in love with this country. ❧

“The Nearer The Fountain, More Pure The Stream Flows” releases digitally on November 12th, and you can pre-order it here: ffm.to/da_tntftmpts or order a physical copy at shop.grapevine.is

It's a nice process. Most importantly, it all started in here. Everything on the record started here. The orchestral bit follows the outline of Esja.”

The Amish, trains and capitalism

One of the things that makes a conversation with Damon fun is the almost stream-of-consciousness way he has of telling a story; one subject sort of bleeds into the next,

Happening

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Live from Reykjavík returns again this November, with Iðnó, Gamla Bíó, Gaukurinn and Frikkirkjan opening their doors to music events brought to you by the Iceland Airwaves crew. Local musicians including Laufey, Daughters of Reykjavík and Emmsjé Gauti will perform for both live audiences, and people watching from the comfort of their sofas. That's right, these shows will be streamed live! So there's no excuse not to take part now, is there? **RH**



Andrea Bocelli

Adored Tenor Visits Iceland

November 27th - 20:00 - Kórinn -
12,990 to 35,990 ISK

One of the world's most beloved tenors will perform in Iceland this autumn. Known for his beautiful voice, Andrea Bocelli will charm the audience with his newest album, 'Si Forever: The Diamond Edition'. He will also woo lucky listeners with some of the most popular operatic arias, which he will perform before his own album. Book a ticket sooner rather than later to experience this operatic phenomenon. **RH**



Of Monsters and Men

MHIAA 10th Anniversary Concert

November 9th to 12th - 20:00 -
Gamla Bíó - 9,900 ISK

It's been 10 years since Of Monsters and Men released their first studio album, 'My Head Is an Animal'. To celebrate, the band is performing not one, but four anniversary concerts. The whole album will be played in order, with the crowd being treated to a few bonus tracks as encores. Appropriately enough, these shows will take place in Gamla Bíó, where the band held the album's original release party. This is a must see for OMAM fans. But if you can't make it, they're being filmed and will be streamed next month. **RH**

CULTURE NEWS



Splish 'n' Splash

Maybe A Swan Song: Hipsumhaps At Harpa

Fannar Ingi Friðbjólfsson on the past, present and future

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine** Photos: **Svavar Pétur Eysteinnsson & Sigurður Ragnarsson**

Fannar Ingi Friðbjólfsson, best known as the mind behind Hipsumhaps, might be about to sing his last.

On November 12th at Eldborg in Harpa, Hipsumhaps will be giving a performance that, for Fannar, may ring out the coda of his musical career, and will most certainly be the final act of Hipsumhaps' latest album, 'Lög síns tíma' ('Songs of their time'). In fact, the concert itself was conceived while the album was being made.

"While we were making the second album, I started to set goals for myself and the project, what opportunities I wanted to create for us," he tells us. "I got this idea that I wanted to throw big concerts; concerts that would cover all the lost opportunities from the pandemic, following the first album. We really didn't get that many opportunities to follow up on our first album. We had been postponing the same concerts three times, and I just really wanted to set the bar high. I felt like we were creating a unique sound, and a big sound. We started thinking about the sound of the album within the context of Eldborg in Harpa. To get this huge stadium vibe."

'Songs of their time' indeed

In addition to being the final time it is played live, the concert will be, according to Fannar, "the best experience you will get of this album"—but it goes beyond that.

"On January 1st, the album will not be available anymore on streaming platforms," he says. "So it serves its purpose of being 'lög síns tíma'. Until January 1st, you can get a digital copy of the album on our website [hipsumhaps.is] where we are raising money for the Iceland Wetlands Fund. That's one of the

themes on the album, and one of my core values: matters of nature and climate change. I wanted to do something special to send positive messages related to the topics on this album."

Pulling the album was not exactly a difficult decision for Fannar, and his reasons could not be more fitting.

"I think it's interesting just to let go of some project," he says. "Letting it go for me, this project is so filled with emotions; not just the music but also the process behind it all. I'm

really just ready to let go of all the focused attention that this project has given me. I'll always be rich off the learning curve that this project has served me, and I will take it with me to the next project."

Having a good time

But can we expect more music from Fannar? As it is now, anything goes.

"I'm just thinking in ideas right now," he says. "They're not necessarily in sound and music. They're also visual concepts. I'm looking forward to challenging myself, but that's for the long run. I think it's also necessary for me to take a step back and just think about other things for a while. I've been reminded that the most valuable thing that we have is time. So I'm just going to have a good time." **✎**

You can buy tickets to the concert, and buy a digital copy of 'Lög síns tíma,' at hipsumhaps.is



"I've been reminded that the most valuable thing that we have is time. So I'm just going to have a good time."

And later, after a good towelling-down...

“My dreams came true during the pandemic, and for that I am ever so grateful.”

Revitalizing Jazz For The Modern Era

Laufey is on a mission to make jazz and classical music approachable to people of all ages.

Words: **Reetta Huhta** Photos: **Art Bicnick**

While many of us might see jazz as a genre listened to mostly by middle-aged men with a glass of whiskey in hand, up-and-coming Icelandic musician Laufey Lin is here to skew that image. Currently based in Los Angeles, she composes songs that fuse elements of jazz, pop and classical music.

Growing up in an intensely musical family, Laufey started her musical journey early on. She began playing the piano at the age of four and added other instruments to her repertoire along the way. Nowadays, she is a multi-instrumentalist with an ability to play the piano, cello and guitar, among other instruments. At first, learning to play music felt like going to school, a routine that was included in most of her days.

“I definitely enjoyed playing, but I hated practicing when I was young. It wasn’t until I went to the Tónlistarskólinn í Reykjavík and started focusing on cello and vocal jazz lessons, that I began to actually love what I was doing,” Laufey recalls.

Resonating with jazz

Even though Laufey’s life was heavily influenced by classical music, she did not feel like pursuing it as a career. She had a desire to create something on her own, something that did not play by the strict rules of classical music, but still had similarities to the genre. That ‘something’ she found in jazz, and especially from the music of artists such as Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday, whose low voices, similar to her own, resonated with Laufey.

“Jazz was that special middle

ground I had been looking for,” she explains, “It felt familiar but had a new twist to it. I completely fell in love with jazz.”

Laufey’s background in classical music turned out to be an obstacle that needed to be overcome when she began writing her own music. The rigorous nature of classical music did not pair well with jazz, which Laufey realised at Berklee College of Music where she was accepted as a student after finishing high school in Iceland.

“I had become such a strict rule-follower because of classical music and its theory. When I started my studies in Berklee, they encouraged us to improvise, which was hard for me at the beginning. I didn’t want to do anything wrong,” she says. All of a sudden, the music was based on what she came up with, rather than what she was made to play by other composers.

Making timeless music for all ages

Laufey had a vision of composing music that connects all three of her favorite genres—jazz, pop and classical music. She also aspired to write music in a way that would please people of all ages. “I wanted to make these genres accessible to young people through modern storytelling. It’s a shame that jazz and classical music have become quite old-fashioned. I want to show that they can be cool, too,” she says.

Initially, composing the music she desired to create was difficult: “It was surprisingly tough. I knew what I wanted to do, but I couldn’t

find a way to land there at first. It took a lot of trial and error to discover my sound.” Laufey believes she also needed to grow as a person in order to create music she was pleased with. Moving to the United States, living on her own for the first time and experiencing heartbreak pushed her to open up and get comfortable with writing. “I had to go through a little bit of life to be able to write about it,” she laughs.

Once she had found her style, she started writing her first album, ‘Typical of Me’. It was born in the midst of the pandemic, at the same time her career started to take off. Ironically, Laufey was able to capitalize on COVID, unlike many other artists. “I don’t like to say it, but the pandemic definitely benefited me in many ways,” she admits. With so much time on her hands, she started posting videos and live streams of her playing music on Instagram and TikTok. “I thought that the best thing I could do was to write and release as much music as possible. I’m lucky that everyone else was stuck at home as well, with nothing better to do,” Laufey summarizes, adding that she hopes her music offered some sort of comfort for her audience during the worst parts of COVID.

Overwhelmed by the support

A while after introducing her songs and performing online, her following started to grow rapidly and her music was noticed by international artists like Billie Eilish and Willow Smith. “Everything kind of snowballed from there. My

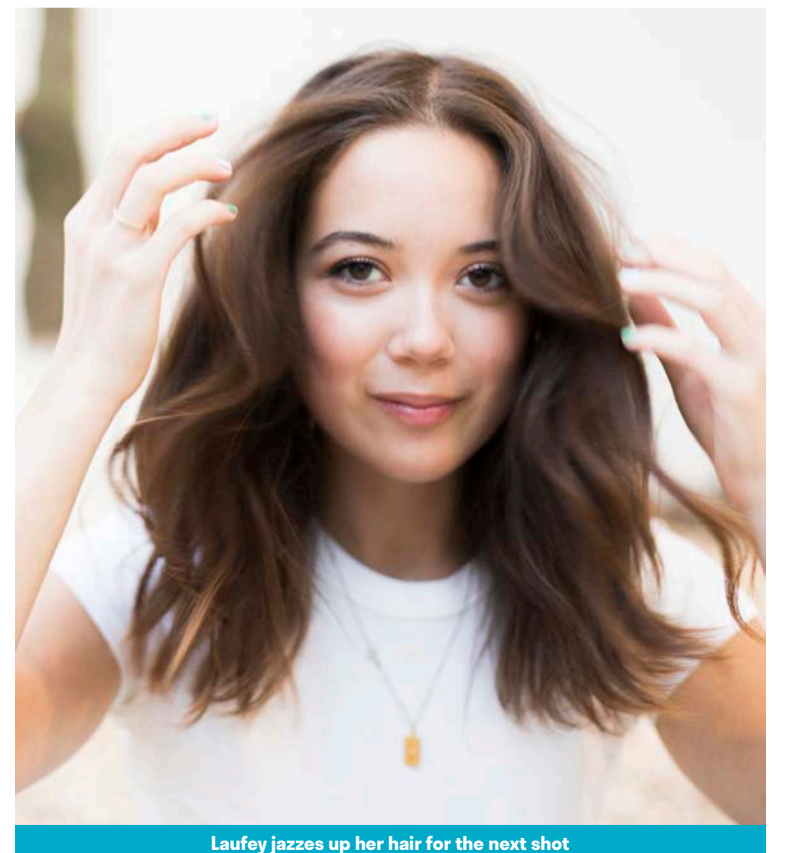
dreams came true during the pandemic, and for that I am ever so grateful,” Laufey says. Nowadays, she has hundreds of thousands of followers on her social media platforms, and she has started to get recognised by fans while out and about. “It was quite overwhelming to realise that behind those accounts are real people. Coming out of the pandemic, I’ve met many fans and it’s slowly sinking in that something truly remarkable has happened,” she says.

Laufey says that composing and recording the album was surprisingly painless, considering it was her first time doing anything like that. The pandemic spiced the process in its own way as well, as most of the recordings were done online. “The album was made in many cities around the world, such as Boston, London and Reykjavík. All in all, it was a collaboration from a distance,” she states. Laufey says she learnt a lot during the process: “Now I know what sounds right for me, what to ask for and when to take a step back.” She also reveals that songwriting serves as therapy for her: “For

me, it is a way of getting my feelings out and making sense of the things that feel a bit puzzling in my head.” Translating her feelings into art has offered her a new way of processing them.

Although the album was released in late April, Laufey hasn’t been able to perform much due to pandemic restrictions. However, she will launch her first tour at the beginning of November by performing at an event close to her heart, the Iceland Airwaves’ Live From Reykjavík festival. “I grew up going to Airwaves events. Never in my wildest dreams did I expect to play there all by myself,” she says, adding that she is excited to begin touring: “I love performing, it’s my favorite thing ever!”

Laufey is thrilled to see what the future holds for her. She has just started her journey and hopes she will achieve her goals: “I want to continue making music, developing my style and bringing all these worlds of music together.”



Laufey jazzes up her hair for the next shot

Farmers Market

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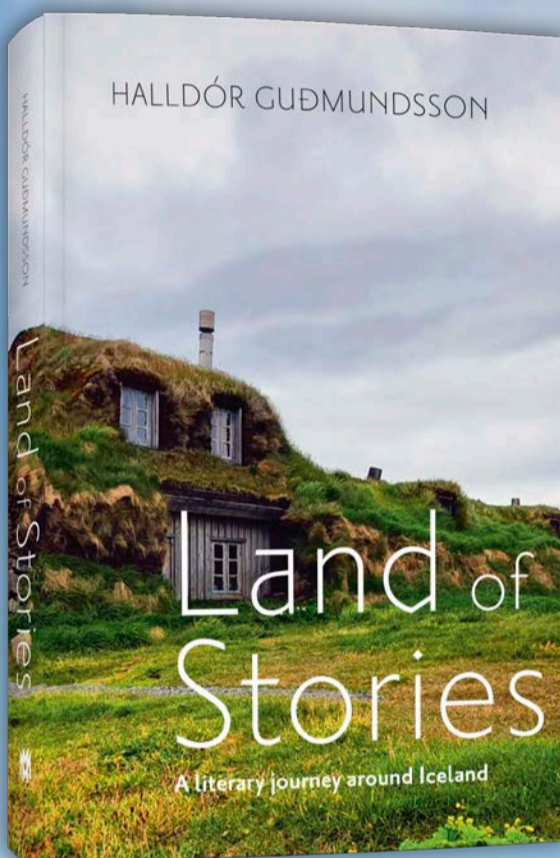
Laugavegur 37



Hólmaslóð 2 / Grandi

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A LITERARY TOUR AROUND ICELAND

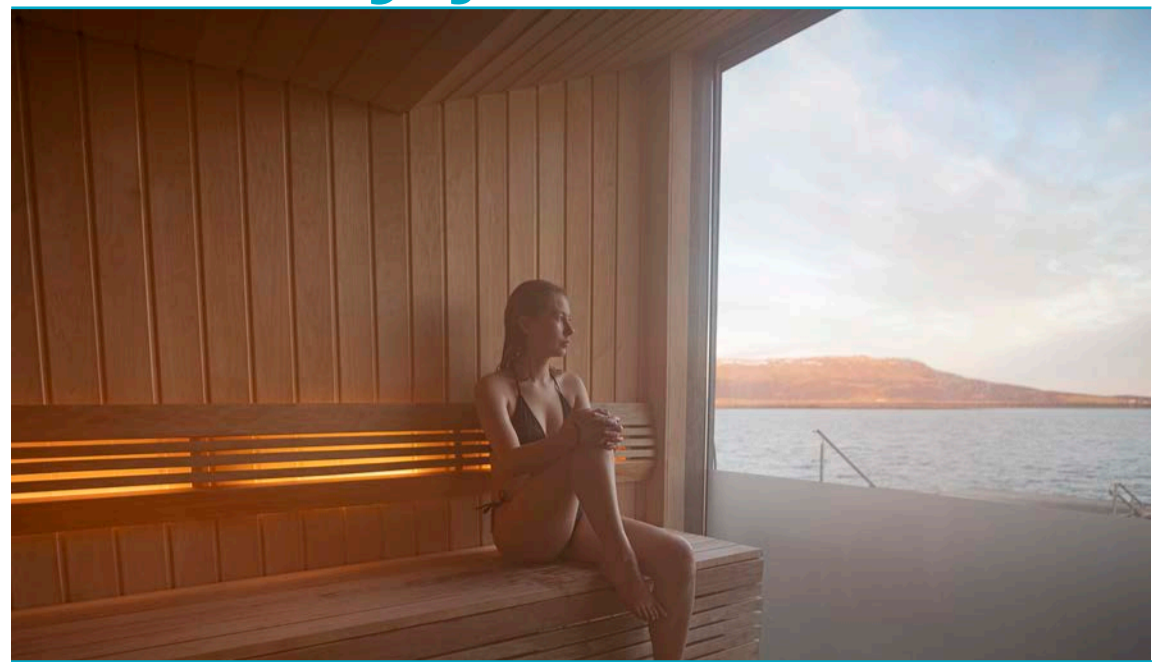


Storytelling is probably the most important cultural tradition in Iceland and a lot of its places have enthralling tales to tell.

This book is a round trip around the country, with thirty stops at such places along the way.



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A reflective moment

Fight The Cold With Heat

A guide to the top five saunas around Reykjavík

Words: **Reetta Huhta & Desirai Thompson** Photos: **Art Bicnick & Vala Baldursdóttir**

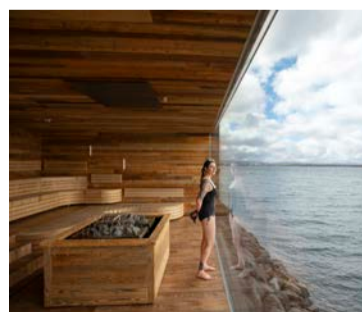
As the cold starts seeping into your bones here in the north, saunas come in handy. The Grapevine crew tested out five of the warmest saunas in the capital area and gathered all the important information about them for you. Note: the crew includes notoriously sauna-loving Finns, so you're in good hands.



Laugarvatn Fontana

Hverabraut 1, Laugarvatn

The hour-long drive from downtown Reykjavík to Laugarvatn Fontana, dotted with striking vistas and a never-ceasing sense of serenity, is the perfect urban cleanse. Once you arrive, this beloved spa is ready to wash away any remaining woes. The environment begs you to make the experience your own, with relaxation pools at varying temperatures, a steam bath and a Finnish-style sauna. What sets this place apart, however, is the opportunity to take a cool dip in the adjacent lake. If you're feeling peckish from the drive, book the Bread Tour—a charming lake-side lesson in geothermal baking that ends with all the samples of rye bread you could dream of. **DT**



Sky Lagoon

Vesturvör 44-48, Kópavogur

Sky Lagoon has been the talk of the town since its opening earlier this year. Although new, Iceland's freshest geothermal spa runs like they've

been at this for decades. Wading in and out of the coves, you'll eventually come across the swim-up bar with sparkling wine (among other things!) on draft. The sauna, step three of the seven-step Sky Ritual, is spacious and offers a stunning view that—when paired with the heat—is hypnotising. For supreme tranquility, go during a quieter time of day and you may even have this little pocket of paradise all to yourself. **DT**



Vesturbæjarlaug

Hofsvallagata 107, Reykjavík

Are you longing for a sauna experience, but don't necessarily want to go to the pool area? In that case, Vesturbæjarlaug is the place to be. They have separate saunas for both men and women inside the changing areas, which enables the biggest sauna-fans to enjoy the warmth without stepping outside the locker room. When the heat is getting too intense, there's always a possibility of plunging into the cold pot to cool down. Also, because the saunas are same-sex only, it allows people to enjoy them in the nude—as one should! Just remember to bring a towel to sit on, if you want the authentic experience. **RH**



Rjúkandi Fargufa

Address varies

When it comes to the best löyly (the steam that rises from the sauna stove), the insuperable winner is this trailer sauna. The stove is flame-heated, making the steam extremely mellow. What's special about Rjúkandi Fargufa is that it comes with a sauna master, who leads the session. The session includes music, essential oils and a whole lot of löyly. After the guests are warm to their core, it's time to dip in the sea. This ritual is repeated three times, and the session itself takes about an hour in total. However, the euphoric feeling you'll experience lasts much longer. **RH**



Sundhöllin

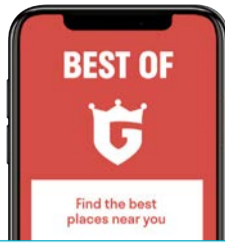
Barónsstígur 45a, Reykjavík

Sundhöllin's sauna might be small in size, but it's big in heat. Hidden upstairs from the public swimming pool, this compact gem offers an intense sauna-experience. Unlike many other saunas in the area, Sundhöllin has equipped their sauna with a water bucket—an accessory which every sauna should include. This means that the visitors are able to control the heat themselves by throwing water onto the sauna stove. As stated in the beginning, this sauna is tiny and you might need to be seated in someone's lap, but the more the merrier, right? **RH** 🍷

“The session includes music, essential oils and a whole lot of löyly.”

November 5th — December 2nd

In Your Pocket



Reykjavík Map

Places We Like

Best Of Reykjavík

Perfect Day

Dance, jive & have the time of your life



Words: **Desirai Thompson**
Photo: **Júlianna Ósk Hafberg**

Eydís Blöndal

Eydís Blöndal has been revered as one of the freshest voices in Icelandic poetry since her first book of poems "Tvíst og bast" came out in 2017. Her newest work, "Ég brotna 100% niður", was released on September 8th. It's available for purchase at Forlagið Bókabúð.

Rise and relax

My perfect day starts with an early rise, around 6:30, with a reverential amount of minutes scrolling through social media. I drink my coffee on the balcony overlooking **Laugardalur** with my partner—preferably before our daughter rises so we can have a moment of stillness together. After our morning routine I walk my daughter to kindergarten and we stop way too often to look at trees and kittens.

Singing on the street

I then have to pace to the gym to catch a hot yoga class to really get me going. My preferred way of commuting is with **Hopp**, listening to music and singing along. I started singing when riding a bike or Hopp as a way of fighting off my social anxiety and justification of using the car more than necessary (where you can sing all you want), but I'm afraid my little experiment may have gone too far. Who cares?

A slow afternoon

My next stop: **Sundhöllin**, where I lie around aimlessly in the pools and the sauna until my hunger and dehydration make me dizzy. With wet, tangled hair I go straight to my pit stop for early lunch downtown: **Emilie and the Cool Kids**. I get a vegan bagel and coffee (and baked goods!) and usually

sit around for an hour or so reading or writing. Since money wouldn't be an issue I would walk around post-late-lunch and buy some books that have been hanging around on my wish-list.

A dancefloor is a damn good time

On **Laugavegur** you usually run into some friends, and that would of course happen on my perfect day. After grabbing a cup of coffee and catching up we would stroll around **Hljómskálagarðurinn** and maybe even visit a museum or the library, depending on where the wind blows us. Then we would hit up some more of our friends and lay down our plan for the night. The night usually starts at **Hlemmur Mathöll** with dinner and a drink, and ends on the dance floor at **Röntgen** after a couple of cocktails. ☺

Vital Info



Useful Numbers

Emergency: 112
On-call doctors: 1770
Dental emergency: 575 0505
Taxi: Hreyfill: 588 5522 - BSR: 561 0000

Post Office

The downtown post office is located at Hagatorg 1, and is open Mon-Fri, 09:00-17:00.

Pharmacies

Lyf og Heilsa, Fiskislóð 1, tel: 561 4600
Lyfja, Hafnarstræti 19, tel: 552 4045

Opening Hours - Bars & Clubs

Bars can stay open until 1:00 on weekdays and weekends until 4:30.

Opening Hours - Shops & Banks

Most shops: Mon-Fri 10-18, Sat 10-16, Sun closed. Banks: Mon-Fri 09-16

Swimming Pools

Sundhöllin, the downtown pool at Barónsstígur, is an outdoor swimming pool with hot tubs and a diving board. More pools: gpv.is/swim
Open: Mon-Thu from 06:30-22. Sat from 08-16. Sun from 10-18.

Public Toilets

Public toilets in the centre can be found inside the green-poster covered towers located at Hlemmur, Ingólfstorg, 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.

Public Transport

Most buses run every 20-30 minutes
Fare: 490 ISK adults, 245 ISK children.
Buses run from 06-24:00, and 7-04:30 on weekends. More info: www.bus.is.

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**Wine bar
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**VINSTÚKAN
TÍU SOPAR**

The Map

Get the bigger, more detailed version of The Reykjavík Grapevine City Map at your nearest hotel or guesthouse, with selections from our Best-Of awards, vital info, downtown bus stops and a wider view of the city.

Dining

1. Blackbox Pizza

Borgartún 26

Blackbox is a solid competitor for best pizza pie in the city. Thin crust, inventive toppings, delivery—what else could you ask for? We'd particularly recommend the Parma Rucola, which serves up all the parma ham goodness you could wish for. For those journeying outside the city, they've also got a location in Akureyri.

2. Chikin

Ingólfsstræti 2

This ain't your mama's KFC. No, Chikin—Reykjavík's first dedicated hot chicken and bao joint—manages to be at once both totally sophisticated foodie cuisine and also food that'll definitely fill the hole in your soul you usually quench with a spicy Twister. So grab some chicken with pickled daikon, shiitake mushrooms, miso mayo and lots of other delicacies.

3. Hosiló

Hverfisgata 12

A newcomer on the block who has certainly made a big stir! Hosiló is a small spot—seating around 30 patrons at full capacity—that offers an eclectic rotating menu of local fresh food. The offerings feature meals from around the world, from French cuisine to Northern Africa goodness, and much more.

4. Kaffi Laugalækur

Laugarnesvegur 74a

For many a young parent, the cafe stop at the end of a long stroll is the proverbial pot of gold. Kaffi Lækur is especially popular with new parents, with a special kids' corner for crawlers and drawers. The generously topped chicken and pesto 'litla gula hænán' and the 'shawaramabake' are our top lunch picks. Also, if you're keto, don't miss 'em,

5. Brauð & Co

Frakkastígur 16

First off—don't miss Brauð & Co's pretzel croissants unless you really don't want to have a spiritual experience. We also swear by their "snuður"—cinnamon bread rolls smothered with a sugary glaze. They take it a step further and stuff the classics with blueberries and whatnot, eliciting inappropriate satisfied moans. Get there early to snatch a warm one.

6. Snaps

Pórsgrata 1

Year after year, regardless of how many restaurants open and close, Snaps remains a timeless classic. Be it lunch, date-night dinner, lazy weekend brunches or a boisterous Christmas work party, Snaps is the perfect venue for a boatload of memories. Steady standbys include the deeply savoury onion soup (with a union of its own we suspect), the house-made fries with crispy rosemary that begs to be a meal on its own, and a textbook crème brûlée topped with an envious snap.

7. Hlemmur Mathöll

Hlemmur

Once a bus station and now a bustling food hall—we love a repurposed space. Hlemmur Mathöll is a classic in the Reykjavík dining scene, with everything from Vietnamese street food to delicious gelato to old school Italian pizza present. Yum.

8. Dragon Dim Sum

Bergstaðastræti 4

For those of us longing for dim sum in Reykjavík, cravings have often had to be satisfied with daydreams of visits past to dim sum houses of Chinatowns abroad. But then Dragon Dim Sum arrived with their fare, which is the perfect marriage between Icelandic ingredients and labouring of Asian dim sum passion. Don't miss their bao or shao mai, and don't worry, their carrot vegan dumplings are also sublime.

9. Lamb Street Food

Grandagarður 7

Pure Icelandic lamb with a middle eastern twist—that's what you'll get at this juicy local eatery where pure kebab is served up with no processed meat. For all you vegans though, never fear, the fresh made salads and hummus are equally wowing. This ain't your regular kebab spot.

10. Laundromat

Austurstræti 9

Have you ever wanted to have lunch and do your laundry in a public place? You're in luck. The Laundromat Cafe on Austurstræti is open (again) for business. Whether you want brunch, a sandwich, or a burger, they have a quality selection of food made to order. Their brunch ain't nothing to scoff at either,

11. Nauthóll

Nauthólsvegur 106

Just behind the University of Reykjavík overlooking the Nauthólsvík geothermal beach is Nauthóll, the definition of a hidden summertime gem. The restaurant is one of those places that downtown Reykjavík rats might call "too far away," but with the advent of public scooters, you can arrive there in style in but 15 minutes. Without hyperbole, there probably isn't a better outdoor view in the city than this place—and their Scandinavian fare is good too.

Drinking

12. Prikíð

Bankastræti 12

Prikíð is the bar version of the "I'm going to bed early tonight vs. me at 3 a.m." meme. At 22:00 you'll have a bunch of regulars relaxing at the bar sipping brews, but arrive at 3:00 and it's Project X. Their outdoor smoking area should be applauded too. Hang out long enough and you'll be sure to buddy up and find an afterparty.

13. Röntgen

Hverfisgata 12

If the cancellation of literally everything is damping your glamorous rock and roll style, Röntgen at Hverfisgata 12 will cure what ails you. This place—a relative newcomer—is already a stalwart in the bar scene, with a stellar atmosphere, great drinks and a lineup of the best DJs in Iceland. Just remember to raise a glass to the good doctor Wilhelm Röntgen (who discovered x-rays) while sipping your tipples.

14. Húrra

Tryggvagata 22

Húrra is BACK! ARE YOU SERIOUS? YES, WE ARE! After a despairing absence from the local scene, the beloved favourite has returned with a vengeance. Seriously—in the few weeks they've been open, the bar/venue has already had shows from heavyweights like Skrattar, Skóffinn and Mannveira. Stop by for vibes, alcohol and other fun things like that you know. Also, their bathroom renovation is pretty crazy.

15. Veður

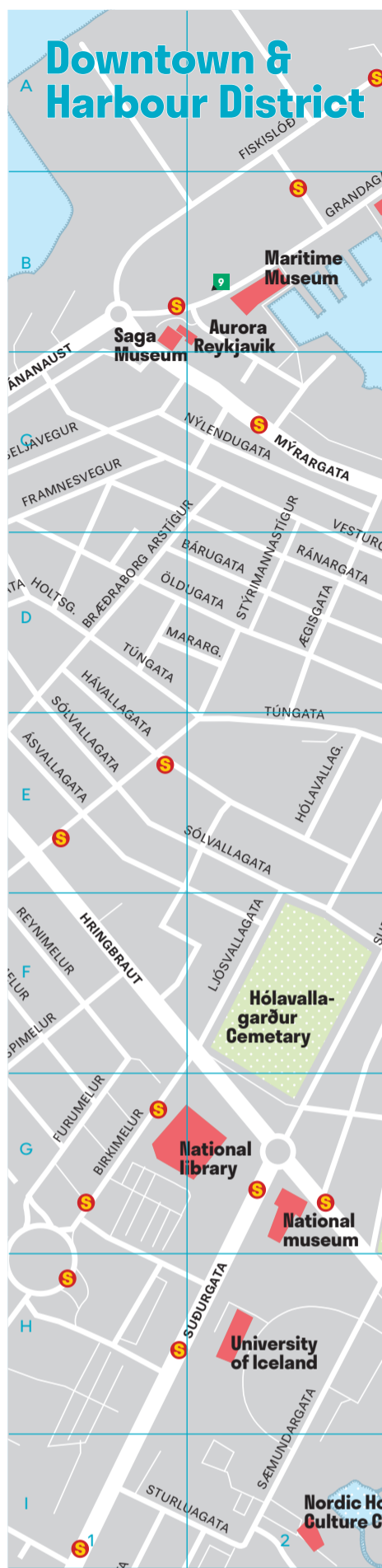
Klapparstígur 33

This charming, low-key, hole-in-the-wall serves up some great cocktails and a dedicated crowd that has grabbed the heart of the Grapevine, even though we are a magazine and not humans. If you feel fine relaxing and chatting, it's still a nice and sophisticated bar, but they've also got an edge. Sometimes they play punk music. \m/

16. Íslenski Barinn

Ingólfsstræti 1a

Of the many nation-themed drinking



establishments in Reykjavík, The Icelandic Bar is the only one that is also a restaurant. Go there at night and maybe you'll meet an elf or Björk or something—that's all people know about Iceland anyway.

17. Mál og Menning

Laugavegur 18b

Wait, a new bar/music venue? Yup! And you thought the pandemic had destroyed all culture in this town. But never fear—Bókabúðir Máls og Menningar is here. There's live music most nights, from DJs to jazz, and during the day, the legendary Bókin is operating from the basement. Seriously—we anticipate this place will be a game-changer in the local cultural scene. Takk fyrir.

E

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New In Town ☆



Smass

Ægissíða 123

We know what you're thinking: great, another hamburger joint. But hear us out. A few Icelandic lads ran a burger place in Denmark for a while but moved home only to find out that there was no smash-style burger place in Reykjavík. These guys opened up Smass in Reykjanesbær and Reykjavík, and, in short, it's been a smash hit! This is the place you go to get some real American cheeseburger with a Nordic twist. And man, that Nordic twist is actually...wait for it...smashing! **VG**



F
FÓTÓGRAFI
Souvenir shop
Skólavörðustígur 22



18. Dillon

Laugavegur 30

A mix between grunge and classy, Dillon Whiskey Bar dominates their little stretch of Laugavegur. Crammed most nights with rockers, metalheads, and tourists looking for a place to mumble AC/DC songs into their beer, Dillon boasts a wide selection of over 100 whiskies and hosts some of Iceland's best hard rock bands on the weekends.

19. Petersen svítan

Austurstræti 12

The sun is finally out, which means it's time for your annual pilgrimage to Petersen svítan. Never been? Well, make sure to bring your sunglasses

because this place has one of the best views in Reykjavík and also very fashionable clientele. Look over the city and have a beer in almost entirely direct sunlight (!!!!!!!!!!!).

Shopping

20. Íslenska Húðflúrstofan

Ingólfsstræti 3

This classic shop caters to all styles, with a roster of artists that serve up everything from realism to neo-school and more. We'd particularly recommend the hand-poked pieces by Habba (@habbanerotattoo). Not only are they gorgeously ornate in that straight-out-of-800-AD-way, but they might save you from spirits.

21. Nielsen Sérverzlun

Bankastræti 4

Way more than your average design store, Nielsen is filled to the brim with knick-knacks from all over, from gorgeous diaries to cosy towels and all the candles you could desire. Stop by, grab something for a gift and don't forget a little something for yourself.

22. Fótógrafi

Skólavörðustígur 22

Fótógrafi claims to have been one of the first photo galleries in town. While its interior is tiny, there's a surprising number of photos to be found inside. The pictures on display are mainly shot in Reykjavík or

elsewhere in Iceland and all of them have a slightly different, edgy take on the island, instead of adding to the abundance of touristy subjects.

23. Stefánsbúð/p3

Laugavegur 7

Stefánsbúð showcases local designers and second-hand high-fashion finds (hello 1990's Gucci!) as well as accessories from quirky international brands. Fun and zany, you don't know what you're going to find but you know it'll be exciting.

24. Lucky Records

Rauðarárstígur 10

Lucky Records is probably the biggest record shop in Iceland, with

shelves upon shelves of new and used vinyl and CDs on offer. If that's not enough, they're notorious for their expert staff whose knowledge goes far beyond the latest Björk or Sigur Rós offerings. In fact, it's best if you just let them take the lead.

25. Húrra Reykjavík

Hverfisgata 18A

This minimalist streetwear/athleisure store serves up a mixed selection of classic items and trendy cuts. They were massively hyped when they opened a few years ago and have stayed hyped because they know what they are doing and are damn good at it.

H

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SECOND HAND CLOTHING
Ingólfsstræti 5
101 Reykjavík



tar skills until the songs started to emerge. “When I was 15 or 16 I tried to make a song,” she recalls. “At first, I was really bad at it. But then, one night, I just made two songs in maybe an hour. It was really fast and really weird, but it worked out well. And then I just started doing it more and more.”

Árný Margrét started quietly posting her creations on YouTube. She told nobody, and was mortified when a family member stumbled across them. But then her secret was out. People started to notice this shy young talent with the pure tremulous voice, gentle, accurate guitar style and an ear for a beautiful melody. And that attention eventually led to her current album recording project.

The folk keeps on coming

She remembers the first session: “I went to Kiddi’s studio and I didn’t know him then. And the thing was, I forgot all my lyrics and I had to come again!” But he was impressed with the demos that they eventually recorded together, and they could both see that a worthwhile body of work would emerge from a longer collaboration. “Kiddi was like ‘if you wanna do it, just say go’, and I was like ‘yeah, sure!’”

They’ve now recorded more than enough for an album—which will probably come out early next year—but Árný Margrét keeps on writing. And thanks to Kiddi’s contacts, there have been plenty

of musicians visiting the studio to help expand on her sound. “It’s hard at first because you make it on guitar, and then you have to get used to all those instruments,” she says. “But then you’re like, ‘wow, this is a great song with all those instruments!’”

And she is now starting to feel comfortable providing direction as she crafts her songs with her collaborators. “If people want to add something to the song then we try it,” she says. “If I like it, then we use it. But it’s my song, so I can choose what I want.”

Árný Margrét is graduating from the high school of folk into the real world of folk, armed with a solid musical talent and a folder bursting with freshly-minted songs, (assuming she hasn’t left it at home).

Info: Catch Árný Margrét playing Live From Reykjavík on November 6th, at Frikirkjan or streamed via dice.fm.

You can also watch demos of some of her songs, filmed at Hlóðriti Studio, by going to the YouTube channel named ‘Arny Margret’.

gpv.is/music
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Wist From The Westfjords

Árný Margrét brings her gentle folk music centre-stage

Words: **John Pearson** Photos: **John Pearson**

Árný Margrét creates sublime, wistful songs that draw on themes of love and longing in the best tradition of heartfelt roots music. She has just returned to Reykjavík after studying abroad, and confides that she’s already missing what she describes as her “folk high school” in northern Denmark. Is that like ‘School Of Rock’, but with Bon Iver in lieu of Jack Black?

“It’s pretty fun,” says the 20-year-old from Ísafjörður. “It’s just creative. You can pick your subjects and there’s no test. I was doing songwriting and music and production. So basically making songs, and having fun with friends.”

Sounds like our kind of college. Árný Margrét had been studying the craft of folk there since early August, “but I’m cutting it short,” she announces. “Because of all this.”

A building buzz

“All this” is the bustle of activity around the talented musician as her career starts to take off. It’s the sessions at legendary recording studio Hlóðriti in Hafnarfjörður, overseen by renowned musician Guðmundur Kristinn Jónsson, (a.k.a. Kiddi). It’s the “music business people luncheons and what-

ever” that she mentions—evidence that Árný Margrét’s talent has been noticed beyond the borders of Iceland. And it’s the upcoming string of five gigs in four days, culminating in her playing at Live From Reykjavík—her highest profile show yet.

“It’s a bit scary,” she says of that concert, “because I think nobody really knows who I am. So I’m excited, but I’m still a tiny bit stressed because it’s like the first big thing to happen.”

Honing the craft

Árný Margrét’s backstory is rooted in the Westfjords, where she grew up. “My mom always wanted to go to music school, but she never had the chance,” she says. “So I think she really wanted me and my siblings to be able to go.”

The music school that mom had in mind was not the kind that you’d associate with either Jack Black or Bon Iver. Nevertheless Árný Margrét dutifully attended, tolerating formal piano lessons until the age of 14 when she got her hands on a guitar, discovered The Paper Kites and started to teach herself the folksy craft of finger picking.

Eventually ditching that music school for a regular high school, she continued developing her gui-

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Event Picks



Reykjavik Art Book Fair ★

November 12th to 14th - Ásmundarsalur - free admission

The Reykjavik Art Book Fair will present art pieces from artists and designers who use books as a medium, as well as the works of smaller art-book publishers and printed artworks from various museums and galleries.

The event aims to get participants to look at book design, publishing and printing as an art form and show its constant evolution. The venue will be packed, with around 30 publishers in attendance. **RH**



Reykjavik International Children's Film Festival ★

Until November 7th - cover charge varies depending on movie

The annual film festival for kids and teens is here again. Bíó Paradís is serving a wide selection of children's movies from all around the world for the youth to watch. This event allows families to enjoy the cinematic arts together, while exploring different cultures through film. That sounds like a lovely way to learn about our planet and its people. **RH**



Geigen's Galaxy Ball ★

November 19th - 20:00 - Ásmundarsalur - 1,000 to 1,500 ISK

Tecno-violin duo Geigen are hosting a masked ball at Ásmundarsalur. The venue will transform into the edge of the world, and guests are asked to arrive wearing masked costumes inspired by space, violins or baroque—the choice is yours. Geigen will perform their new music to the guests. **RH**



MUSIC NEWS

The band, **Ateria**, winners of the Músiktilraunir contest in 2018, just released their first album in October. Part of the prize for the band of young women was studio hours to work on and record their award-winning sound. But when in the process of recording the album, they quickly found out that the number of hours they won wouldn't be enough to capture their ambitious plans for their brand of experimental folk. So, according to an interview with Visir.is, these resourceful women struck a deal with the owner of **Sundlaugin** studio to mop the floors in exchange for more hours. It's obvious that they mean business—and when listening to the resultant album, it's clear they used their time in the studio wisely. This is a strong debut for a band that could soon be making international headlines—and they wouldn't be the first Músiktilraunir alumni to do so. **VG**



Our former cover star, **Fannar Ingi Friðjónsson**, or the musician **Hipsumhaps**, has announced that he will take down his hit album, 'Lög síns tíma,' from Spotify in the new year. Part of the reason is because of his ongoing dispute with his publisher, **Record Records**. Fannar Ingi has launched the homepage **hipsumhaps.is** where his fans will be able to buy the record. All profits will go to the Icelandic votlendissjóður (wetland fund), which is fighting global warming right here at home. This will be a true bummer for the thousands that rely on Spotify to listening to **Hipsumhaps**, but the alternative is for such a good cause, that you'll feel good with every listen. **VG**



The wonderful talent and otherworldly singer, **Jónsi**, just released a surprise album, called '**Obsidian**'. This is his third studio album, and coincides with his installation of the same name at the **Tanya Bonakdar Gallery** in NYC. Co-produced and mixed by **Paul Corley** (**Yves Tumor**, **Oneohtrix Point Never**, **Ben Frost**, **Koreless**) and **Nathan Salton**, **Obsidian** follows a more ambient path than its predecessor 'Shiver', which was released just over a year ago. Jónsi is perhaps best known for being the founder and the singer in the legendary band **Sigur Rós**, and therefore it's also to no surprise that he draws his inspiration from Icelandic nature, but his new album is inspired by the majestic volcano at **Fagradalsfjall**. Find the album on Spotify. **VG**

November 5th — December 2nd

Concerts & Nightlife

Events are listed by day, and are all live performances or DJ sets. For complete listings and detailed information on venues visit grapevine.is/happening

Send your listings to: events@grapevine.is

Friday November 5th

DJ Bingo - Disney Theme

20:00 Gaukurinn

Friday Jazz Night

20:00 Mál og Menning

Kate Havenik & Guy Sigsworth

21:00 Nordic House

Tómas R. Einarsson Tríó

20:00 Skuggabaldur

International Children's Film Festival

Bíó Paradís

Saturday November 6th

Manic State

15:00-18:00 Hringekjan

★ Live from Reykjavik

20:00 Various venues

Aurora Foundation Market

Mengi

Sigurður Guðmundsson

20:00 Mál og Menning

★ International Children's Film Festival

Bíó Paradís

Los Bomboneros

21:00 Skuggabaldur

Sunday November 7th

Mengi for Kids

12:00 Mengi

ZHDK Strings

16:00 Harpa

Singer/Songwriter Night

20:00 Gaukurinn

★ International Children's Film Festival

Bíó Paradís

Ragnheiður Gröndal

20:00 Skuggabaldur

Monday November 8th

Monday Jazz Night

20:00 Skuggabaldur

Tuesday November 9th

Karaoke

20:00 Gaukurinn

★ Of Monsters And Men Anniversary Concert

20:00 Gamla Bíó

Inga Maria Hjartardóttir

20:00 Mál og Menning

Nico Moreaux Quartet

20:00 Skuggabaldur

Wednesday November 10th

Concertgebouw Orchestra & Klaus Mäkelä

19:30 Harpa

★ Of Monsters And Men Anniversary Concert

20:00 Gamla Bíó

Holdris & Blóraböggull

20:00 Gaukurinn

Sycamore Tree

20:00 Mál og Menning

Daniel Friðrik, Valdi Kolli & Magnús

Trygvason Eliassen

20:00 Skuggabaldur

Thursday November 11th

★ Of Monsters And Men Anniversary Concert

20:00 Gamla Bíó

DJÁSS trio

20:00 Skuggabaldur

Red Line & Hylur

20:00 Gaukurinn

Friday November 12th

★ Reykjavik Art Book Fair

Ásmundarsalur

Apocalypsestick

20:00 Gaukurinn

Friday Jazz Night

20:00 Mál og Menning

Humar Saman Festival

20:00 Mengi

★ Of Monsters And Men Anniversary Concert

20:00 Gamla Bíó

Hipsumhaps

20:30 Harpa

Saturday November 13th

Teitur Magnússon

20:00 Mál og Menning

BÖSS kvartett

21:00 Skuggabaldur

Sunday November 14th

Ennio Morricone, In Memoriam

17:00 Harpa

Elvar Bragi kvartett

20:00 Skuggabaldur

Monday November 15th

Björk Orkestral

17:00 Harpa

Helma Möller

20:00 Mál og Menning

Tuesday November 16th

Karaoke

20:00 Gaukurinn

Jazzdjöflar

20:00 Skuggabaldur

Wednesday November 17th

Coney Iceland - Circus Side Show

20:00 Gaukurinn

Beebee and the Bluebirds

20:00 Mál og Menning

Thursday November 18th

Laminar Flow, Cosmic Onion & Eilíf

Sjálfstrúan

20:00 Gaukurinn

Mandólin

20:00 Mál og Menning

Ingi Bjarni kvartett

20:00 Skuggabaldur

Friday November 19th

★ Geigen Masked Ball

16:30 Ásmundarsalur

Spacebreaker and Chernobyl Jazz Club

20:00 Gaukurinn

Þorgrímur Jónsson kvartett

20:00 Skuggabaldur

Mikael Lind Album Release Concert

21:00 Mengi

Saturday November 20th

Sbeen Around

14:00-17:00 Hringekjan

Reykjavik Women's Choir

15:00 Harpa

Lucy in Blue

20:00 Gaukurinn

Sunday November 21st

Gabriel Fauré - Requiem

17:00 Hallgrímskirkja

Magnús Thorlacius

20:00 Mál og Menning

GDRN & Magnús Jóhann

20:00 Skuggabaldur

Monday November 22nd

Sleep Conference

13:00 Harpa

Brjóstbirta

20:00 Mál og Menning

Monday Jazz Night

20:00 Skuggabaldur

Tuesday November 23rd

Ebenezer

20:00 Mál og Menning

Slava Poprugín & Ólöf Sigursveinsdóttir

20:00 Harpa

Wednesday November 24th

The Parasols

20:00 Gaukurinn

FÍH & MT jam session

20:00 Skuggabaldur

Philipp Rumsch & Ingi Bjarni

21:00 Mengi

Thursday November 25th

Sváfnir Sigurðarson

20:00 Mál og Menning

Sing-along with Iceland's Rock Choir

20:00 Harpa

KIN & Jesper Pedersen

21:00 Mengi

Friday November 26th

Nykur

20:00 Gaukurinn

Jóel Pálsson kvartett

20:00 Skuggabaldur

Hróðmar Sigurðsson with a Band

21:00 Mengi

Bodega Jazzbað

21:00 Bodega

Saturday November 27th

Oh My Goth - Goth Night

20:00 Gaukurinn

Nina Richter with Christmas Choir

20:00 Mál og Menning

★ Andrea Bocelli

20:00 Kórinn

Sunday November 28th

Johann Sebastian Bach: Christ-mas

Ora-torio

17:00 Harpa

Poetry Night

20:00 Gaukurinn

Christmas with Jóhanna

20:00 Háskólalabíó

Monday November 29th

Monday night jazz jam

20:00 Skuggabaldur

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Art



It's all fun and games until somebody gets hurt

Prowling Monsters, Hidden Darkness

The Icelandic Dance Company meets The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra

Words: **Valur Grettilsson** Photo: **Einar Hrafn Stefánsson**

out horrific, hunting sounds—a signature of Erna's creations. The monster, formed by all the dancers, exploded, squeaked and felt so alive that it was truly a sight for the eyes. The dancers commanded the audience's attention, fighting to overshadow Anna's composition.

Breaking the violin

As the performance progressed onto Anna's Entropia, the fusion between the musicians and the dancers became stronger. Dancers walked around with the violist, who bravely continued to perform her solo without a hiccup. The dancers crawled around the musicians like odd creatures until in the end, the dancers each took their own instruments and danced violently. So violently, in fact, that one of the violins being swung around, shattered and shot out into the audience (don't worry, no one got hurt).

The grand scheme of things

The influence behind Anna's compositions is supposedly the ecosystem and interplay of the existence of mankind in the grand scheme of things. Although this was not on my mind while listening, my thoughts often wandered to the dark Atlantic Ocean—a stronger experience than I anticipated. And perhaps, because the concept is so open, it fit into the grand scheme of things.

This was a truly unique performance, and it was a privilege to see, and experience, two of Iceland's greatest artists fuse together in such a strong and powerful way.

✂

The monster

In the second composition, Transcension, the dancers formed a terrifying monster and voiced



Occasionally, Icelanders have beautiful northern lights, majestic volcanos and Godlike sunsets with all the colours in the world painting the sky. But none of this compares to the incredible performance of AÍÓN, where two of Iceland's greatest artists created a truly unique night out at Harpa.

From Sweden to Iceland

After premiering the show in Sweden in 2019, the Icelandic Dance Company (IDC) and Icelandic Symphony Orchestra (ISO) brought AÍÓN to the latter's home base, playing to a theatre of Icelanders who have waited out a pandemic to witness the award-winning performance.

AÍÓN is the result of a collaboration of world-renowned dancer and IDC art director Erna Ómarsdóttir, and incomparable composer Anna Þorvaldsdóttir. Both have gained international attention, with Anna previously shortlisted for best composition in New York Times and Erna being more or less the reason Icelandic dance is booming today, while also having won multiple international awards for her choreography and performances.

Fusion

Anna's dark composition begins with Morphosis. The dancers begin slowly, sliding over the stage, while the music takes the reins with both hands. All the while, lights project liquid-like

streaks on the walls of Eldborg. Now, there's good reason Anna is considered one of the best composers in the world. Her heavy and dark undertones and hauntingly beautiful melodies stole the show out of the gate. At moments I had to remind myself that the dancers were sliding around the stage until they crept up to the conductor, who then turned to control them with her movements while also guiding the orchestra. That was the moment the strong fusion really occurred between the music and the dancers. Little did I know, a battle of forms had begun.

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Art Picks



★ Attempting the Embrace n°31

Until December 5th - Hafnarhús, Tryggvagata 17

Have you ever walked outside on a perfect spring day? The air is

neither warm nor cold. If you close your eyes and extend your arms away from you, it can often feel as if the barrier between body and space is blurred. That's exactly the experience Reykjavik-based French multidisciplinary artist Claire Paugam—recipient of the 2020 Icelandic Art Prize Motivational Award of the Year—aims to deliver at her new exhibition at

Hafnarhús. The city bench set up in the middle of the event space is only a hint at what's to unfold. Urging visitors to consider their position in the environment—both within and outside the walls of the building—the exhibit employs visual analogy to display the push and pull between the human body and the environment. **DT**



★ Reclaim(ing)

Until November 12th - Listasafn Mosfellsbæjar, Pverholt 2

This exhibition features the work of sixteen female artists from the Association of Female Painters. Founded in 2019, this organization aims to increase visibility of a new generation of female painters in Iceland, as well as act as a hub for an exchange of ideas. **DT**



★ Songbirds

November 7th until January 16th - Hafnarborg, Strandgata 34

On a trip to Cuba some time ago, Icelandic artist Katrín Elvarsdóttir noticed caged songbirds adorning windows of local homes, as many tourists to the island do. In her work, Katrín compares the loneliness of these isolated birds with the human experience of isolation. **DT**



★ Kristín Þorkelsdóttir

Until Dec 30th - Museum of Design and Applied Art, Garðatorg 1, 210 Garðabær

You've probably seen Kristín Þorkelsdóttir's work before, though you might not know it. She's designed the packaging of countless foodstuffs, as well as Icelandic banknotes and other famous items. Come trace her progression as an artist. **HJC**

November 5th — December 2nd

Art Listings

Events are listed by venue. For complete listings and detailed information on venues, visit grapevine.is/happening.

Send your listings to: events@grapevine.is

Opening

BERG CONTEMPORARY

Dieter Roth, Graphic Works

What you wear often reveals who you are, and Sunna Örlýgsdóttir understands this as well as anyone. Her fascination with the process of garment making is evident in her curious and captivating creations. From the luxurious to the peculiar, Sunna experiments with it all.

- Opens on November 13th, 2021
- Runs until December 23th, 2021

PULA

Ofankoma

Softness with a statement is the name of the game in Lilý Erla Adamsdóttir's forthcoming exhibition. Her bold yet delicate pieces push far beyond the bounds of crafting to plant her work firmly in the realm of evocative, unique and surprisingly timeless art.

- Opening on November 6th
- Runs until November 28th

Ongoing

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND

Of The North

'Of the North' (2001) is created from Steina Vasulka's archive of video recordings of Icelandic nature, shot from macroscopic and microscopic viewpoints. So from microbes to crashing waves and melting ice, this is a visual document of the formation and destruction of our planet.

- Runs until January 9th, 2022

Hello Universe

It's 2021, and we're so over Earth; cue the entrance of Finnur Jónsson. The avant-garde art of Finnur—the first Icelandic artist to address outer space in his works, in the early 20th century—presents the artist's unfettered interpretation of the marvels of the celestial bodies. Always remember: we are but matter experiencing itself on a pale blue dot.

- Runs until January 9th, 2022

Muggur

Guðmundur Thorsteinsson, widely known by his artist name, Muggur, was also known for his captivating personality. While his artistic career may have been relatively brief—he died at the age 32—he lived a full and adventurous life. This fact is

evident in this exhibit which depicts scenes from his travels around the world, as well as around his native Iceland. His worlds of fantasy are also on display here, among works showcasing various other themes.

- Runs until February 13th, 2022

EINAR JÓNSSON MUSEUM

Permanent Exhibition

In 1909 Einar Jónsson—described on the museum's website as "Iceland's first sculptor"—offered all of his works as a gift to the Icelandic people, on the condition that a museum be built to house them. The resulting edifice, constructed just over the road from Hallgrímskirkja, now contains close to 300 artworks. There is also a beautiful garden with 26 bronze casts of the artist's sculptures to enjoy.

REYKJAVÍK CITY MUSEUM

Settlement Exhibition

This permanent exhibition—where Viking ruins meet digital technology—provides insight into Reykjavík's farms at the time of the first settlers. Archaeological remains uncovered on site dating back to 871 AD surround you.

18

Elisions

This new show gathers together pieces by American artists N. Dash, K.R.M. Mooney, B. Ingrid Olson and Carrie Yamaoka, who use painterly, photographic and sculptural methods to explore the concept of 'Elision'. This word conveys the sense of something missing, truncated, compressed, or contracted. To quote the promotional material supporting this launch: "Removal is additive, just quietly so."

- Runs until November 20th

REYKJAVÍK MARITIME MUSEUM

Fish & Folk

Name a better duo than fish and Iceland. You can't. So come learn about the history of Icelandic fisheries from row boats to monstrous trawlers.

Melckmeyt 1659

Melckmeyt was a Dutch merchant ship that crashed near Flatey Island in 1659. Explore the wreck here.

with two images of different origins against each other.

GERDARSAFN

Debatable Lands: Dialogues from Shared Worlds

This is a mid-career retrospective of the 20-year collaboration between artists Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir and Mark Wilson. Snæbjörnsdóttir and Wilson approach their art partnership with an ecological and pluralistic view. In a research-based practice, they prompt discussion and thought about our changing world, and our own human role in those changes.

- Runs until January 9th, 2022

FOLD GALLERÍ

Double Exhibition

Fold Gallerí—auction house, and purveyors of fine art since 1990—presents a new exhibition featuring Hrafnhildur Inga Sigurðardóttir and Rósa Sigrún Jónsdóttir. Hrafnhildur Inga is an oil-on-canvas artist who predominantly features water in her art, be that a river, a waterfall or any kind of rivulet inbetween. Rósa is a visual artist who often utilises the tension of differing textiles in her sculptures and installations.

- Runs until November 19th, 2021

ICELANDIC ART CENTER

Time Has Come

The 10th Sequences art biennial returns, curated by Þórunna Björnsdóttir and Þráinn Hjálmarsson. Creative energy abounds in dialogue between featured artists specialising in various media. At times, this interchange between moment, environment and context rises to the level of art itself. Take part in this interdisciplinary exhibition showcasing 35 local and international artists.

- Runs until November 21st, 2021

REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

The Return of the King

Artist and photographer Sigmundur Unnar Birgisson marries floral images by the late photographer Hjálmar R. Bárðarson with strikingly simple photographs of elderly Icelandic men. The union feels a touch unusual, but at the same time quite harmonious.

- Runs until December 12, 2021

NORDIC HOUSE

Time Matter Remains Trouble

The interplay between matter and time is the focus of this exhibition featuring artists Alice Creischer, Anna Lindal, Anna Rún Tryggvadóttir, Bjarki Bragason and nabbteeri. They urge us to remember that creation, preservation and decay is a natural progression faced by humans, objects and ideas alike.

- Runs until December 21st, 2021

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - KJARVALSSTAÐIR

Guðný Rósa Ingimarsdóttir: opus-oups

Guðný lives and works in French-speaking Belgium. The word 'opus' denotes a piece of artwork, while 'oups' is French for 'oops'. Paired together the words demonstrate that art that can come from seemingly inconsequential things. Often employing found, forgotten or formerly used materials, Guðný brings the essence of 'opus-oups' to life.

- Runs until January 16th, 2022

FOLD GALLERÍ

Náttúran í fókusi

This exhibition of Þórunna Bára Björnsdóttir's colourful and imposing works urges its viewers to take a moment in time—with all the natural destruction on the earth's doorstep—to appreciate the wonder of nature at its best. In the time of anthropogenic climate change, these moments help ground us and propel us forward. Hopefully, at least, we progress clutching the dream of a brighter future for our surroundings.

- Runs until November 13th, 2021

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - KJARVALSSTAÐIR

Budding Earth

Swedish sculptor Carl Boutard and Icelandic sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson are featured in Ásmundarsalur's current exhibition, Budding Earth. When the work of the two is presented together, each shines a light on the creations of the other to offer a view distinct from that if they were considered separately. With strong themes of nature, movement and human life, this exhibition

allows you to rethink the interplay of these things and ultimately, make the experience of the work all your own.

- Runs until February 6th, 2022

BERG CONTEMPORARY

In Media Res

The artistic journey Hulda Stefánsdóttir took in publishing her book 'Time Map' inspired the creation of her newest exhibition. The pandemic has, for better or worse, made all of us stop and reconsider time—likely more than ever before. For Hulda, it's no different. Pay a visit to BERG Contemporary to press pause on your own timeline.

- Runs until November 6th, 2021

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ICELAND

The Portrait Collection

The artistic journey Hulda Stefánsdóttir took in publishing her book 'Time Map' inspired the creation of her newest exhibition. The pandemic has, for better or worse, made all of us stop and reconsider time—likely more than ever before. For Hulda, it's no different. Pay a visit to BERG Contemporary to press pause on your own timeline.

- Runs until January 2nd, 2022

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - HAFNARHÚS

AbraKadabra - The Magic of Contemporary Art

The newest exhibition at Hafnarhús aims to open the world of contemporary art up to a new generation of art enthusiasts, namely children and young adults. The works on display are all in the permanent collection of the Reykjavik Art Museum.

- Runs until March 20th, 2022

MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ART

GARÐATORG 1
210 GARÐABÆR

EXHIBITIONS

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SIGURÐARDÓTTIR UNTIL 27.02.22

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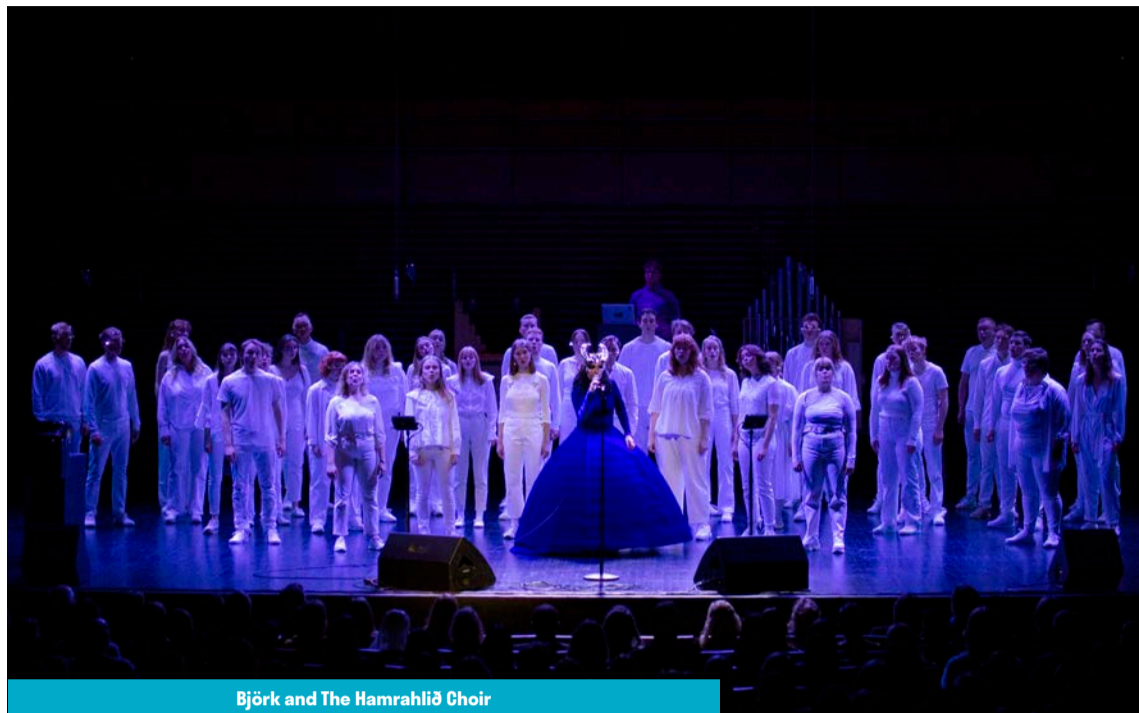
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TASTY COCKTAILS



Björk and The Hamrahlíð Choir

Björk's Choral Concept Soars

Voices lift this episode of the Icelandic icon's 'Orkestral' concert series

Words: **John Pearson** Photos: **Santiago Felipe**

A musician announcing plans to “re-imagine” a well-loved body of work in the live arena can induce a shiver down the spine of the devoted fan. In anticipation of the results? Or of dread at what might transpire? Perhaps a mixture of both, given the chequered history of this concept.

This televised performance by Björk in Reykjavík's Harpa Concert Hall—part of a series presenting her songs through unusual instrumentation—sees her collaborate with the Hamrahlíð Choir, one of Iceland's foremost choral organisations. And there's no need for Björk fans to be hesitant to witness the results, as this treatment coaxes breathtaking new aspects out of familiar material.

Many of the songs are taken from her 2004 album 'Medúlla', a record constructed mainly from various sounds made by the human voice. Björk decided not to tour the record at the time, considering it too difficult to recreate on stage. But the Hamrahlíð Choir, in making 42 human voices available, provides an unmissable opportunity to explore the possibilities of this material.

Artist at play

Taking the stage, Björk projects a stately presence regularly illuminated by flashes of her trademark playfulness. She swishes and sways her blue velvet hooped dress, her face partially obscured by a solid brass mask-helmet that gives the impression she's sporting a pair of metallic ram's horns. But through the metal frame it's easy to identify the joy of someone doing exactly what they are meant to be doing, with the added glee of having just raided the world's most expensive dress-up box.

Following the opening number “Show Me Forgiveness”—performed solo and a cappella, as on 'Medúlla'—Björk is joined by an entirely white-clad choir. The


choristers' clothing provides the perfect canvas for coloured washes of static stage lighting, its visual simplicity allowing the voices of the performers to shine.

But proceedings are not entirely vocal. Björk's long-time collaborator Bergur Þórisson contributes organ along with some carefully understated beats and electronic sonics. And Bjarni Frimann Bjarnason, musical director of the Icelandic Opera, plays various instruments including harpsichord on Björk's debut hit “Human Behaviour”; a quirky pass at a classic track, surprisingly included in the set while the choir take a breather. The choristers are also on a break during “Vertebrae By Vertebrae”, when Björk's only accompaniment is Bjarni's stabbing, spiky accordion. The track acts as a sonic sorbet between choral courses, but its slightly jarring effect does make you look forward to the return of the lush, gentle sounds of the choir. And in doing so, it testifies to the success of this format.

The night's highlights come in the shape of the two strongest moments on 'Medúlla'. “Pleasure Is All Mine”—the choir's first track as they take the stage—has a hypnotic, pure-chant aesthetic. And “Who Is It” just feels like unbridled joy, the smiling choristers casually sauntering around the stage as they sing.

No easy undertaking

This isn't the first time that the Hamrahlíð Choir and Björk have worked together—indeed, a teen-aged Björk was a member of their ranks—but even given such familiarity, this concert would be no easy undertaking for any artist. A stage packed with choristers might seem like somewhere a song could hide and let the massed voices do the heavy lifting. But this format strips songs down and lays them bare, leaning heavily on the songwriting and the choral arrangements—both of which are largely Björk's own work. Their quality and strength form the backbone to this performance.

Spine-tingling, but for the right reasons. 

Info: This programme will be available to view within Iceland on ruv.is until November 7th. The last concert in the series will take place on November 15th, and will be broadcast live on RÚV within Iceland and streamed internationally by dice.fm



Bjarni and Björk



“What if it’s easier for us to abuse the earth because we refer to it as feminine?”

The Sound Of An Apocalypse

Ever wondered what the end of the world sounds like? Well, Sóley will show you.

Words:
Reetta Huhta

Photos:
Art Bicnick

A master of storytelling through music, Sóley recently released her fourth LP, ‘Mother Melancholia’. Having plunged herself deep into news of global warming, Sóley decided to write her latest album as a eulogy for the planet and humankind. She refers to the sound of the album as “chamber doom”, which is a departure from her earlier releases, although the surrealistic and dewy tones typical to her music are still present.

‘Mother Melancholia’ was released October 22nd, though it had been ready to go since 2020. Like many other artists, Sóley decided to postpone the release date to the (somewhat) post-pandemic time. Since she looks at her art as documentation of a certain era, she wasn’t tempted to make changes to the album while it was waiting for its time to be published. However, Sóley admits to being nervous before listening to the album after a year of sitting on it. “I was anxious that I would have grown apart from it, but luckily I hadn’t. I’m still really proud of it, and I guess that’s a good sign,” she reveals.

Translating science and ideologies into art

After surrounding herself with hopeless scientific reports and news about the catastrophic state of the earth, Sóley had an urge to transform them into music. She wanted to compose an album that could serve as a soundtrack for the end of the world.

“In my mind, the end won’t be like a zombie movie. It will be more colorful and quite artistic in its own way,” Sóley explains. She loves how art can cooperate with science by translating research into different art forms, offering a new perspective on the issues. Art helps us understand what science is showing us. “It preserves different eras and helps

people to understand what was and is happening in the world,” Sóley summarizes.

‘Mother Melancholia’ was also influenced by eco-feminism, a branch of feminism examining the effect of gender categories and demonstrating the ways in which they exploit unjust dominance over women and nature. For example, earth is referred to as Mother Nature, which imprints an image of it being feminine. As humans continue to neglect nature, Sóley started to wonder if gendering the earth has something to do with it. “What if it’s easier for us to abuse the earth because we refer to it as feminine?” she ponders.

When Sóley had decided the concept for the album, it was easy for her to compose it. “It’s like writing a book: You need to know what you’re going to

write about,” she describes. She adds that visualizing the work is also a big part of the process: “I tend to see my music—and especially this album—as a movie. It just doesn’t have the picture.” She reveals that films in general act as a source of inspiration for her work—in this case Darren Aronofsky’s *Mother!* “It was so chaotic and yet such a beautiful piece of art,” she says admiringly.

Experimenting with new instruments

Sound-wise, Sóley wanted the music to be unpitched. After all, the album is about the end of the world—it should not sound perfect. As a classically trained pianist, Sóley was afraid she would not be able to let loose with

composing the desired music with said instrument, so she bought herself a cello, theremin and mellotron and began experimenting with them. “I know the piano too well, and it can be hard to see all the possibilities from outside the box when I’m making music with it. Playing new instruments I was not familiar with allowed me to be free from the complex classical background and I was able to create simpler melodies, which was the goal,” she explains.

Sóley self-released ‘Mother Melancholia’, which gave her the artistic freedom to create whatever she wanted. It is most definitely not your typical pop album with songs lasting less than three minutes.

“I did the opposite,” she laughs, as most of the tracks are much longer than four minutes. “I know it’s probably not the greatest move when it comes to Spotify streams, but I don’t care. I did what I really wanted to do.”

Her lack of concern with what anyone else thinks of the music definitely paid off. Sóley says she has been overwhelmed by her fans’ enthusiastic feedback. “People are really sinking into the details of the album,” Sóley smiles. ‘Mother Melancholia’s story seems to resonate with listeners. 🍵



A cup of tea with your apocalypse?

sushi
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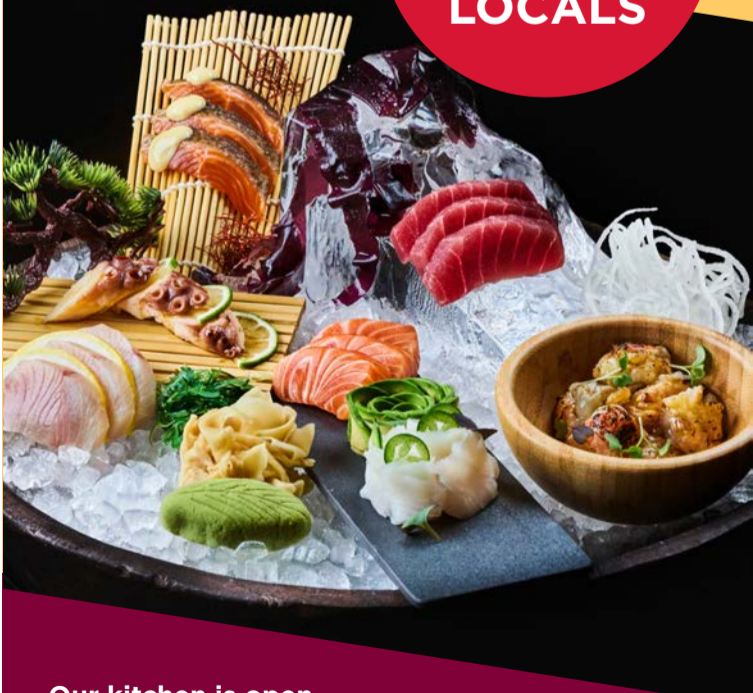
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Track By Track

The Reykjavik Grapevine 24
Issue 11—2021



Nornagal: dress code casual, (sleeves optional)

Witches Meet Psychedelic Wail

Nornagal releases Witches Wail

Words: [Valur Grettisson/Nornagal](#) Photos: [Nornagal](#)

Info

Nornagal - "Witches Wail"

Psychedelic rock band Nornagal has released their newest album, 'Witches Wail.' To be honest, there are few Icelandic rock bands with a psychedelic leaning, so we at The Reykjavik Grapevine were curious—this band obviously has to explain itself. So we asked the band to walk us through their album track by track and tell us: what does it all mean!? Is it a double rainbow in music form, or, is this something deeper and darker? Here is what they said:

Ascent

'Witches Wail' tiptoes towards the concept-album, taking you into a full-length journey in which each song stands as an individual chapter. "Ascent" therefore is a mood-setter, getting you into the flow of the album: you're going for an exploration in a soothingly stable yet dark environment, with breaking waves, and a dash of unexpected cries.

Ad Arbitrium

The first "real" song on the album is also the shortest and the only one that follows a semi-standard song structure. The lyrics are about being lost and searching for direction—the perfect start to an album made up of a wide array of sonic experiences.

Paige

Paige is the name of the person whose testimony of being abused is being told through the song. Mechanical and repetitive patterns at first, it later breaks into a strong feeling of liberation. This is arguably the most emotionally challenging song on the album, and maybe also the most empowering.

Venus

This is a straight rocker with a lot of 70s prog influence in it, while

the lyrics tell a tale of spiritual seduction.

Trigger/Release

This is the first Nornagal song that was ever written, and maybe the perfect showcase for all the elements that make the band: psychedelia and groove mixed with weirdness, uncommon song structures and sometimes even screams. It is a creepy trip with a morbid ending based on a short story Phil wrote.

Segasus

"Segasus" is a wander into Nornagal's mind-house: randomly opening some of the doors to listen to the band's inner dialog, with comments in an esoteric language. Confusion bonus-point: the party tracks in the background are the initial, electronic versions of two other songs on the album.

Tæm Löp

Written in Edinburgh on a Sunday morning in a wannabe-hangover state (yes, that happens), "Tæm Löp" is about all the possible stories that a poor recollection of the

previous night's mishaps allows for. Fast- and slow-paced tempos—this is Nornagal's hit single!

Joondamine

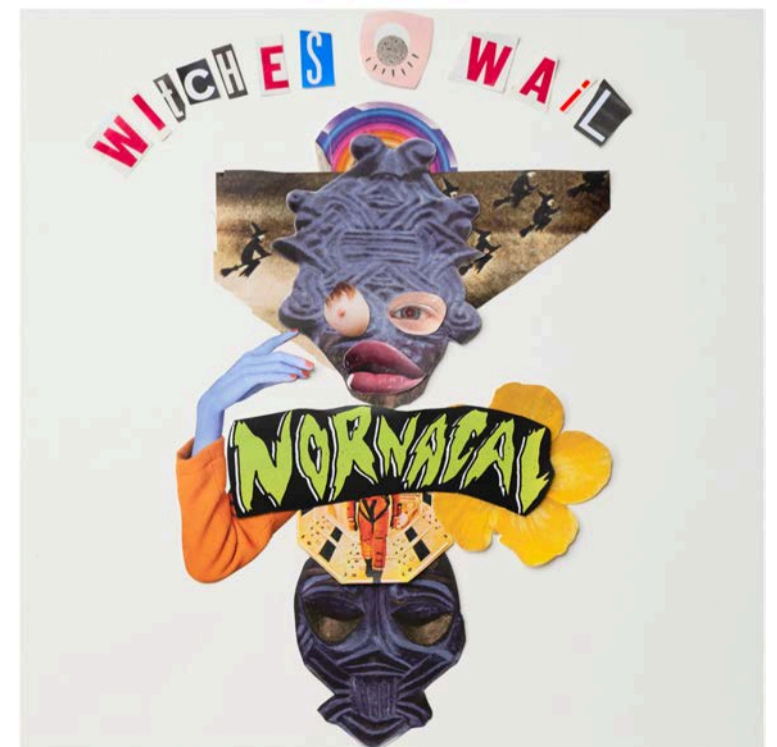
Joondamine is the return into one's self-alignment after the previous madness episode. Four-voice drone and all, to make sure that you get ready for the last chapter of the journey!

Yog

"Yog" is the second song written by Nornagal, and the first song ever published as a demo in 2019. It is a spiritual journey through light and dark paths, ending with a rather sinister conclusion that knows no binary distinctions.

Descent

"Descent" is the closure to the album and your interpretation of it is as valid as ours. A whole experience is best concluded by letting some things sink in, and letting others go. Keep the good, learn from the bad, and you're good to go for a little while! 🍷



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Wine 750 ISK.

BRAVÓ
Every day from
11:00 to 20:00.
Beer 700 ISK,
Wine 900 ISK.

BREWD OG
Wed-Sun
14:00 to 17:00.
Beer 990 ISK,
Wine 990 ISK.

CAFÉ BABALÚ
Every day from
19:00 to 21:00.
Beer 690 ISK,
Wine 795 ISK.

DILLON
Every day from
14:00 to 19:00.
Beer 600 ISK,
Wine 850 ISK.

FJALLKONAN
Every day from
15:00 to 17:00.
Beer 790 ISK,
Wine 990 ISK.

FORRÉTTABARINN
Every day from
16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.

ÍSLENSKI BARINN
Every day from
16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 700 ISK,
Wine 700 ISK.

**JUNGLE COCKTAIL
BAR**
Every day from
17:00 to 19:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 1,000 ISK,
Cocktails 1,500
ISK.

KAFFIBARINN
Every day from
15:00 to 19:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine (On Wed.)
850 ISK.

KAFFIBRENNSLAN
Every day from
16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 650 ISK,
Wine 790 ISK.

KALDI
Every day from
16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 850 ISK,
Wine 850 ISK.

KEX HOSTEL
Every day from
15:00 to 19:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine 750 ISK.

LAUNDROMAT
Every day from
20:00 to 22:00.
Beer 650 ISK,
Wine 1,000 ISK.

LOFT
Every day from
16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine 750 ISK.

MIAMI
Every day from
15:00 to 19:00.
Beer 700 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK,
Cocktails 1,200
ISK.

PRIKID
Every day from
16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 700 ISK.

PUBLIC HOUSE
Every day from
15:00 to 18:00 &
23:00 to 1:00.
Beer 890 ISK,
Wine 890 ISK.

PUNK
Every day from
16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 890 ISK,
Cocktails 1,500
ISK.

PETERSEN SVÍTAN
Every day from
16:00 to 20:00,
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 1,000 ISK,
Cocktails 1,500
ISK.

RÖNTGEN
Every day from
16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 900 ISK.

SÆTA SVÍNID
Every day from
16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 890 ISK,
Wine 990 ISK,
Cocktails 1,500
ISK.

**SESSION CRAFT
BAR**
Every day from
12:00 to 19:00.
Beer 790 ISK,
Wine 900 ISK.

SKÚLI CRAFT BAR
Every day from
12:00 to 19:00.
Beer 900 ISK,
Wine 900 ISK.

SPÁNSKI BARINN
Every day from
14:00 to 20:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine 750 ISK.

SÓLON
Everyday from
15:00 to 18:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.

SUSHI SOCIAL
Every day from
17:00 to 18:00.
Beer 645 ISK,
Wine 745 ISK,
Half-priced
cocktails.

TAPAS BARINN
Every day from
17:00 to 18:00.
Beer 645 ISK,
Wine 745 ISK.

VEÐUR
Every day from
12:00 to 19:35.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.

ÖLSTOFAN
Every day from
15:00 to 20:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.



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pizza with three
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17:00 - 18:00

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Deig / Le Kock
Every day-All day
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coffee & bagel
-1,000 ISK

**1,500 ISK
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búlla Tómasar**
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Burger, french
fries & soda -
1,390 ISK

Gló
All day, every day
Bowl of the
month - 1,290 ISK
Vegan option

Shalimar
Monday - Friday
12:00 - 14:30
Curry - 1,290 ISK
Vegan option

Sæta Svinið
Every day
15:00 - 18:00
Chicken wings -
1,190 ISK

Sólon
Monday - Friday
11:00 - 14:30
Ceasar salad -
1,490 ISK

Lemon
Every day
16:00 - 21:00
2f1 Juice +
sandwich
1,095 ISK
Vegan option

Uppsafir
Every day
11:00 - 14:00
Burger & fries -
1,390 ISK
Vegan option

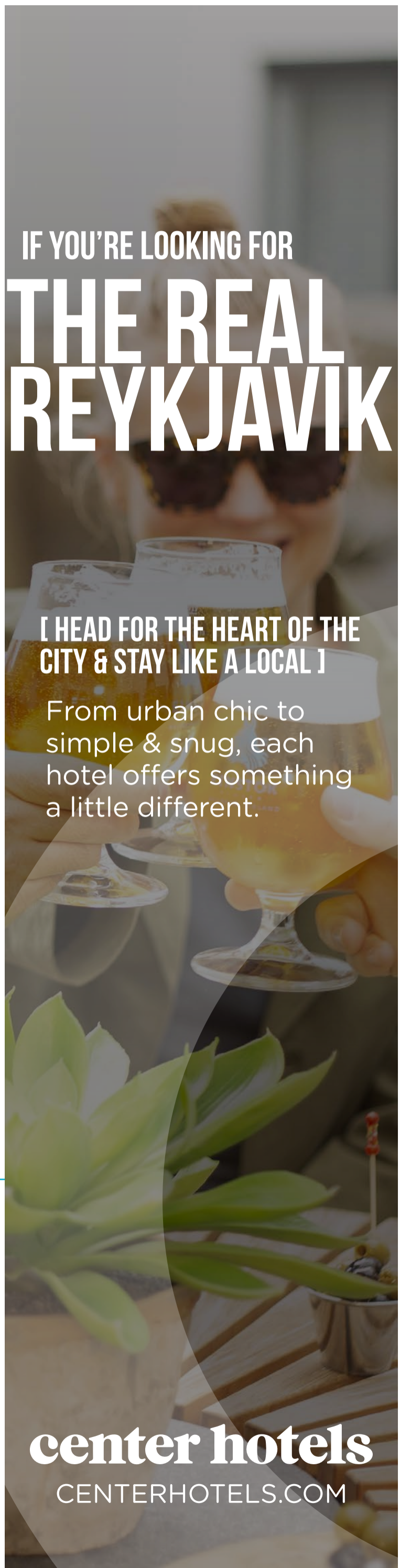
**2,000 ISK
And Under**

Sólon
Monday - Friday
11:00 - 14:30
Fish of the day -
1,990 ISK

Matarkjallarinn
Monday - Friday
11:30 - 15:00
Fisherman's fish
soup -1,990 ISK

**5,000 ISK
And Under**

Apótek
Every day
11:30 - 16:00
Two-course
lunch -3,390 ISK
Three course
lunch - 4,390 ISK



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There are few books, if any, that have shaped the Icelandic soul as significantly as the *Folklores and Adventures*, or “Íslenzkar Þjóðsögur og æfintýri”, collected by Jón Árnason in the 18th century. This book is not only the most comprehensive collection of Icelandic folk stories—featuring elves, trolls, ghosts and more—but it’s also one of the cornerstones in our fight for independence. The book was published in two volumes and printed in Leipzig, Germany in 1862 and 1864. But the road to printing wasn’t easy.

Scary stories

Jón was just a young boy when he became obsessed with folklore. Born in 1819, he later wrote in his memoir that he forced all guests to his family’s farm to tell him a story—even if they were so gruesome and spooky that his mother had to sleep next to him to fend off the nightmares that would ensue. His enthusiasm continued throughout the years and as he got older, he grew more and more curious about the common folklore that had never been properly recorded in Iceland.

First print was a disaster

Jón became a student in the School of Bessastaðir, and it was there that he began to collect traditional tales in earnest. He published his first collections with his best friend Magnús Grímsson in 1852 under the title *Íslenzk æfintýri* (‘Icelandic adventures,’ in Eng-



The Book That Shaped The Icelandic Soul

The Icelandic folktales that helped Icelanders win their independence.

Words: Valur Grettisson Photo: Magical stöff

lish). But there was little to no interest in these folklores at the time and the book was not well received. It was also a time when Icelanders were struggling economically, so it’s safe to say that

there were no booming sales in folkloric literature. Jón and Magnús were left questioning whether there was much point in continuing their work at all.

The German’s got it

Enter German scholar Konrad Maurer, a professor at the University of Munchen and what we could today call a “friend of Iceland.” Konrad met the young and enthusiastic Jón and Magnús, and heard about their interest in Icelandic folklore. Of course, the professor recognised the importance of such tales through the German Grimm brothers, and was also collecting similar tales in Iceland, which he later printed himself. He encouraged the men to keep on collecting stories and promised that when they were ready, he would print them in Germany.

Dedicated to Jacob Grimm

Jón and Magnús resumed collecting stories with vigour, sending letters to friends and old schoolmates seeking out more tales. Unfortunately, Magnús died before the book was published, but Jón persisted and finally sent the finished text to Konrad in Germany. What’s more, Jón was so taken by the Grimm brothers that he actually dedicated the book to one of them, Jacob.

Shaped national culture

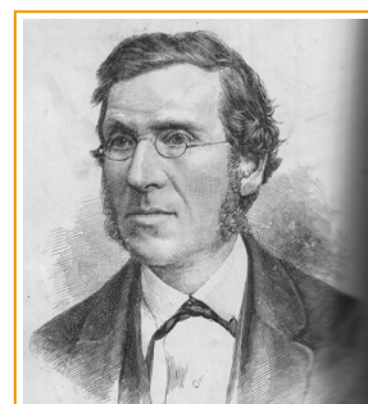
When the book was finally published, it was a hit. In part, this was because the mood in Iceland had changed since Jón’s last book. Icelanders were becoming increasingly romantic about their heritage, mostly to show the Danish monarchy that Icelanders were not just one of their colonies, but a nation with an old and important history. Iceland’s hero of independence, Jón Sigurðsson, recognised the importance of the book, and bought 800 copies to give to the members of the literature association (Bókmenntafélagið). This proved to be an important step in the fight for independence. The book inspired Iceland’s greatest writers to invest in and develop

the national culture in various ways. Everything from the mid-winter festival of Þorrablót to the national costume, which was designed by the painter, Sigurður Guðmundsson, inspired by the traditional stories he himself had contributed to Jón’s book.

Supernatural Iceland

The stories in the book cover the weird and the wonderful of Icelandic folklore and culture, with elves, warlocks, ghosts and monsters all making an appearance. Some of the stories have stayed with us for centuries, and parents today are still retelling them to their children. However, these days, this book is almost unheard of outside of Iceland, and even within the country, knowledge of folktales is fading with each generation. It’s with this in mind that we decided to share the stories from this magnificent book, in our new video series *Supernatural Iceland*. Each month we will explore the world of Icelandic folklore as we travel around the country seeking out the strange and unusual, in order to do just what Jón Árnason wanted—to preserve these stories for generations to come.

Info: You can watch our series inspired by these stories, Supernatural Iceland on our YouTube channel now.



Folkie bloke Jón Árnason

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FANCIES is where we talk to Reykjavík's most fashion-forward figures about style

Kolbrún Anna Vignisdóttir



Words: Desirai Thompson
Photo: Art Bicnick

Fancies is a Grapevine series where we highlight an individual with supreme style. Our latest subject is Kolbrún Anna Vignisdóttir (30), a makeup artist and funky fashion lover living in Reykjavík.

Wearing:

- Coat: Second hand from Depop
- Skirt: Hringekjan
- Blouse: The Red Cross
- Boots: The Red Cross
- Bag: Yeoman

Describe your style in 5 words:

I really love everything from the 70s and I like to dress up and be extra! Fun and unique patterns, texture and colour are things I look for when picking an outfit. I would sum up my style as: 70s, colourful, groovy, chic and fun!

Favourite stores in Reykjavík:

Second hand shopping is my favorite! I buy most of my second hand stuff from the Red Cross shops. I also like to shop at Wasteland and consignment shops like Hringekjan. Yeoman, GK Reykjavík and Andrá are really good designer shops I love to visit too!

Favourite piece:

Without a doubt, coats in general! I love coats and I kinda collect them. Which means I have way too many but they are like art to me. I thrifted my favourite coat from Depop and I absolutely love it.

Something I would never wear:

I am really open to the rapid changes in trends. Even though I have my favourite style era, nothing is out of bounds for me.

Lusting after:

Nothing at the moment. I'm a spontaneous shopper so I hardly ever map out what I want next. I like browsing vintage items to see if there is something I just can't resist! 🐾

FJALLKONAN

KRÁ & KRÆSINGAR

Fjallkonan is a new lively restaurant & pub in the heart of Reykjavík offering a selection of Icelandic and international dishes from local ingredients.

Casual and cosy atmosphere yet still fun and festive. Stop by for snacks & drinks, lunch or dinner.



Icelandic Delicacies



Must try dishes

LAMB & FLATBREAD

Slow cooked lamb, traditional Icelandic flatbread from the Westfjords, carrot purée, pickled red onions, horseradish sauce

ARCTIC CHARR & BLINI

Lightly cured arctic charr, chickpea blini, horseradish sauce, roe, crispy lentils, yuzu-elderflower dressing

ICELANDIC PLATTER

- > Puffin, crowberry gel
- > Minke whale, malt glaze
- > Lamb tartar, chive mayo

THE LAMB BURGER

Bacon, mushroom & date duxelle, pickled red onions, pickled cucumber, rucola, smoked cheese, fries

SKYR ETON MESS CHEESECAKE

White chocolate "Skyr" mousse, meringue, raspberries, raspberry sauce

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Food



The Reykjavík Restaurant Scene Has Never Been Stronger

New in Post-Pandemic Restaurant Scene

Words: **John Pearson, Reetta Huhta, Valur Grettison** Photos: **Art Bicnick & various sources**

The pandemic might have changed a lot of things, but eating isn't one of them. The Icelandic restaurant scene has never been as strong as it is right now, food courts are opening up all around the country and Dill got its Michelin star back. And new places are popping up on every corner preparing for the end of the pandemic. We compiled the newest and hottest places to visit in Reykjavík.

the revolution ate its children. Don't fret, GenX never believed in anything anyways. But we can tell you right now, the coffee at the new Café Ó-le is way better than we used to drink. **VG**

matching chinos and 66°North fleece sweater should be within the margins. **VG**



Laugavegi 28
537 99 00
sumac@sumac.is
sumac.is

Sumac Grill + Drinks

tripadvisor

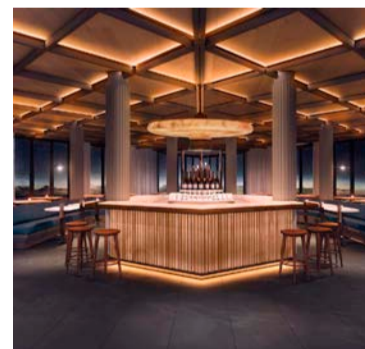
Sumacgrilldrinks



Kaffi Ó-le

Hafnarstræti 11, 101 Reykjavík

If you were born in Iceland in the early 80s, you just might remember the name Kaffi Ó-le. Hearing it may even overwhelm you with nostalgia, memories of lost loves or nicotine poisoning. Café Ó-le was once the name of the local haunt of the young genX cool kids, but is now a slick coffee house next to the Radisson 1919 Hotel. Sounds like



Tides Restaurant

The Reykjavík EDITION, Austurbakki 2, 101 Reykjavík

If you're a smart, casual kind of person, finally, there is a place in Reykjavík that goes with your outfit. Tides Restaurant is the crown jewel in the new harbourside Reykjavík EDITION hotel. The restaurant is ambitious; celebrated chef Gunnar Karl Gíslason is at the helm here, and that alone should tell you that EDITION means business. The food is expected to be modern Icelandic cuisine with a strong Michelin-minded twist. Just keep in mind, the dress code is casual smart, so,



Brút

Pósthússtræti 2, 101 Reykjavík

Brút had us from the first poster about their opening late last summer when they wrote; Food & Wine...or just wine. The restaurant is located in the famous Radisson Blu 1919 hotel and the minds behind this operation are the famous Ólafur Örn Ólafsson, who has more media presence than the president, Ragnar Eiríksson and Bragi Skafatason. But what matters here, is that they are also the owners of the incredibly successful wine bar Vinstúkan tíu sopar on Laugavegur. Brút has the potential to become something remarkably good. **VG**



it one of Reykjavik's best kept secrets. Bál Vín og Grill is located in the Borg29 food hall and, in addition to serving up absolutely delicious food, their wine list is unparalleled. "It's really hard to compare it with anywhere else in the city," explains one Best of Reykjavik panellist. "The environment is rather casual but you've got just such an incredible wine selection—it's better than what you'd find at high-end restaurants. And of course, it's good to get a few little things to eat along with it." We'd recommend their beef tartare.



Chickpea

Hallveigarstigur 1, 101 Reykjavik

If you're hurrying into the downtown branch of Kronan for an essential or two, it would be easy to miss Reykjavik's freshest falafels nestling next door. The unassumingly-fronted Chickpea was started mid-pandemic by a trio of culinary creatives, who realised that the falafels they made for friends were not just delicious but also a major business opportunity. And it's not just the falafels that are made from scratch, the pita bread is also made from dough that Team Chickpea creates at the start of every day. **JP**



Héðinn

Seljavegur 2, 101 Reykjavik

If the restaurant scene in Iceland was a multiverse, Héðinn would be the one with the elegance of Dr. Strange and flashy, cool vibe of Tony Stark. The interior design at the place is out of this world but at the same time grounded and firm. The restaurant has half of the Icelandic national team of chefs at the helm and produces mind-bending dishes that could unexpectedly tear a rift in your universe. Héðinn is one of Reykjavik most ambitious projects and a must-visit. **VG**

needed," another panellist agreed. "We needed a jazz bar that was committed to doing jazz (and all that that entails) well, but this place has cracked the code. [The building it's in has] been a rather cursed spot, but I remember when I first walked in, I thought "This is what was born to be here."



Mikki Refur

Hverfisgata 18, 101 Reykjavik

Mikki Refur offers an imported selection of natural wines that truly show off their mastery of wine curation. This of course landed them a lot of praise in our latest Best of Reykjavik issue, and deservedly so. The panel said that they cater to both those that know a lot about wine and those that just want to try new and exciting things. Another one said that it has a boutique vibe in that respect. It feels like you're in London. So, queen up and have a natural sip. **VG**



Skuggabaldur

Pósthússtræti 9, 101 Reykjavik

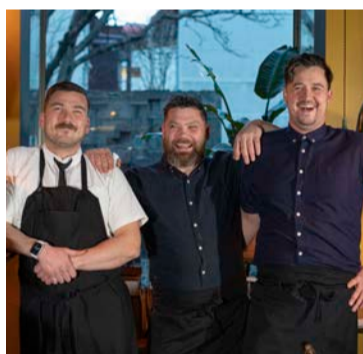
It's rare that a bar elicits as much excitement as new jazz haunt Skuggabaldur. But since its opening, it's basically blown up and was unanimously voted a Best Newcomer by our diverse Best of Reykjavik panel. "It's a great place to sit outside; they've got really nice jazz music. You need to go on Monday, when they have Mánudjazz, which used to be at Húrri. It's so nice," said one panel member. "Yes, they're bringing something that Reykjavik



Bál at Borg 29

Borgartún 29, 105 Reykjavik

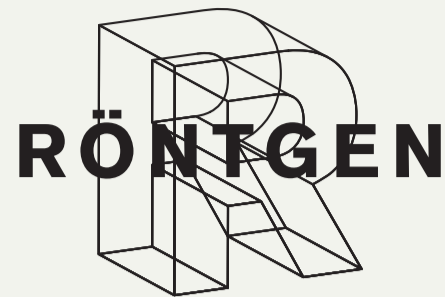
Now, here is a secret we don't want to keep—even if we recently named



Hosiló

Hverfisgata 12, 101 Reykjavik

Also earning a best newcomer nod is Hosiló, which recently took over the location that once housed Dill. With their weekly changing menu, the chefs prepare the most mouth-watering dishes with the freshest produce. According to regular customers, whatever is placed on the table is definitely something creative and enjoyable, and the veggie options in particular are always a hit. The place is small and cozy, and the staff is the most welcoming around. Though the pandemic has been rough on the restaurant scene all over the world, Hosiló is going strong—which should indicate that they are doing something right. **RH**



Hverfisgata 12



Happy hour / 4–7pm
Beer / Wine / Cocktails



Travel

Around The World In A Day

Experience Iceland's lava—from the earth to the sea—in this day trip

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine** Photos: **Art Bicnick**



Travel distance from Reykjavik:
180 km

Tour provided by:
thelavatunnel.is

Car provided by:
gocarrental.is

Iceland loves its circle tours: Golden Circle, Diamond Circle, Silver Circle, and of course circling the entire country. But one autumnal Saturday, we discovered a day trip which shaped up to be a great way to get to know plenty about Iceland's lava. From its journey from the centre of the earth, to its power of geothermal energy, and what it becomes when it reaches the sea. The best part is, you can do all this in a single day, and can complete the circle either clockwise or counterclockwise.

This, however, is the journey we took.

Into the lava

We headed out of Reykjavik going east on Route 1, and taking the southbound exit to Ölfus. This took us to Raufarhólshellir, site of the famed Lava Tunnel.

For the unfamiliar, the tunnel in question is a lava tube, formed by the Leitahraun eruption, which set off just east of the Blá fjöll mountains some 5,200 years ago. As Kallia, our guide, explained, lava tunnels are formed due to the top-down cooling effect of flowing lava; the top layer cools quickly, but the lava underneath continues flowing. Once the eruption slows, so too does the lava flow, until it stops altogether, leaving a tunnel behind.

It's difficult to put into words just how awe inspiring it is to stand within

a cavity where lava once flowed around the time the pyramids were being built in Egypt. Natural "skylights" formed by parts of the roof collapsing into the tunnel let the sunlight reveal deep reds from iron oxide splashed across rippling layers of lava, swirls and spirals of currents frozen in time.

The whole effect gives a strong impression of the sheer power of the forces beneath our feet. We wanted to stay longer, but we had a schedule to keep, so off we went.

If you see a dead whale, avoid it

From Raufarhólshellir we went south, to Þorlákshöfn. As it so happened, there was an enormous beached fin whale a couple minutes east of us, and so we opted to check that out before continuing the circle. A small detour from this themed tour in order to see an entire whale up close.

I regret to report that the experience was both sad and repugnant. The carcass, surrounded by families with little kids cavorting around, was a week old at this point. Even from a dozen metres away, the smell was overpowering, and uncannily resembled the smell of a human cadaver. On closer inspection, the whale bore signs that someone had sawed off some of its baleen. We didn't linger.

History's march to the sea

Heading west from Þorlákshöfn along the coastal Route 427, we were treated to expanses of lava fields unseen by those who stick to the Ring Road. Much of this area is relatively "young lava," a mere few centuries old, and still bears the contours of freshly erupted waves making their slow march to the sea. The road winds through a patchwork of sea green, silver, and ochre moss that accentuates their shapes.

This took us to Grindavík. In need of a good stretch and much needed nourishment, we paid a visit to Bryggjan, a nondescript café by the harbour. The nautical decor—fishing ropes and nets hung from the ceiling—is charmingly corny, but the real treat here is the soup. Whether you get lobster or vegetable, you serve yourself, the refills are endless, the bread is free, and the effect is both satiating and wholesome.

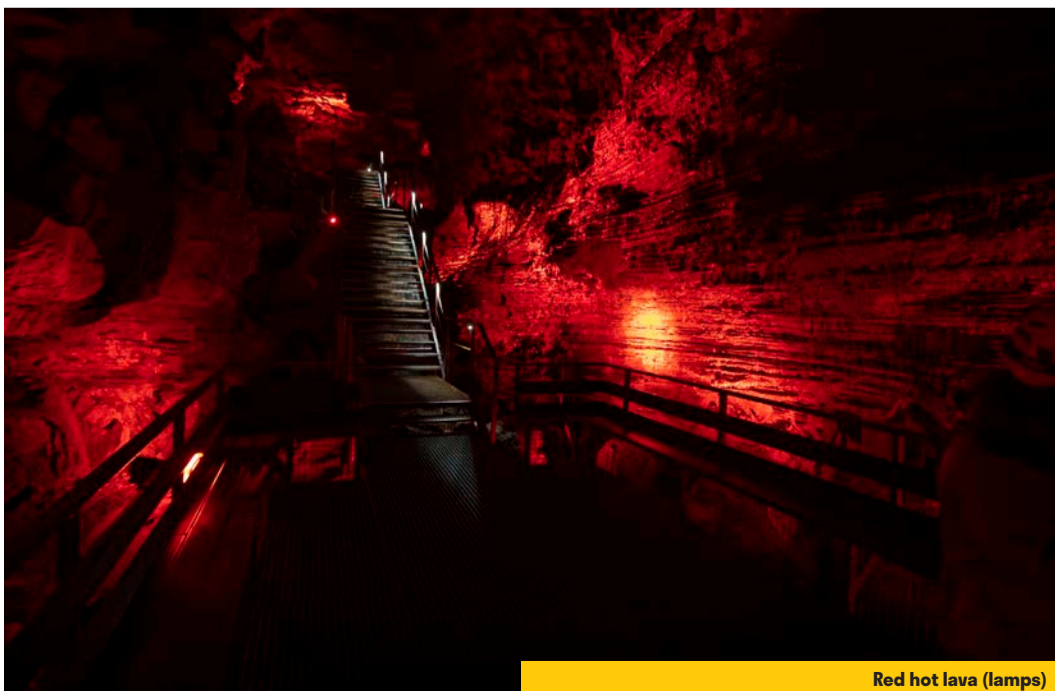
How Iceland keeps the lights on

There are several lookout points along this route and further west, where you can see the lava meeting the crashing waves. We pressed on to Gunnhver, part of the same geothermal system that feeds into the Blue Lagoon and provides power to a good portion of the country.

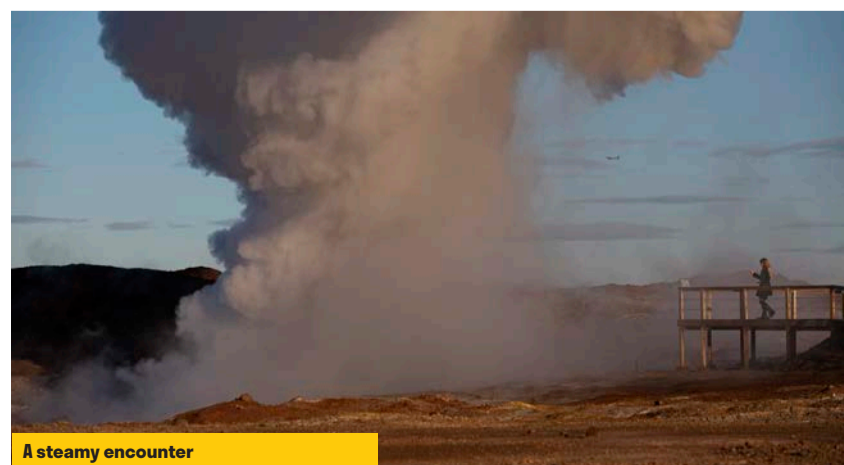
Walking the wooden decks around the plumes of powerful steam, it's a stark reminder of how the same forces that have wreaked so much havoc on this island over the centuries are the same ones that also provide Icelandic homes with heat and a good portion of their electricity.

Completely wiped out by this point, we got back on the road for Reykjavik—tired, sure, but also thoroughly satisfied with this newfound circle tour. 🍷

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Red hot lava (lamps)



A steamy encounter

Your Star Sign's Spirit Cocktail

The stars aren't the only thing getting lit tonight.

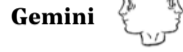
Words: **Desirai Thompson & Reetta Huhta**

Need some insight on which drink to order to appease your astrological inclinations? We've got you covered.

imperceptibly transfer you into that relaxing, serene place you long for.



It's always a race with you, Aries, so of course you're going to want a drink that gets you to the finish line as fast as possible. Ask the bartender for a Long Island Iced Tea, just keep in mind that being the drunkest person at the club isn't always a victory.



Since there are never enough hours in a day for a busy bee like you, a Jägerbomb is your only option. Just admit it, you need your booze mixed with Red Bull.



Being the most sensual of the signs, your drink is basically anything with St. Germain. The soothing aroma of this distinguished elderflower liqueur will



Hemingway was an archetypal Cancer. Celebrate being in good company with his famous drink, Death in the Afternoon. Pour a jigger of absinthe into a glass of champagne and, as he suggests, "drink three to five of these slowly."



The most attention-seeking of the signs, Leo, your spirit cocktail is literally anything on fire. If the bartender pulls out a long match and lights up that libation, this is the drink for you. It's a show we've rolled our eyes at a thousand times before. Just like you.



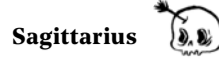
You're far too practical to order a fancy cocktail. Beer is your beverage of choice. Stick to the good old lager, trusted to get you going slowly but surely.



It's no surprise that Libra is the cocktail most in need of the perfect balance—the classic daiquiri. The most common bartender's test, its simple ingredients only become elevated when they meet a perfect equilibrium in the glass. Cheers!



Do you feel misunderstood by the other signs? Does it seem like sometimes they just don't get you? Well, here's a glass of Kalimotxo—red wine mixed with coke—to soothe your annoyance.



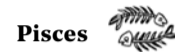
Always on the quest for spiritual awakening, there's no better drink for a Sag than the fabled green muse—absinthe. Sipped by some of the most acclaimed artists in history, this spirit is for you. C'est la vie!



Yeah yeah, we get it. You're too responsible and self-controlled to get wasted. Drink your mocktail in peace.



Aquarius, the mystical healers and humanitarians of the signs. Corpse reviver is your drink of choice, obviously.



You're a wreck, Pisces. Naturally you're going to want a drink that is as much of an emotional roller coaster as you are, so have a shot (or seven) of tequila. You'll either dance the night away, cry over your ex's Instagram or try to fight the bouncer. Maybe all three. 🍸

WELL, YOU ASKED



QAnon, Hot dogs and Trapped

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine**

Got a burning question that needs answering? We give absolutely terrible advice, but since you keep asking, we'll keep answering.

I'm going home for Thanksgiving and am dreading having to spend a four-day weekend with my anti-vax, QAnon supporting uncle. What should I do?

We often say in the queer community that the best, closest family you can have is the one you choose for yourself. I feel this applies to everyone—no one is obliged to hang out with relatives that they can't stand. However, if you must spend four days with this guy, the best strategy is to pick arguments with him. Get loud. Hurt feelings. Absolutely ruin Thanksgiving. It's a bullshit holiday anyway, and you can guarantee that no one will invite you back ever again.

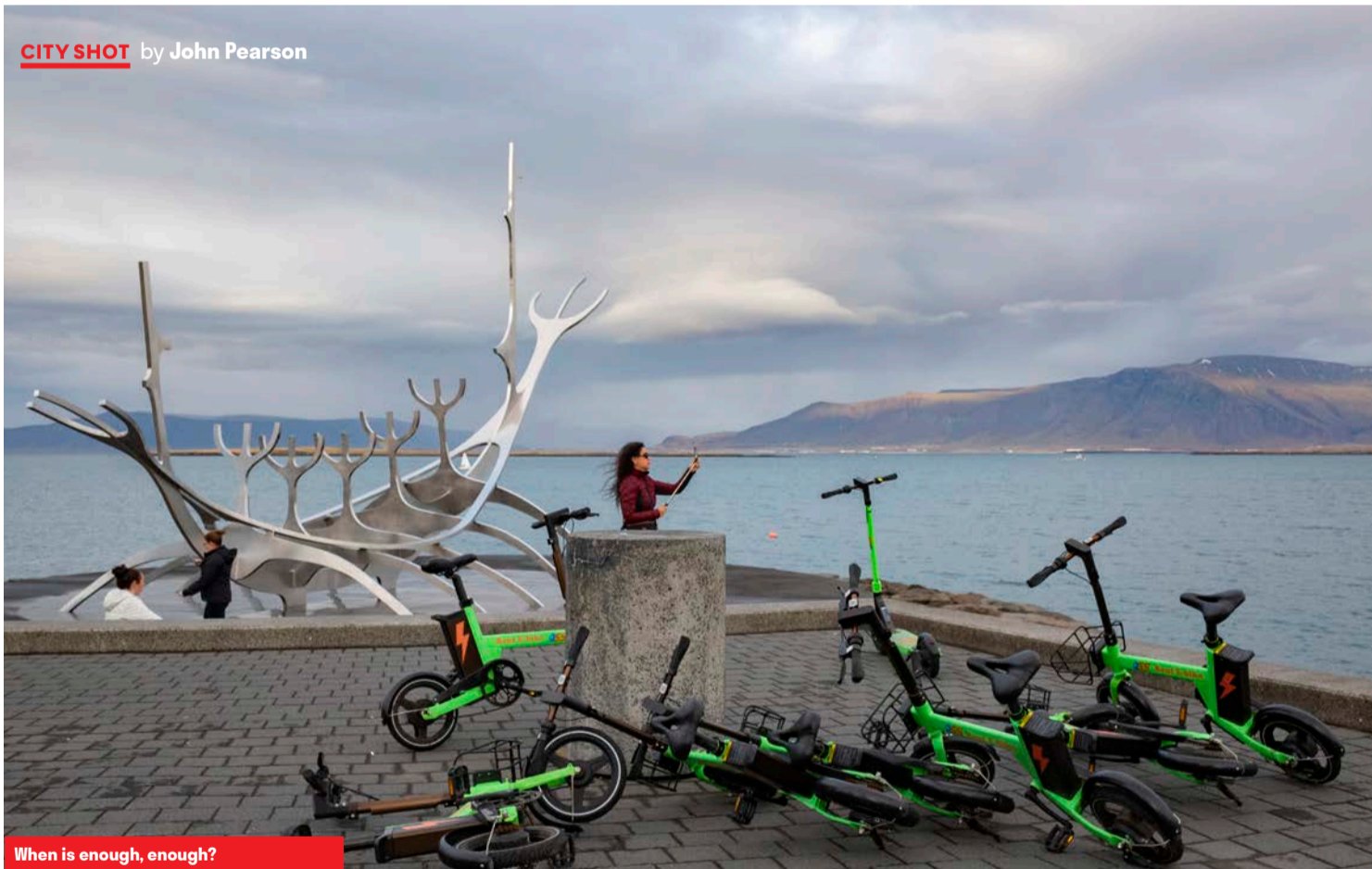
Are the hot dogs at Bæjarins Bestu really worth waiting in line for an hour?

As this hot dog stand is literally right next to our offices, I feel obliged to say yes, they are. But did you know you can have that same BB goodness at home? Just buy a pack of Sláturfélag Suðurlands hot dogs and simmer them in a mixture of water, beer and beef bouillon for like an hour. You can even buy all the same condiments in the grocery store. DIY baybee!

Trapped gives me the impression that Iceland is a very dangerous place. Is this true?

No country is completely safe of course, but Iceland is a lot safer than most. That's why we keep writing crime novels and making crime TV series—we want this material to give us an air of danger and intrigue, like some mysterious bad boy you went to high school with who never actually committed any crimes, but still maintained that menacing front. 🍸

CITY SHOT by John Pearson



When is enough, enough?

HOT CHIKIN & BAO BAR



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