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## THE REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

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The Reykjavík Grapevine  
Issue 9 – 2011

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Editorial | Haukur S. Magnússon

## WELL THIS IS JUST LOVELY!

### Haukur's 43rd Editorial

So this is our third annual BEST OF REYKJAVÍK issue. Making it has been really hard (like always), but it's also been a lot of fun (like always). Sitting around with friends and associates, swapping tips, tricks and opinions; soliciting emails and Facebook comments, making up polls... trying to get a feel for what people like these days, y'know, aligning oneself with the zeitgeist... it is a gruelling and sensitive and FUN process.

We always leave our BEST OF issue with a bunch of new knowledge in our heads. Word on new places, restaurants, jogging paths or bakeries that we simply must try as soon as we finish writing the damn thing. It's fun.

As soon as this thing is off to the printers' (and I've had a nice nap), I intend to soak in Neslaug, dine at Dill, jog around Laugardalur, rent 'TWIN PEAKS: FIRE WALK WITH ME' at Aðalavíðeóleigan, borrow someone's kid and take it for beers at Laundromat, buying a doublescoop of beer ice cream at Island. YUM!

Like I said last year and like I'll continue saying until I either die or give up, it's not about the commerce or exchange of money or BLIND CONSUMPTION. The best loaf of bread from Reykjavík's best bakery doesn't amount to much if there's no one fun to share it with.

Again: "All of the best, most life affirming moments I've experienced in Reykjavík have come for free, or at least I didn't need to pay for them with any officially recognised form of currency. They have come through interacting with



the people, paying visits to friends and family, chance encounters on the streets, heavy debates, smiling faces and lost arguments."

So love to you, friend.

### Special | Best Of Reykjavík



## REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTIONS



When compiling last year's best of list, we got to thinking that some of these places are so firmly established as local favourites that naming them "best of" anything is sort of redundant.

It's also kinda unfair to all the places that are trying to make their name today. For instance, there will only ever be one Ísbúð Vesturbæjar, and they will probably firmly remain Reykjavík's favourite ice cream joint for as long as they don't mess up horribly. That shouldn't mean we can't get excited and dish out props to other ice cream vendors.

So we came up with a solution that we figure gives us the chance to honour some of the perennial local favourites while still giving props to new and exciting places around town. We simply made a category that we call REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTIONS.

What makes a 'REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTION'? By our makeshift definition, a 'REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTION' is a place or entity that's time and time again proven itself as one of the best of its kind, and has remained a must-visit throughout the years. When achieving INSTITUTION status, one is automatically disqualified from winning any 'best of' categories, because you're beyond being 'best', having been all consistently awesome for a long, long time.

A REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTION is a must-visit for tourists to Reykjavík.

A REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTION will retain its status as such until it starts sucking, in which case we will ceremoniously remove them from our list next year.

Without further ado, here are our REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTIONS, along with some choice reader and specialist quotes that argue their status:

#### Kaffibarinn

"Despite some ups and downs, Kaffibarinn has remained the undisputed reigning champion of Reykjavík nightlife and drinking for well over a decade. They are a true nightlife institution."

#### Bæjarins bestu

"Everyone goes there. All the time. For over 70 years now. Not exactly gourmet dining, but a really freaking great snack nonetheless."

#### Ísbúð vesturbæjar

"It's hard to explain the charm to outsiders, just tell them to go there. The ever-present queue speaks for itself."

#### Hornið

"For a restaurant to remain so consistently on top of its game for over thirty years is one huge achievement. They are cosy, dependable and ever-tasty."

#### Mokka

"They brought 'coffee' to Iceland, pretty much."

#### Tíu dropar

"Quintessentially Icelandic in every way. The coffee, the cake, the vibe. If I were to point a visiting friend to 'the essence of Iceland,' this is where I would send him."

#### Kolaportíð

"If Kolaportíð weren't around, we'd need to establish it immediately, lest we vanish back to the dark ages of commerce."



### TRACK OF THE ISSUE

#### Ojba Rasta Jolly Good

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

Summer has finally threatened to show itself, somewhat, and if you like reggae, Ojba Rasta's new single Jolly Good is the perfect track to put on for a nice garden BBQ party. Climbing the charts in Iceland, this feel good song has even reportedly received some plays in reggae homestead Jamaica.

The ten-piece band formed in 2009 boasts an impressive roster of musicians who also play in a handful of other great bands. They plan to play a bunch of shows this summer, and they are currently working on their debut album, slated for release out this fall. Until then you can enjoy 'Jolly Good' on repeat, it's kind of that kind of song.

In case you were wondering about the band name, Ojba Rasta, not only does sound like a reggae band, but it's also a play on the word 'ojbarasta', which is Icelandic for something like, 'eww gross'.

[www.soundcloud.com/ojbarasta](http://www.soundcloud.com/ojbarasta)

#### Bókin - Bókabúð Braga

"It's hard to imagine Reykjavík without it. So let's not."

#### Brynja

"This neighbourhood hardware store almost predates Laugavegur, and they always serve you with a smile (and don't mind throwing in some good advice when needed.)"

#### Austur-Índía félagið

"Probably your safest bet for fine dining in Iceland, period."

#### 2011 ADDITIONS:

#### Jómfrúin

"This Danish 'smørrebrød' house provides a unique atmosphere and taste you won't find elsewhere in town... or in the world for that matter."

#### Prikið

"Serving old men their morning coffee since way back, and somehow combining that with serving beer and hip hop to young folks since the late '90s. And burgers. And milkshakes. They ain't for everyone, but they are a one-of-a-kind place with spirit and soul."

Feel like we missed one? Drop us a line at [bestof@grapevine.is](mailto:bestof@grapevine.is) explaining why a given place should be merited INSTITUTION status, and we shall consider it for our 2012 edition!



## THE LAMBURGER

120 g Lamburger (lamb), garlic grilled mushrooms, cheese, lettuce, tomatoes, red onion, sauce Béarnaise and french fries.

Those who taste The Lamburger will hardly be able to believe their taste buds.



## BE SQUARE AND BE THERE

Gullfoss and Geysir are surely a must-see in Iceland, but neither is something you eat. That's why we have 13 brilliant and creative hamburgers at Hamborgarafabrikkan (The Icelandic Hamburger Factory).

Hamborgarafabrikkan would eat Hard Rock Café for breakfast, but since there is no Hard Rock Café in Iceland we eat our original Lamburger with the wonderful Icelandic lamb.

#### Turninn Höfðatorgi

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The Reykjavík Grapevine awarded Hamborgarafabrikkan the "Best Specialty Burger 2010". It made us happy. Because we aim to please. That's why we only use 100% fresh high-quality ingredients, directly from the Icelandic nature.

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## Sour grapes and stuff

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

### 4 Letters

#### MOST AWESOME LETTER:

Hello!

The vulcano going mad again on Iceland. Could this be MAN MADE? On YouTube a lof of videos showing beaming against vulcanoes. On cryptome com there is articles called Man made disaster. There are submarines making earthquakes, and new technology like Haarp. Could be making tsunami in Japan in March: <http://www.infiniteunknown.net/tag/navy/> When I look at the pic from your last vulcano I see a lof of lightning (google pic section). Natural or man made? Nice if you check this up. Haarp station in Norway, Tromsø.

Yours sincerley (vennlig hilsen)

Per Dahl, Norway (Norge)

Dear Per Dahl from Norway (Norge),

I happened to pick up your fine publication while spending two very educational and enjoyable days in Reykjavik and read your commentary on Jake Halpern's NYT article. I was appalled - not by your response, but by yet another example of "helicopter journalism" (or "helo journo", can I copyright that?). The most egregious example of this was the focus on knitting and canning as some sort of macroeconomic truth.

Mr. Halpern would do better to stay in his own country and explore more of it. In the Midwest, or "flyover country", where I live, plenty of people are knitting and canning for a number of reasons, a lot of them economic. Yet I suppose a visit to Minnesota wouldn't be as interesting as the chance to pass judgment on "weird" Iceland. Interesting, isn't it, that many of the commenters on Mr. Halpern's article wished for more of that "weirdness" in the United States.

I hope to return to your lovely and sane country for a longer visit, but in the meantime I will try not to bash my head against the wall as a response to what passes for journalism these days in the traditional media. I'm also thinking of taking up sewing and container gardening.

Sarah Nagle  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
USA

Hi Sarah,

Thanks for your letter nice letter. We're glad to hear that you enjoyed yourself here and that you found something nice to read in our paper, too. We try and stuff it with nice stuff.

Now, we've seen a lot of those 'helo journo's', as you call them, over the last couple of years. While Hello Kitty would be preferable to

#### MOST AWESOME LETTER

##### FREE LOBSTER FEAST

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

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

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

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



thank you for your nice letter. And for your tip! We really love it when we get tips on potential stories from you readers. It doesn't really make our life easier, but it doesn't make it harder either. Anything that doesn't make life harder is OK in our book.

Now, as for your tip: come on man! Are you fucking kidding? Everyone knows the earthquakes and tsunamis that have all of the sudden started plaguing mankind after millennia of peace and quiet are being caused by THE LIZARDMEN and their evil cohorts (does the name APPLE COMPUTERS ring a bell?) that wish to further enslave mankind.

Seriously Per, get with the program! By spouting these crazy 'conspiracy theories' you are only undermining those of us that have actually put some thought into figuring out how the world really works and who's pulling the strings behind the curtains.

Still, when you think about it, the ability to make volcanoes erupt on command sounds like it could be pretty useful when the final battle between THE LIZARDMEN and us freedom fighters finally reaches its impending epic crux in a Michael Bay directed BATTLE OF THE EVERYTHINGS! Maybe the good people MANNING the nuclear submarines and the HAARP rayguns and that grassy knoll are secretly training and developing weapons to counter the LIZARDMEN.

And by uncovering them in public like you are, you are effectively ruining mankind's only shot against the lizards and the illuminati.

DID YOU EVER THINK OF THAT? HUH?

Wait. Sorry, we didn't mean to shout. We take it all back. Here, take our 'MOST AWESOME LETTER' as a token of our regret.

Love to you, Per

those lazy, generalising layover guys, we do guess we're some kind of symbol or microcosm of the global crisis and will as such be studied and wondered about by journalists. And if working in publishing has taught us one thing, it is that journalists are all really lazy. Sometimes they don't even bother to spell check theyre artilles bfoer submitting then!

So lazy journalists are prone to generalising instead of trying to paint a larger, more nuanced picture. But such is the nature of today's media, we guess (present company included). Maybe it's good to remember that no one article or essay can portray a community or issue with all the subtleties and contradictions inherent in life, the universe and everything. They can and should be read for fun and information, but they should also always be read with a critical eye. Interacted with if you will. Which is what you're doing.

To be fair to Jake Halpern, while he does highlight and exaggerate and perhaps go out of his way to find Iceland's oddballs, his article was pretty fun to read and as far as we know he didn't make anything up (unlike that Michael Lewis asshat). Good ol' Jake, he sure was a fun read. And no cars exploded around him.

Look forward to seeing you next time!

Hello Grapevine,

I find an urge to comment after reading about Victoria Harnish's experience which she described in the last issue.

The thing is, as an early 30s male Icelandic national—and professional, mind you—I have experienced exactly the same things as Victoria, not once but twice. The only caveat in my story is that my experiences occurred in Boston International Air-

port and in Minneapolis - and the "agents" investigating me wore suits, black suits. I never dreamed of complaining to someone about it - as I sincerely thought that was life and travel in the U.S. - but I am happy that Victoria has shown me how to do it. I know how to contact my local councilman and the airline. The only thing I need now is an Icelandic equivalent to Homeland Security and an American equivalent to the Reykjavik Grapevine - any help would be appreciated.

best regards,  
Gunnar Guðmundsson,  
Caucasian male thitysomething Icelandic professional

Dear Gunnar,

thank you for your letter. Seriously, though Gunnar? You too? Are they profiling the wrong people? Is 'Caucasian 30 year old professional' the new 'North African Muslim'?

We hate to break it to you but that probably just is life and travel in the United States. Though we can't say we've had the same experience (well, not all of us... some of us look more professional than others), it makes sense to us that 'Caucasian 30 year old professionals' are, just like anybody else, taken for a random security check. Maybe in a twisted way, you could be happy that TSA is doing their job.

Of course it doesn't change the fact that it totally blows. Stupid everything!

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Iceland | Welcome to!

# Mayor's Address: WELCOME TO REYKJAVÍK

By Jón Gnarr



Dear reader,

Welcome to Iceland. Whether you're here for fun and travel or for business, I hope you'll enjoy a good time here and will get to know some locals. I would also like to make a special request that you spend a lot of money throughout the duration of your stay. Do not save on dining and drinking. Allow yourself some luxury. You deserve it, and it is good for the economy. I ask that you do

not visit the retail outlets run by the Salvation Army (Garðastræti 6, 101 Reykjavík) or the Red Cross (Laugavegur 12, 101 Reykjavík). Even though they are fun shops, they are rather inexpensive. You should rather visit more expensive shops.

A lot of tourists that visit the country wonder why it is called Iceland, because—despite what the name might indicate—it isn't at all cold here. The average temperature in Reykjavík is

1°C. Nowhere in the world has better summers than Iceland. It might snow in the month of June, however. That is called 'a spring snowfall'. July is the hottest month. When it comes around you better have a t-shirt handy, because the temperature can reach up to 20°C. Weather.com often states a temperature followed with a "feels like" temperature. When the heat in Reykjavík reaches 20°C, they will often say it "feels like" 15°C. That is probably due

to something known as 'the wind chill factor'. No Icelander understands this. If we had this "feels like" feature in our weather reporting, we would say that it "feels like" 40°C whenever the temperature reached 20°C, without exception. This demonstrates the importance of 'mentality' and 'attitude'.

But how can it be that such a warm country came to possess such a frigid name? Yes, the explanation is simple: MISUNDERSTANDING. Ingólfur Arnarson, the first man that found Reykjavík, wasn't on his way here at all. He was en route to the United States of America, to buy grapes and other fast food that grew wild there in those days. He was very interested in food. And also homicide. On his way he noticed a cloud of smoke ascending to the heavens from an unknown country. His curious nature got the best of him, and he changed his course and set sail to Reykjavík (Reykjavík literally means "smoky bay").

As he disembarked his ship, he saw that the smoke was in fact steam rising from Reykjavík's many swimming pools. He was therefore quick in tearing off the suit of armour that he had worn in case he'd encounter some Native Americans while picking grapes, and jumping into some swim trunks. After swimming a good 500 metres he sat in the hot tub and relaxed. After a fun chat with the locals he had forgotten all about America. Who needs to travel all the way to America to pick grapes when there's a shop on Laugavegur called Vínberid (Vínberid literally means: "the grape")? Ingólfur decided to settle here. He rented a small apartment along

with his wife, Hallveig Fróðadóttir, who many claim was the daughter of Frodo from 'Lord Of The Rings'. Nothing has been proven about that, however.

One day Ingólfur and Hallveig were taking a stroll around town. They were walking their dog, who was called Plútó and was a Great Dane. It was a sizzling hot summer's day. It was long before the t-shirt was invented. They were both dressed in full suits of armour, with swords and shields and helmets and everything. They stopped by at Ísbúð Vesturbæjar in Hagamelur to get some ice cream and cool down. The story goes that Ingólfur asked the clerk whether she knew what the country was called.

She thought it was called Thule. Ingólfur felt that was a stupid name.

"No country can be called Thule", he said.

Outside the ice cream shop, a crowd had gathered. They had heard that foreign visitors were in town. A lot of those people were elves. Ingólfur then approached the crowd, raised his ice cream cone aloft and shouted:

"Henceforth this country will be called Iceland, because one can get the world's best ice cream here!".

Today we have a statue of Ingólfur. The statue depicts Ingólfur dying of heat, leaning on his dog.

Don't be a stranger, be like Ingólfur!

Best regards,

Jón Gnarr  
Mayor of Reykjavík

Special | Best Of Reykjavík



## The Anarchist's Edition



An anarchist interested in history might want to take an 'oppression tour' around the city, checking out important power-symbols like the police headquarters at Hlemmur, the cabinet building at the bottom of Bankastræti (originally built as a prison, this tiny cabin allowing for 70 prisoners!) and Alþingi on Austurvöllur (just remember to take off your overcoat to avoid being charged for attacking the parliament and its free will). Another anarchist might just want to pick up some of the good quality bricks around the house of parliament, for instance to discover whether the Situationists were right in asserting that beneath the paving stones lies the beach.

The third one is likely to enter a

jazz concert whereas his or her comrades in arms would want to hear the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra, or better yet, play their weekly gig with that same orchestra. The hedonist would drink and eat well, a luxury meal followed with a good orgy, as the dropout would wander behind supermarkets to experience the unbelievable surplus of the consumer society... and then join the orgy. Another one would just masturbate, fair enough. In Öskjuhlíð one should be able to find strong enough trees to build a primitive shelter and, if lucky, catch a few rabbits for lunch (if you have no luck with the rabbits, there are plenty of tourists around).

More seriously, the big institutional Churches, both the Lutheran State Church and the Catholic one, have recently been the centre-point of criticism due to their priests' historically common sexual violence against women and children, and not less for their super-hypocritical response to that criticism. It might be good to go and teach some of them a lesson. But at the same time, there should be one or more of those guys in each and every institution of the ruling order, meaning that at least a whole summer is needed to poke all of them at least once in each eye. If limited by time, it might be a better idea to get up in drag or, if drag is your everyday clothing, take off all your clothes and bike to the Nauthólsvík artificial beach. It is a taboo—yes, also

here in the country of never-ending-naked-dancing-jumping-in-the-wilderness-to-be-inspired-by.

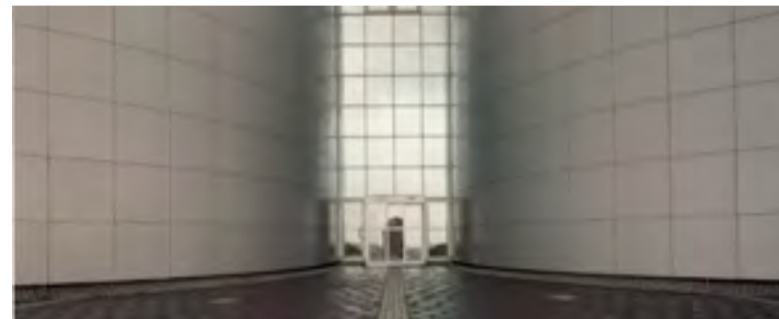
One could go on forever like this—and that is the absolutely only real answer to the question: what is 'the best of Reykjavík' for 'The Anarchist'? Generalising about 'The Anarchist' would go perfectly against the essential meaning of anarchy, namely: Liberty from all possible manifestations of authority, not only the very visible ones—the schools, the church, the police, the government, the nuclear family etc.—but also from our own or our community's self-suppression and from media-designed stereotype categorisations. 🍷

✍ SNORRI PÁLL JÓNSSON ÚLFHILDARSON

News | Reykjavík

## A Reykjavík Monument For Sale :C

What Will Become of Reykjavík's Pearl?



Rumour has it that some rich Russian investors with ties to Ásgeir Þór Davíðsson from the sleazy strip club Goldfinger want to turn The Pearl into a casino. Now, this is really disturbing. We are talking about a Reykjavík monument becoming, of all things, a casino.

Unfortunately there is little to stop this from happening because its owner is Reykjavík Energy, the city's utility company that owes more than 200 billion ISK to foreign investors. When it became evident this March that the company could not get any of their loans refinanced, the city had to step in with an emergency loan of 12 billion ISK.

Of course that's hardly enough to rescue the company and there were strings attached. Among them, the city stipulated that Reykjavík Energy sell off all assets not tied to its core business of selling electricity, hot water and cold water to the city. After all, it is a public utility company and you can argue that it really shouldn't be funding the cost of

monuments that don't turn a profit.

Still, it will be a sad, sad day when The Pearl is no longer a place where Icelanders and tourists can go to enjoy spectacular 360 degree views. It's too bad the city spent its reserve fund bailing Reykjavík Energy out or else it could probably buy it. Let's just hope that whoever does buy it doesn't give it a horribly tacky facelift with Las Vegas style advertisements for the gambling and uncouth activity that might be going on inside.

Now if you're wondering how a utility company owned by the city managed to rack up a debt over 200 billion ISK, we're going to cover that in our next issue, after we get through all of this happy 'Best of Reykjavík' stuff. It won't be a 'Worst of Reykjavík' issue or anything like that, but it could get pretty bad. 🍷

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# The Fate Of Small-Town Iceland: An Update From Flateyri

Back in January I wrote an article for The Grapevine about the bankruptcy of the fish factory in Flateyri, a tiny village in the Westfjords of Iceland, where I happen to own a house. At the time there was a lot of drama: Distress flares were being fired from the dock. To some, it felt like this was the first village to be sacrificed to the kreppa, an entire community on the verge of being abandoned by a cost-cutting government.

Not much has changed. Needless to say the village is still there, and so are its people, for the most part anyway. Some fish processing has resumed, albeit there is a protracted and complicated legal battle ensuing between Lotna (a company allegedly backed by Gylfi Sigurðsson, the Bundesliga footballer), another fish processing company from Reykjavík, and the regional development agency. It is a pretty much unwanted and uninteresting saga, which the Icelandic newspapers have for the most part given up on reporting.

## Words

Neil Holdsworth

## Photography

Neil Holdsworth

But the situation is no less serious. What it means is this: In a village of 170 people, eleven are currently employed in the fish factory. Last Friday, nine of the eleven were told that they would be made redundant next month. As recently as five years ago, 120 people had jobs in the fish factory. A large proportion of the inhabitants of Flateyri have been unemployed and on benefits. Every couple of weeks there is another meeting about 'the situation in Flateyri', but there is a feeling in the town that nothing is being achieved. The villagers I spoke to fear another attempt by the authorities to close down the village school, following the recent closure of the care home in the village, making yet more people redundant.

My neighbour once told me that the school is the heart of the village. I never understood what he meant until I climbed to the top of the mountain above the village and looked down. In the silence of the fjords you can hear

every sound, and the sound of the kids playing reverberates around the fjord, amplified by the wind and echoing against the mountains. The school is the heart in the sense that it pumps new life in to the village, and makes life here possible. No normal person is going to want to bring a family up in a remote, isolated settlement that involves a twenty kilometre drive through a mountain to the nearest school, no matter how beautiful that place is.

If the school ever does get closed down, the village will become little more than a few abandoned buildings and a collection of summerhouses, like so many other abandoned places dotted around the Icelandic countryside, and particularly the Westfjords. Flateyri is not by any means unique: It's the same story across many of the tiny fishing villages of Iceland. This is what is going on in the Icelandic countryside today.

The death of Flateyri would be the end of a whole village, a whole culture, a whole human community that was until recently home to over 500 people. And the crazy thing—from an outsider's perspective—is that there is no obvious reason why this should be the case. There's a lot of fish in the ocean. Indeed, the fjord has some of the best fishing grounds in the whole of Iceland,



that is why hobbyist sea anglers travel from all over the world come to the village to fish there every summer. But the village economy has completely collapsed because the fisheries management laws (the dreaded 'quota system') prevent people, for the most part, from making a living from fishing in the sea. And there are huge vested interests amongst the largely Reykjavík-based fishing industry in protecting the current legal position. It's a uniquely Ice-

landic problem, and exactly the fight that is currently being played out in the intractable, untranslated, battles of the 'big' fisheries management bill currently being considered by the Icelandic parliament. That is what is going on behind the scenes here, and it's a matter that is of absolutely critical importance to the future of towns like Flateyri, and of Iceland itself. ♥

Special | Best Of Reykjavík - Best place to enjoy a Zen moment

## Reykjavík's Zoo: Unexpectedly Fun



Húsdýragarðurinn  
Laugardalur, 104

One of the first things you learn about things to do in Reykjavík is what isn't available. You can't buy beer in the supermarket. You can't attend a boxing match. And the city zoo doesn't have any jungle animals.

But don't let a lack of tigers and elephants dissuade you from visiting the capital's zoo (actually called Húsdýragarðurinn, which refers to domesticated animals rather than wild ones). For those raised in the city, seeing pigs, cows and the Icelandic horse for the first time can be fun. My personal favourite place, though, is probably the birdhouse. Chickens are hilarious.

Kids will of course enjoy this place, and not just because of the animals. There are a few carnival-esque rides across this sprawling estate, none of them too scary or outlandish for even the smallest kids. You can take a little train that snakes its way through the grounds, or you can also take a little boat around a pond on the grounds, or relax with some grilled lunch at the nearby café. For the nerdy child of all ages, there's even a science tent, replete with physics-based games such as that one where you stand on a disk while holding a spinning bicycle wheel.

The seals are probably the main animal attraction at the zoo, and they seem to be flourishing so well that they're actually running out of room for them. But if the mayor gets his wish, and po-

lar bears are moved in, maybe that little problem can be solved the natural way.

The zoo is a great place to go alone, with friends, or with your kids. Don't let it be said it's not a "real" zoo. You get the zoo experience, and a lot more. ♥

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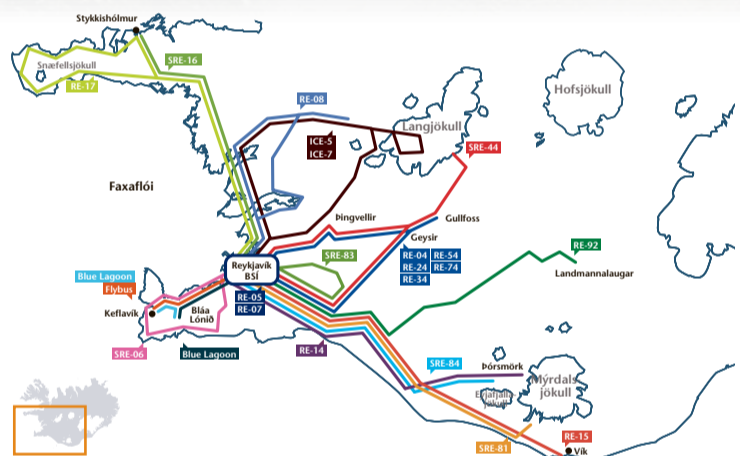
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# They Are Not Leaving



More than 20,000 immigrants are currently living in Iceland. They enjoy the safety and serenity in this country, a rich cultural life and a functioning social system. Some of them have even experienced less discrimination than elsewhere. However, many foreigners have difficulties integrating into Icelandic society. Their problems range from direct discrimination to subtle differential treatment in work and everyday life.

## STEREOTYPING FOREIGNERS—A HIERARCHY

Foreigners have experienced different degrees of discrimination in Iceland depending upon their origins. Scandinavians are treated the best; they are even allowed to vote in municipal elections sooner than other foreigners. Europeans come next, most of them enjoying freedoms under the EEA-Agreement. North Americans follow, being culturally close to Icelanders. Then comes the rest of world.

As for direct discrimination, studies show that it is especially experienced by Eastern European and dark-skinned immigrants to Iceland.

There are many examples of this. When asked, Margrét Steinarsdóttir, legal advisor to immigrants at the Service Centre Miðborg and Hlíðar, and director of the Icelandic Human Rights Centre, recounts reports about a dark-skinned woman being denied access to a downtown club on the grounds that they had “troubles with dark-skinned women” before. Barbara Kristvinsson, advisor to immigrants at Miðborg and Hlíðar, also recalls: “The media plays a large role. Sometimes there were reports in the newspapers about crimes attributed to Polish or Lithuanian people with headlines such as ‘Increase in

crime’ right next to them. Newspapers were even more eager to get pictures of them, seemingly to stigmatise them. Of course, this brought the connection: ‘Eastern Europeans are all criminals.’”

A study about Poles in the Icelandic media published in October 2010 by the Social Science Research Institute at the University of Iceland concluded that “media discourse has created a stereotype of foreigners as threatening, usually Eastern European men, connected to organised crime, rape and fighting.” Such racial stereotyping is a practice that was criticised by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance in 2007. Equally worrying is the observation that “those who understand the language more and who use the Icelandic media, feel more discriminated against than those who don’t. Some even say it is better not to speak Icelandic, so that one doesn’t feel so bad.”

## ICELANDIC SKILLS AND DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT

In many cases, however, different treatment of foreigners in contrast to Icelanders is subtle, often related to language skills. Barbara, an immigrant herself, remarks: “Even though I’ve been here for 19 years and speak Icelandic, I have an accent and sometimes I still feel that people talk down to me because of that”. A foreign student commented that Icelandic students complained about her “bad Icelandic placing obstacles” in their way during a written group assignment, although she had her (Icelandic) husband look over her part: “It’s becoming a little better now, but they made me feel as if I had to prove that I deserved to be here.” In another account, an English-speaking woman called a health centre in Reykjavík, but was repeatedly hung up on. When she demanded a personal explanation, the receptionist said that people had to speak Icelandic in order to see a doctor. And, Arnþrúður Karlsdóttir, the director of radio station Útvarp Saga, indignantly refused to talk to an English-speaking woman on her talk show (see Grapevine.is, 18.II.2010).

## JOBS—KNOWING THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Speaking the language is, of course, not only important for integration in private, but also professional life. Nevertheless, it is not the golden gateway into Icelandic society and the job market. Xavier Rodriguez, a lawyer and journalist from Barcelona, complained in 2008 to Fréttablaðið about his difficulties. Having passed a LL.M. at the University of Iceland, speaking good Icelandic and having four other Master Degrees, he did not find a stable position as a lawyer. Now, he works as a freelancer for Icelandic and Spanish clients, as a journalist for the Catalan national Radio and TV, owns a travel agency and teaches media in a high school. “You have to reinvent yourself, if you want to be working here as a foreigner”, he says.

Data from Iceland Statistics and the Directorate of Labour in Reykjavík show that more than eight percent of foreigners are unemployed, compared to around 4.5% of Icelanders. In 2009, 31% of unemployed foreigners had worked in the construction industry. While this is admittedly a high number, it also means that around 70% of the unemployed foreigners did not lose their jobs due to the collapse of the construction industry. Another interesting issue would be to examine how many educated foreigners are working in low-skilled jobs.

The problem does not simply reside in the deliberate discrimination of foreigners. It is deeply rooted in Iceland’s homogenous society, in which giving jobs to relatives or friends has always played a large role. But, as Barbara says: “It is hard to pin down. There are also a lot of Icelanders who are unemployed. Imagine you have a vacancy and you have 200 applicants, of which you know 50. In the end it comes down to a personal fit”. Even further than this goes an anonymous Icelandic source telling me the story of being told in the Unemployment Office in Reykjavík that the Icelandic people are in a better position when looking for a job than foreigners: Icelandic companies rather hire Icelandic people, it was said in an

introductory meeting for the Icelandic unemployed. Call it nepotism, call it a-small-society-in-which-everyone-knows-everyone. In any case, it reflects the difficulties that foreigners can have finding work in Iceland without having a network of relatives and friends with whom they could connect also on a professional level.

## FOREIGN WORKERS—“THE DISPOSABLE CLASS”

Moreover, many non-EEA-citizens feel unwelcome after they have lost a job, as they do not have access to social security through unemployment benefits. Explains Margrét: “If you don’t have a permanent residence permit, you are not entitled to unemployment benefits, no matter how long you have been living here. This is different for EEA-citizens, since the EEA-Agreement grants certain rights in Iceland, just as Icelandic citizens enjoy such rights in EEA-countries. But, of course, I think that people should get unemployment benefits simply on the grounds that they have been working and paying taxes here.”

The connection between eligibility for unemployment benefits and permanent residency represents a big impediment for immigrants, because many of them stay using changing, temporary residence permits for years. Like Jonas Moody. After losing his job, he learned that he was not eligible for unemployment benefits, despite having paid taxes in Iceland for six years. In a striking piece that appeared on Icelandreview.com entitled ‘Iceland’s Disposable Class’, he wrote: “My adopted nation has truly let me down... Despite marriage and home ownership and being able to decline very difficult words like ‘kír’ and ‘ær’, if I don’t have an income, then according to the Immigration Office I am no longer welcome in Iceland[...] Because it is best for the economy if all the superfluous people left the country, my life here is being revoked. Cancelled. [...] It angers me to hear politicians and economists talk about ‘the imported workforce’ as if we’re something that arrived on a cargo ship packaged in a box. As if, when the

nation is done with us, they can crumple us up and toss back into the ocean whence we came”. Jonas has since returned to the U.S.—now, his Icelandic husband is an immigrant there.

It is interesting to note that when a request for residency is declined, there is no independent judicial body for review. The Minister of Justice, who is the Appellate Body for decisions of the Directorate of Immigration, also appoints its Director. In turn, the decisions of the Ministry are only subject to a limited court review on procedure rather than substance. This has been subject to criticism in several Human Rights reports, as for example in the 2009 Icelandic Human Rights Centre report ‘Discrimination in Iceland’.

## IS ICELAND REALLY BETTER OFF WITHOUT FOREIGNERS?

Times are tough. Everywhere. Being an immigrant is tough. Mostly everywhere. But the main question is: Is Iceland better off sending Jonas, with his Icelandic partner, away? Is it really best for companies to hire someone they know? Eva Joly recently urged Iceland in Silfur Egils to “use” foreign specialists to help make the country better after the crisis. In times of internet and globalisation, in which bananas “travel” freely around the world, is there any use in trying to keep foreigners outside? Making them immigrants somewhere else?

Countries have already tried that. Concentrating on attempts to close off, they have neglected the integration of foreigners into their societies and, now, have to face the consequences. Iceland, being decades behind in its experience as an immigration country, should learn from these mistakes. Integration has to start now and not after decades when people realise that the foreigners are still here. Migration has always been an integral part of human life on earth and Iceland should take it as an opportunity to integrate foreigners, learn from them and become a better society, equipped to face the challenges of the modern world, in which multicultural and broad thinking is essential. ❧

## Words

Irina Domurath

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# WHOSE FAULT WAS THE GIANT ICELANDIC CONSUMPTION BOOM?

*Banks, merchants and media are all innocent—so it must have been you!*

## Words

Magnús Sveinn Helgason

## Photography

Skari

Columnists and commentators pined for a good old-fashioned recession to put the brakes on the materialism of their fellow countrymen. As the storm clouds of the coming crash and crisis were gathering they rejoiced, arguing that it would be a good thing; it would teach people a necessary lesson.

Considering the vast size of the recent Icelandic consumption boom that peaked in 2007, it is remarkable how little attention it received as it was happening and how few real explanations have been offered for its emergence. There are virtually no scholarly studies of the origins and nature of Icelandic consumerism during the boom years, and very few critical analyses. Even the daily press paid remarkably little attention to the changes that were taking place in the consumption habits of Icelanders. It wasn't really until 2007 that we encountered critical public discussion about consumerism in Iceland. And most of this public discussion was neither particularly deep nor enlightened.

## "REAL ICELANDERS" ARE CONSUMERS

It is not as if the rapidly growing consumption and shifting consumption patterns had gone unnoticed. When the question of consumerism was raised by politicians, it was in the context of environmentalism and was always framed as a global problem—Westerners in general had to consume less. There were occasional complaints from artists and academics, and when reading the "letters to the editor" published by the Icelandic newspapers one encounters an occasional reader complaining about materialism and consumerism. But these lonely voices only serve to highlight the absence of any kind of debate on the question. People grumbled and complained, but that's all it ever amounted to. There was no real debate.

A closer look reveals some more sustained and serious attempts to critique or resist the advance of consumerism. There were a few groups that voluntarily withdrew from consumer society, making "buy nothing" pledges—vowing not to buy anything new, but instead rely on sharing or fixing things that broke. Or simply learning to go without. Some of these were even featured in the media. Within Icelandic youth culture we also find criticism of consumerism and con-

sumer society. There was, for example, a strong anti-consumerist undertone in the "krútt" culture of the time. Bands like Sigur Rós, múm and Trabant presented a very critical view of consumerism, materialism and the anti-environmentalist policies of Icelandic authorities. Furthermore, a radical criticism of consumerism was central to the anarchist and radical environmentalist movements that formed around the protest against the hydro-electrical projects and the government's heavy-industry policy.

In general, however, all of



these impulses were met with indifference or scorn by the general population and the leading public intellectuals. Commentators ridiculed the "krútt movement" as empty and superficial, and environmentalists were branded as spoiled or even deluded middle-class children who were attempting to sabotage the prosperity of "real" Icelanders. This was the thrust of an August 2007 op-ed by Guðmundur Andri Thorsson, one of the most respected authors in Iceland and a regular columnist for Fréttablaðið. Guðmundur Andri felt there was something unbelievably silly about protesting Icelandic consumerism and materialism. It was something only a spoiled child would do. Probably just to get attention.

## A NATION OF SPOILED CHILDREN

It is therefore interesting that at around the same time as Guðmundur Andri Thorsson wrote his article deriding environmentalists and critics of consumerism the extreme expressions of Icelandic consumerism were gaining greater attention, even from "real Icelanders". We even encounter for the first time something that could pass for a sustained criticism of consumerism in the Icelandic media. This discussion, however, was almost offensively superficial and simplistic: Its main thrust was that Icelanders were by and large simply big greedy babies who needed to be taught a lesson. Columnists and commentators pined for a good old-fashioned recession to put the brakes

*"The scorn that met artists or activists who criticised consumerism or materialism during the boom illustrates the same point: Criticism of the boom's materialism was somehow fundamentally illegitimate."*

on the materialism of their fellow countrymen. As the storm clouds of the coming crash and crisis were gathering they rejoiced, arguing that it would be a good thing; it would teach people a necessary lesson.

In April of 2008, for example, a columnist for Fréttablaðið wrote about how he had been sitting, eating his lunch at a restaurant in a shopping mall, all the while wondering how much better life would be when the depression finally hit and people "would begin enjoying the things they al-

ready had, instead of continually chasing after something new". Two months later, in May, a different columnist wrote about how discussions of an impending recession had filled her with anticipation: she would get to live in "exciting times". She then went on about how Icelanders, especially people of her generation, needed to learn some tough lessons, arguing that standing in line at a food bank would do the trick.

Comments like the above were a recurring theme in newspaper opinion columns from late 2007 throughout 2008, and while most (but not all) were somewhat tongue in cheek, they also revealed a certain attitude that appears to have been very common: that Icelanders were somehow so deeply wedded to consumerism that only a recession could cure them. The image of Icelandic consumerism as a drunken binge, complete with calls for people to "sober up" was also frequently used.

## RECESSION AS BITTER MEDICINE

This was also among the first impulses after the depression did hit: It was somehow good; people would now have more time to think about "what really mattered", they would be cured of their materialism and greed. The media, eager to deliver 'feelgood stories', ran with this line. In early October 2008, Fréttablaðið devoted several pages to

interviewing a young woman who had turned a sizable inheritance into an even larger fortune remodelling and building luxury homes for the Icelandic nouveau riche. Then, when the crash came, she lost some money on an ill-advised investment in a fashion chain, GK, which had catered to an upscale client-

tele along with ordinary people in the process of maxing out their credit cards. But no worry: this little adventure had taught her an lesson that she and the journalist felt was so profound that it had to be shared with the entire population: There was more to life than money, fancy things and consumerism!

At the same time, Arnar Gauti Sveinsson—who hosted a lifestyle show on TV station SkjárEinn entitled 'Innlit-útlit', which promoted the most vulgar form of consumerism and snobbery for luxuries and design goods—appeared alongside fashion retail queen Svava Johansen in SkjárEinn's public service messages, where they urged people to think about the importance of all those things that money could not buy. Which sounded pretty funny coming from people who had built their entire careers on convincing people that they indeed needed to buy happiness and that the good life was defined by things, clothes, furniture and other stuff from the mall.

In fact, it wasn't until the harsh reality of the economic crisis really hit home, and the lines at the food bank actually emerged, that this kind of silly speculation stopped. A large section of the population was cured of consumerism all right. They could not afford to feed their families.

## ICELANDERS ARE JUST SUCH SPENDTHRIFTS...

This reaction to the coming depression and its beneficial potential as the miracle cure against materialism and consumerism underlines one thing, namely the view that when it came to consumption Icelanders somehow couldn't help themselves.

Searching the public discussion

of the years leading up to September 2008, the single most common explanation that is offered for Icelandic consumerism is that Icelanders were simply unusually given to spend money and buy things—because they derived such joy from consuming. It was some kind of a national characteristic. The lack of critical discussion about the origins of the consumption boom and the emphasis on it as caused by 'the nature of Icelanders' is a reflection of the degree to which people felt it was indeed a natural state of affairs: During the boom people felt there was nothing worthy of a deeper explanation going on.

The scorn that met artists or activists who criticised consumerism or materialism during the boom illustrates the same point: Criticism of the boom's materialism was somehow fundamentally illegitimate. It was an attack on the settled order of things, the very nature of Icelandic society and culture.

What makes this all the more fascinating is that after the collapse there was an attempt to blame artists and the "krútt" movement for what was now seen as the superficiality of the boom period. Musicians and artists were also criticised for not having been critical enough during the boom, and for thus being complicit in the overconsumption extravaganza. Which is "kind of unsettling, [since] there are probably few social groups that participated less in all the boom bullshit than artists and musicians[.]" as Örvar of múm put it in an August 2009 interview with the Grapevine.

## CONSUMERISM AS A PATHOLOGY

After the crash a new consensus has been emerging, according to which the consumption boom was not so much a natural expression of innate national characteristics, but a form of disease or addiction. Icelanders became addicted to consumption.









Both explanations have a common feature: Icelanders were somehow unable to help themselves when it came to consumption. Whether it was caused by the cultural genome of the people or an addiction or disease, people were somehow at the mercy of some unexplainable forces outside anyone's control. Both explanations conveniently absolve the banks that peddled "easy credit", advertisers who sold people "affordable luxuries", the lifestyle industry that convinced people they needed a makeover for themselves or their kitchens, let alone the larger social or economic structures.

It also diverts attention from the commentators and columnists as well as the cultural Brahmin, who not only failed to raise serious questions about the rampant materialism and consumerism of Icelandic society, but went so far as to deride and scold those who did.

No, the focus is on the individual moral failure of those Icelanders who fell victim to consumerism, all those people who bought flat screen TVs or travel trailers on credit. ❧

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*Cook wrote: Monday, June 27, 2011 - AH65 The Platinum Circle - Three in one!*

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"Thank you so much for offering this tour! We were thrilled to be able to put a few of the tours we wanted to do into one! Our driver for most of the day was Erlinger and he was fantastic. Not only did we see amazing Icelandic scenery, we also were able to be well informed on history and our natural surroundings. Thank you again."

*Croken wrote: Saturday, June 25, 2011 - AH150 Taste the Saga*

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# Things They Like About Reykjavík

## Compiled by

Haukur S. Magnússon  
Anna Andersen

## Photo

Skari

While compiling our BEST OF REYKJAVÍK list, we consulted with a large group of people from all around town. Some of them were very detailed in their preferences, and some of what they like about our fair city is very likely some of what you'll like about it, once you try it out for yourself. In that spirit, here are some excellent folks and their excellent thoughts on Reykjavík.



## AGÚST BENT SIGBERTSSON

DIRECTOR/MUSICIAN



### The Best Pizza: Gamla Smiðjan

Remember to ask for your toppings on top of the cheese, or your pepperoni will be buried under it. Icelanders be crazy, yo.

Best place to go to the bathroom whilst clubbing: Austur

The stalls are small and uncomfortable, but there are speakers in there. So you can do your business and do a little dance. Also, no one can hear your disgusting bowel movements over all the booming techno.

Best after-hours activity: Swimming in the pond

Everybody's always doing it, it's no big deal. Most locals jump in there at least once a night to freshen up. Iceland has the purest water in the world, you know.

## LOJI HÖSKULDSSON

MUSICIAN



I love Reykjavík more than anything. It's just the best city. It feels like a big city, but still everybody knows everybody. I have three favourite neighbourhoods: Grandi, 104 Reykjavík and Breiðholt. I grew up in 104, so I connect it very much to my childhood. I went to school in Breiðholt, and got to know the place as a teenager, and then I play music in Grandi where I can be as loud as I want. It's also the only place I can really connect with the sea. My favourite street is Hverfisgata in 101 Reykjavík. It has so much potential to be something. It's like a hidden secret in Reykjavík. I like Ísbúð Vesturbæjar in Vesturbær. It's

the best ice cream store. Then there's Kolaportið. It's wonderful all the stuff you can buy there; all of my clothes are from there. Oh and one last thing, I like to admire the architecture in Reykjavík, especially in the Laugalækur neighbourhood.

## BÓAS HALLGRÍMSSON

MUSICIAN/TEACHER



### The best places to take kids

10 Dropar: This coffehouse has it all; great colouring books, a nice staff and it's generally just great fun. It doesn't hurt that they serve real Icelandic pancakes rolled up in sugar, just the way grandma makes 'em!

The Seltjarnarnes swimming pool: Not really in Reykjavík, but nonetheless one of the best ones out there. A good kiddie pool, nice hot tubs and a sauna. The slide is exemplary.

The Einar Jónsson museum and sculpture garden: It has so much to please the eyes. It's a great spot for hide and seek when the art has been consumed, too.

Kolaportið: Folks might not agree on this, but I believe it's important that children get to know the human spectrum. Kolaportið has a lot of colourful and fun items; toys in boxes, books on tables and fun people.

Heiðmörk: It has the Maríuhellar caves that are nice to look around in. A beautiful environment that's good for all sorts of fun and games.

Fjölskyldu- og húsdýragarðurinn: This is rather basic. They have seals, rabbits, turkeys and sheep. And the science tent, where you can perform experiments and scream in a box!

Laundromat Café: Even though it's not my favourite place, it has to be said that it is superbly child-friendly and fun! A lot of nice toys and books, and a nice children's menu.

## HILDUR KNÚTSDÓTTIR

AUTHOR/COPYWRITER



### The best things about Reykjavík are...

The happy hours at all the bars! How small it is (although it can be a real drag if you're in that kind of mood). Postal codes 101 and 107. All the really cute kitties that aren't afraid of begging for a little petting session. My friends.

## ANNA HILDUR HILDIBRANDSDÓTTIR

MD, ICELAND MUSIC EXPORT



I really like to go swimming in Reykjavík because I live in the UK and the pools here aren't as nice. I especially like the Vesturbæjarlaug and Árbæjarlaug pools. Then I really like to go to Café Rósenberg. It's the best place to hang out and meet people, and the people that run the place make it so welcoming and cosy. Bíó Paradís is also great. It has a nice selection of films and the atmosphere is appealing.

## JÓN GNARR

MAYOR



### The best place for a walk: The Old Cemetery

It's really cosy because it's not really windy. Taking a walk without being as-

saulted by the wind is always nice.

### The best place to take a foreigner: The Reykjavík 871±2 exhibit

That underground museum in Aðalstræti. Going there had a profound effect on me. You could say I had a spiritual enlightenment there. When I visited, I had just returned from Trinity College, where I looked at the Book of Kells—and I—it's hard to explain. It relates to our history and culture, and to downtown and city planning. It's definitely where I'd take any foreign visitor.

## GREG BARRETT

MUSICIAN/ARTIST



I like the new city code that says that all landlords have to have someone occupy their buildings because previously wealthy landlords would leave their downtown building unoccupied and let them go to ruin. Now they'll have to be put to use. That's great. There's also that knit graffiti. Someone is going around putting woollen things on lampposts. Some kind knitting graffiti artist. I really like that. What else? I like the high quality 'nammi' you can get at corner shops all over town.

## MYRRA LEIFSDÓTTIR

ARTIST



### The best places to hang out with your children

Laugardalurinn: the entire region is a favourite of my son Eldur and I. We both go there for Tae Kwon Do practice, then we like to hang out in the Botanical Gardens and maybe have a picnic... Húsdýragarðurinn is also fun to visit,

and then there's the pool...

The harbour area: This is another favourite place of ours to visit. It has Sægreifinn and Café Haiti for sustenance, then we like to look at the ships and just wander around. Tryggvagata is right by there with the Reykjavík Art Museum, the library and Kolaportið... everything you need for a nice day out. Sundhöll Reykjavíkur: This goes without saying. The hot tub is especially nice, because it has such a great massage feature.

## NANNA ÁRNADÓTTIR

AUTHOR/STUDENT



Esja, the mountain that sort of watches over Reykjavík from the other side of the bay, is always a different colour. It depends on the day and the sunlight but the Esja can be pink, purple, white, black or slate, you name it. It's like a game, "I wonder what colour the Esja will be today?" Every time I see it, no matter what it looks like, I get this massive soul-boner and it takes my breath away. Another thing I like is that bookstores are open late in Reykjavík, some are open until 10 pm and the staff doesn't look at you funny when you sneak a book to a table and spend a few hours reading this novel or that. The problem with bookstores though is that they are like a time vortex, you go in and suddenly it's an hour later. What's that about?

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Pictured: lots of cod. The headline says 'mackerel', yes, but cod are also mentioned in the article. Furthermore, that picture looks really cool. How could we not have used it?

# MACKEREL MAYHEM AND THE UNHOLY TRIANGLE



**Words**  
Quentin Bates

**Photography**  
Viktor Svan

Forty years ago, Iceland saw its last real spell of hard times before the crash of 2008. In 1968 it wasn't the financial geniuses who failed, but the herring. A fishery that had sustained communities all around Iceland, not to mention coastal regions all around the North Atlantic, came to an abrupt and unexpected halt.

The immediate result was unemployment and emigration, until Iceland's fishermen instead turned to cod to keep themselves fishing.

It was the end of an era. Overfishing, that easily bandied phrase, is widely blamed for the herring's collapse, but in hindsight, fishing was probably just one of several factors, that include a shift in sea temperatures, that was probably crucial to the herring's disappearance.

But the herring came back, appear-

ing in force in the 1990s and things appear to have come full circle as the Atlanto-Scandian herring stock is now showing signs of weakening again. Since then, a third major pelagic stock has risen and fallen. Blue whiting, which had been fished intermittently for years, suddenly became a serious fishery in the 1990s, and just as a management plan had finally been agreed, the stock went into a tailspin and fishing is now virtually zero.

As blue whiting have been weakening, mackerel, an unpredictable, migratory and predatory species that ranges over the North Atlantic, has seen a population explosion, extending its migration into Icelandic waters and beyond, sparking a bitter row between those nations whose fishermen rely heavily on the mackerel for their livelihoods.

## THE MACKEREL CLUB: NO ICELANDS ALLOWED

Fishermen in Britain, Ireland, Norway, the Faeroes, Denmark, Holland and elsewhere have all been through the lean years when mackerel was scarce, putting up with increasingly tight quotas as the mackerel club of Norwegian, Faroese and EU governments bickered and argued, but maintained a fragile truce.

When massive volumes of mackerel suddenly appeared around Iceland, things began to come unstuck. The

mackerel club had consistently refused to let Iceland join on the grounds that Icelandic waters were completely mackerel-free. That's certainly not the case now—although history hints that the mackerel will eventually withdraw.

In practical terms, the agreements over this vital fishery have been shredded and burned. The sight of the Icelandic fleet shovelling up quota-free mackerel was, understandably, too much for the Faroese, not to mention that groundswell of dissatisfaction among Faroese fishermen at the low quotas while it was obvious that mackerel were increasingly abundant on their doorstep.

With Iceland enjoying a mackerel bonanza, Faroese fisheries minister Jacob Vestergaard stepped out of line and set autonomous quotas two years running that he feels reflect his country's position.

## DETERMINING THE PROBLEM

The reactions were predictable. EU and Norwegian fishermen who had lived with the pain of years of dwindling quotas are furious. They see newcomers set to cash in on the markets they have laboriously nurtured, and they see themselves being drastically undercut by newcomers, some of whom had never even seen a mackerel as recently as five years ago.

So where do the real problems lie?

Fishing on the three main pelagic stocks of mackerel, Atlanto-Scandian herring and blue whiting are generally managed through brittle agreements between Norway, Iceland, the Faeroe Islands and the European Union, who hold interminable meetings and all of which are subject to intense pressure from lobby groups in their own back yards. In Norway that's Fiskebåt; in Iceland it's LÍÚ, the influential fishing vessel owners' association. In the EU those lobbying are the Producers' Organisations (POs), as well as the green groups who have been quick off the mark in condemning Iceland and the Faeroes for endangering the mackerel stock. The media haven't been far behind, with even the Sunday Times in London carrying a remarkably ill-informed article about the Icelandic and Faroese fleets being set to exterminate mackerel.

## NOBODY WANTS TO SLAUGHTER THE GOLDEN GOOSE

Hold on a moment... Let's think for a moment here. There are plenty of uncomplimentary things the greens can say about fishermen, but stupidity is one that simply doesn't fit. It's in nobody's interest to wipe out mackerel—and this is a good place to point out that no marine species has ever been fished to extinction. The closest so far is probably bluefin tuna, but even the prized

bluefin are still a fair way from joining the dodo.

No fishing company spends millions of Euros buying and equipping a ship and then building up markets to fish for two seasons. Fishermen want to come back to that same fishery at the same time every year and sell to the same customers they've been dealing with last year and every year before that.

So let's kindly forget the whole idea of a set agenda to exterminate anything. Nobody wants to kill any golden geese, thanks very much.

## THE UNHOLY TRIANGLE

To begin with, the failings lie with the unholy triangle of distrust between fishing, science and politics. Science tends to dismiss information from fishermen as unreliable. Fishermen tend to distrust science as being inaccurate and ultimately used against them. Politicians sway in the political breeze and if the wind gusts from the vote-friendly green camp, then science and fishing trail far behind.

With apologies to scientists who are genuinely doing their best, fishery science is still a highly imprecise discipline. Imagine trying to count the trees in a forest, but with trees that you can't see that are also constantly moving. Whatever the scientists tell us, much marine science remains informed guesswork—and any fisherman will also tell you that mackerel are notoriously difficult to locate, plus the sheer rapidity of the mackerel's westward expansion took everyone by surprise.

All of these problems are compounded by the failure of existing management mechanisms to cope with climatic change and natural fluctuations in marine stocks that are due to a whole swathe of partially understood factors, of which fishing is just one. This is coupled with a short-sighted political determination to deal with each stock as a separate entity rather than as part of a complex of species within a changing environment.

Managing migratory stocks that ignore borders set by humans on the basis of national flags leaves the whole business crippled by counter-productive baggage, virtually ensuring a tortuous process in reaching any kind of agreement that will always be a compromise that nobody is satisfied with.

But it's all we have—until someone comes up with some kind of radical thinking that puts the politics and national interests second to the practicalities of management that can react to events as they happen, and not half a dozen years afterwards. I'm not holding my breath. ♡



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# A BEAUTIFUL, MYSTERIOUS GARDEN

Egill Helgason writes about his favourite place in Reykjavík—which, incidentally, is a cemetery...

When I was a boy I lived close to the Old Cemetery ("Gamli kirkjugarðurinn"), which is just up the hill from the pond. The cemetery is an old, mysterious place—and as a garden it is very beautiful in its Nordic way. I think this would count as my favourite place in Reykjavík. Too bad it is completely full, and thus people who die in Reykjavík are usually buried in a cemetery in Gufunes, far out in the suburbs, in a place where no one really goes until he or she pass away.

## A GOOD PLACE TO COURT GIRLS

When I was a young man, the Old Cemetery was a good place to take girls on long summer nights. There is even a famous description in a book by Þórbergur Þórðarson, one of Iceland's foremost writers, about how he manages to lose his virginity in the cemetery. This was around 1912—so the garden has long had this attraction. In Þórbergur's case, the affair is rather grotesque, but for me the allure of the garden on a night in June or July is much more romantic. It is a nice place to sit around with a bottle of red wine or a couple of beers in summers—no disrespect meant to the dead.

I started going to the garden at an early age, when I was about seven or eight. Since then, I've gotten to know most of the gravestones there. It may seem morbid, but I used to roam the garden looking for people who had died in November of 1918. This was the time of the Spanish Flu, which hit very hard in Reykjavík, killing many young people.

## THE BREAKDOWN OF THE MOST DASHING MAN IN ICELAND

Many illustrious Icelanders are buried in the garden: poets, politicians, artists, bishops—and it also hosts the graves of independence hero Jón Sigurðsson and his wife Ingibjörg Einarssdóttir. They both died in Copenhagen in December 1879, Ingibjörg passing away a few days after her husband. But the news of their death only reached Iceland in February the year after—the country was such a far away isolated place. Their bodily remains were subsequently moved to their home country, where they were buried with great honours in May 1880. Pictures from the funeral are quite impressive—black clad people moving through

## Words

Egill Helgason

## Illustration

Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir

the humble town that was the Reykjavík of 1880.

Other luminaries that permanently reside in the Old Cemetery are for example poet/politician Hannes Hafstein. He was the first prime minister of Iceland, being chosen for the job by the Danish authorities in 1904. Hannes Hafstein is said to have been an extraordinary figure, in his literary outlook he was influenced by the famous Danish realist Georg Brandes—who was a great influence on Henrik Ibsen—but as a politician he was the scion of the nascent Reykjavík bourgeoisie. He is still revered by many—he was also thought to be a very good-looking man. But the latter part of his life was rather tragic. He lost his beloved wife, Ragnheiður, in 1913, and after that he started wandering around the cemetery, spending long hours at her grave, talking, and probably drinking as well. For Icelanders this makes a very strong picture—the most elegant and dashing man of the country breaking down like that in full view of the townspeople.

## THE MOST FAMOUS GRAVE

But the most famous grave in the Old Cemetery belongs to a man of a much lowlier origin than the independence hero and the prime minister. This is the poet, drinker, gambler and barrel maker Sigurður Breiðfjörð. Sigurður was a great representative of the rímur, the popular poetic form of the old farming society. For a long while the rímur were about the only "fun" to be had in Iceland. Sigurður Breiðfjörð was ferociously attacked by Jónas Hallgrímsson—the upcoming national poet—a romantic who thought the rímur were backward, monotonous, and basically stupid. But at that time the people liked Sigurður Breiðfjörð more than Jónas Hallgrímsson—even if he later got the upper hand.

However Breiðfjörð was in constant trouble because of his debt, drinking and dissolute living. He lived in Greenland for a while, working as a barrel maker for Danish merchants. When he moved to Reykjavík he had to fight the authorities for the right to live in the town. He was once sentenced to a flog-

ging on account of bigamy, he finally appealed to the king in Copenhagen and the punishment was never carried out. Another famous story is that he once sold his wife for a dog.

## IN THE NAME OF POOR POETS

Sigurður Breiðfjörð died at 48 in 1846, in a house that stood on Aðalstræti (which was then the main street of Reykjavík). His foe, Jónas Hallgrímsson, had died one year earlier in Copenhagen. Most likely it was drink that caused both their deaths, and it is said that on his deathbed Breiðfjörð couldn't hold down his liquor any more.

But he is still a loved figure, not because of his poems that nobody reads anymore, but because he features as a poetic ideal for Ólafur Kárason, the poor, scorned, unhappy poet-hero of Halldór Laxness' novel 'The Light Of The World' ("Heimsljós"). In the book's most famous scene, Ólafur Kárason makes a kind of pilgrimage to Breiðfjörð's grave, a simple, rugged stone with a harp on it. Ólafur decides that the five strings on the harp represent joy, sorrow, fortitude, love and death—in the name of all poor poets who have ever lived in Iceland.

Many aspiring poets have since sat on this grave—often with a bottle in hand.

## NO STONE OR CROSS

There are many other interesting places in the garden. Some of the graves are in disrepair, but others are well taken care of. In some places the trees are so dense that sunshine doesn't reach the ground—other parts of it are brighter and sunnier. My great grandfather probably lies there somewhere. He was a rather lowly farmer in Borgarfjörður, in the west of Iceland. He took ill and finally rode to Reykjavík to seek cure. There he promptly died and from what I have been told he was buried in the Old Cemetery. But nobody seems to know where. There is no stone or cross on his grave.

As early as in the 1940s, the cemetery was becoming fully occupied, so a new one was marked out in Fossvogur, on the eastern slopes of Öskjuhlíð hill behind The Pearl. It is also quite a beautiful garden, even if it lacks the mystery of the Old Cemetery. There you will for example find the graves of British, American and Canadian soldiers who died in and around Iceland during World War II.

## THE FRENCH FISHERMEN

The Old Cemetery also has a memorial dedicated to a battle that was just as ferocious and deadly. This is the stone erected for the French fishermen who came on their ships to the waters around Iceland during the 19th century and into the 20th. It is said that as many as four thousand of them perished. Their ships were small, they were poorly shod and clad—but in comparison to the dirt poor Icelanders even these sailors had desirable things like wine, brandy and biscuits. Writer Þórbergur Þórðarson, who grew up by the great, desolate, sands in the southeast of Iceland, describes what a feast it was when a French ship stranded near his home. This includes a comic description of Icelandic farmers drinking French wine during a wedding—but of course the reality of these fisheries was deadly serious.

Many of the fishermen started working on the so called "golettes" when they were just little boys. Mothers and wives waited for them in the towns on the coast of Brittany during their long voyages to Iceland, usually starting in late winter,

returning in autumn. The French built hospitals for their fishermen in Iceland, for example the French hospital in Reykjavík, which stands in a street aptly called Frakkastígur ("French Street"). They even wanted to found a French factory town in the Westfjords of Iceland in 1860, but their plans were met with fierce resistance. In that period Iceland still had quasi-serfdom and the affluent farmers were suspicious of towns forming by the seaside where there were more opportunities, more freedom.

The memorial stone to the French fishermen stands almost in the middle of the Old Cemetery. It is a dignified place. The inscription comes from an old novel, which was very famous in its time, 'Pêcheur d'Islande' by Pierre Loti:

"Il ne revint jamais. Une nuit d'août, là-bas, au large de la sombre Islande, au milieu d'un grand bruit de fureur, avaient été célébrées ses noces avec la mer."

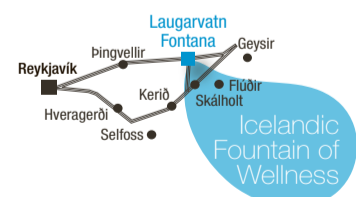
("He never came back. One August night, in a great storm by the dark Iceland, his marriage with the sea was celebrated.")



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NORRÆNA HÚSIÐ

Sound appetizing? There are numerous restaurants in Reykjavík that can serve you the foodstuffs mentioned in this article. Don't be afraid, it's mostly harmless...

# A Box Full of Offal, A Bag Full of Blood

## How Icelanders eat, PART II

It's a brisk September day and despite the winds Icelandic housewives, mothers, aunties, grandmothers have come out in droves and are queuing in the food section of Hagkaup. I've never seen so many women in a single Icelandic supermarket at the same time. The queue seems that much longer as they're all lining up with empty shopping carts, bumper to bum. I ask Great Aunt Freyja what we're lining up for and what's the rush.

"Offal", she says, "on a limited once-in-a-year-offer".

"Beg your pardon?"

"Sheep offal: guts, intestines, stomach lining, tripe, kidney, liver, heart, some cubes of fat and a bag of frozen blood, to be more precise".

A few ladies have made it to the front of the queue, rolling their carts—now full with white shoeboxes piled one on top of the other. One of them squeaks by with a bag of frozen sheep heads. The sheep eyes glare as she passes.

"You're not really expecting me to eat that, are you?"

"Just you wait", says Aunt Freyja. "With a little elfin magic, offal tastes like ambrosia. And even you'll like the jellied sheep head".

You see, she plans to turn much of this slátur (this offal box) into Icelandic liver sausage (lifrapylsa) and blood pudding (blóðmör); and then, as she tells me later, since due to the economic crisis, we've got to cut our luxuries, we're to eat this with rice pudding every Saturday for next few months.

You can't imagine my horror—or maybe you can. Do you eat the liver sausage and the blood pudding on the side, or what?

More recently I had a conversation with Solla, Iceland's resident vegan foodie, in which she told me that as a child growing up even she ate rice pudding most Saturdays (one wonders why she became a vegan). Aunt Freyja tells me that



her family didn't eat rice pudding every Saturday, possibly every second. "Sometimes, on Saturday, we ate salted cod", she says with a smile. I get the feeling that she gets a kick out of my unease.

I ask her: "Freyja, you're kidding about the rice pudding with liver sausage, right?"

She gives me the raised eyebrow then says very seriously, "You know we can get twenty meals or more out of this box. Since those bankers lost everything, we've got to start tightening our belts".

Apparently Uncle Guðmundur eats it on top. That's right, sweet rice pudding with reams of cinnamon and brown sugar, and a couple of slices of liver sausage and blood pudding plonked on top. The savoury-sour balances the sweet; and all of it, the rice pudding, the sausage and the blood pudding are so packed full of protein that our hardy Icelandic fisherman and farmers can handle Iceland's winter winds—or so Uncle Guðmundur

tells me when he arrives from Minnesota the following January, knife and fork at the ready for þorrablót (the traditional mid-winter festival).

One woman somewhere near the head of the queue starts shouting. There's about to be a discounted-offal-free-for-all but Aunt Freyja, sensible as she is, tells me to wait with the shopping cart. Things have soon died down.

"What did you tell her?"

"I told her that there was enough for everyone. The rule is everyone only gets one offal set".

I look behind us, and the queue of women and supermarket carts is now around the corner. There clearly isn't enough for all. The white boxes will soon be finished. We make it to the front of the line by the skin of our teeth. There are only five boxes left. Aunt Freyja takes the lot. Then looks back at the heavy-set woman behind us, smiles and puts three back.

stuff together with your hands until it's the right consistency to be poured into a sheep's stomach. Aunt Freyja takes on the job of sewing the stomach up with cotton, boiling the Frankenstein-looking balls, and dunking them in the sour whey mixture.

Months later in January, the morning before Uncle Guðmundur's arrival, Freyja takes me on another shopping spree. On this trip, she picks up a little sour whale blubber, a jelly-loaf-pate made with ram's testicles, a tub of fermented shark or hákarl (believe me, an acquired taste), some head cheese, and a few bags of harðfiskur (wind-dried fish)—her particular preference is haddock for its harder flavour.

I believe we're nearly ready for Uncle Guðmundur's arrival feast, but Aunt Freyja tells me we need to stop off one more place first. We end up at a friend's home in the middle of nowhere, and you won't believe it, but somewhere from the larder this friend produces something else jellied.

Back in the car, I ask Aunt Freyja, "What did you just pick up?"

"Selshreifur", she says. "You can hardly get it anymore". Jellied seal fins. I can only shake my head.

Of course, it is understandable that all this weird food comes from the old days when Icelanders had to make do with whatever was available. During the years when merchant vessels couldn't get to the country a bit of jellied seal flipper might have been just the ticket, but now? Why in God's name would you eat it now?

"We're creatures of habit", says Aunt Freyja, pouring me a shot of Brennivín and handing me a desert fork to spear myself a cube of fermented shark—an Icelandic tapas-style appetizer.

Freyja has laid on a buffet for Viking kings. Not only has she brought out the blood pudding and liver sausage that we made in September—now truly soured in whey, she's defrosted and boiled the singed sheep heads and, as in the supermarket months before, they glare at me from the table. When Uncle Guðmundur arrives he surveys the table licking his chops, but pays particular attention to the sheep heads.

"Wait until everyone arrives!" shouts Aunt Freyja from the kitchen. "Don't start picking, Guðmundur. I know what you're like".

But Uncle Guðmundur winks at me, and reaches over, plucks out one of the sheep's eyes and pops it in his mouth. "That's the best part", he says, then pours himself a shot of Brennivín.

Next time: I find out the bitter truth about Iceland's vegetables. ♡

### Words

Marc Vincenz

### Illustration

Megan Herbert

## New bar menu

Rib-eye mini burgers  
Duck confit dumplings  
Tandoori tiger prawns  
Pizza with yellow fin tuna  
Lobster spring rolls

*... warm and casual.*

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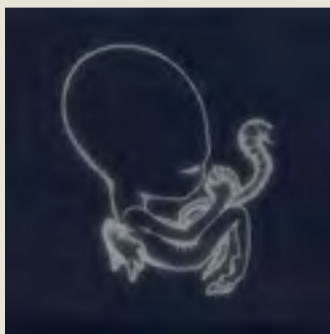


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# Cultural souvenirs we recommend!



Gus Gus  
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## ART IN THE SKY

All profits from the sale of the book go to **THE ART & CULTURAL FUND** of **Iceland Express** which aims to assist Icelandic artists in promoting their work abroad.



Grapevine readers, friends, enemies and staff do the choosin!  
By: the usual gang of idiots

Our annual BEST OF REYKJAVÍK LIST, 2K11 EDITION is finally here in all its listy listness. For the third year in a row, we've spent countless hours of what was supposed to be our free time compiling the thing [via your suggestions, e-mails, Facebook comments and bar-talk], and as always we are sure you are more than ready to contest and challenge every single entry in here.

And this is the point. We should strive to spend our time having conversations about stuff in our environment that contributes to our quality of life and sanity in general. We need to care about our surroundings, big-up the things we are thankful for and try to improve whatever entities we are not.

As we like to say (or lazily copy/paste) on this occasion: "We love the great city of Reykjavík. We really do. In fact, we love it so much, we named our magazine after it—and most of us choose to live here for extended periods at a time. It really is an excellent little city, all things considered. Of course it's lacking in many things a city will need. Decent public transport, actual neighbourhoods, a variety of ethnic eateries, clubs for late night partying on weekdays and about a million people, to name but a few. But we still swear by it, and if you're reading this, chances are you do too."

We do feel that these are some nice tips on some of what makes Reykjavík-life worthwhile, some good entries into a hopefully never-ending discussion. The primary purpose of this BEST OF REYKJAVÍK thing is celebration! It's about big-upping stuff, giving mad props to it and patting it on the shoulder. Sort of a print-version of the Facebook 'like' if you will.

Our list is of course by no means a scientific one, and it is certainly heavily contestable. It should be read as such.

It should be used as a starting point for a conversation of appreciation; something for you folks to read, verify, dispute, totally disagree with, argue over, send us angry rants about and generally enjoy.

Here's how we did it: Ever since spring 2009 we've been accepting readers' thoughts on what's BEST at bestof@grapevine.is, as well as conducting random polls on our Facebook, on the street and at the bar. Using your suggestions and arguments for guidance, we then assembled a couple of large panels of tasteful folks that represent pretty much every gender, income bracket and political affiliation to discuss. Below are the results. Enjoy, and remember to send your suggestions to bestof@grapevine.is for consideration in our 2012 edition.



### Best burger Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar

Heimilisfang 34, 105

G5

So Búllan takes BEST BURGER for the third year in a row. Like last year, their crown was contested; some people think "their meat is sort of odd", and others complain that only the original location is any good ("they are bad at franchising"), but once again their lovers are louder than the haters: "Friendly service, fire-grilled burgers and all the condiments you could hope for... please don't change, Búlla!"

Runners-up: American Style ("Hard to explain the appeal, but it exists"), Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar ("The vibe is kinda weird but the food is great [...] a bloody good burger"), Vitabar ("Always a classic...")

(2009: Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar  
2010: Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar)

### Best veggie burger Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar

A lot of places got votes in this category. Búllan got props for serving up veggie patties from everyone's favourite organic farm, Móður Jörð (also because "they feel greasy, not good for me, which I want in a burger, even if it's veggie"), while 2009 winners Drekkinn have their loyal following. However, Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar's option of allowing you to trade the meat from any one of their burgers with a Portobello mushroom seemed the most appealing to our resident veggies. "I like getting a 'Salsa burger' with Portobello... it's a taste sensation", remarked one of our correspondents.

(2009: Drekkinn  
2010: Saffran)

### Best 'specialty burger' Vitabar's 'Forget-me-not'

This used to be known as 'the best blue cheese burger' category. Then we decided that having such a category was useless, since Vitabar would take the prize every time. So we changed it into 'best specialty burger', which opened up the category for a lot of other contenders. Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar won last year due to their 'Lamburger', but Vitabar are back to reclaim the throne. According to pretty much everyone, "these blue cheese burgers are to die for, the atmosphere is unique and authentic, and they never fail!"

Runners-up: Kex ("it's a new place, but they serve SLIDERS!"), Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar ("a great selection of specialty burgers..."), Prikið ("Try Sul-tuborgarinn. You won't regret it").

(2009: Vitabar  
2010: Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar)

### Best slice Deli

Deli won this category in 2009. Then they won again in 2010. And guess what... they take the prize again now. We've heard they're open sporadically at night these days, which might make them a contender for the 'drunken slice' category, but sporadic opening hours prevent this from happening.

Why do Deli take the prize yet again? Probably because, as one mail-in remarked, "they do their slices New York-style, meaning that they don't keep them in heater boxes all day growing stale but throw them in the oven when you order. This means a slightly longer wait, and a much fresher slice". A Facebook commenter also remarked that "... they have some really novel toppings, not the usual pepperoni and sveppir you get everywhere".

Runners-up: Gamla smiðjan ("They have the best pizza, so why not the best slice?"), Express Pizza ("Slightly inconsistent, but different from the rest. Plus their dipping sauces rule!")

(2009: Deli  
2010: Deli)

### Best drunken slice Devitos Pizza

'Best drunken slice' gets our crowd arguing every time. Even though folks mostly agree on what a 'drunken slice' needs to offer (grease), they are very divided on which place brings the goods in a consistent enough manner to deserve their bingeing money. At our BEST OF MEETING, a fight nearly broke out between supporters of Pizza King ("they have all the grease you need, plus they're right downtown")

and Devitos Pizza ("the originators of Reykjavík grease, and they're super consistent even if you need to walk a spell from whatever bar you were at"). So we decided to resolve it with a vote on our Facebook page. And Devitos won by a pretty hefty margin. Congratulations Devitos, you are awesome.

Runners-up: Pizza King, Express Pizza ("I just love it when I'm drunk!")

(2009: Devitos Pizza  
2010: Devitos Pizza/Pizza King TIE)



### Best pizza Gamla smiðjan

Just like last year, this one did not take long to figure out. One panellist remarked: "I used to live in Providence, RI, where there's a pretty heavy concentration of Italian Americans and some of the world's best pizza places. Gamla Smiðjan is comparable to any of Providence's top five". Like we said last year: "Gamla smiðjan seem to handle every single order with care, love and respect [...]. Now, while it's not the most charming place to eat out at, they do deliveries, and we've yet to receive a cold pizza from them".

Runners-up: HaPP ("a really novel and great pizza. The only thing that's cooked is the crust. I've had strawberries and mozzarella on my pizza and loved it), Eldsmiðjan ("it feels like they're making a comeback!"), Saffran ("love that pieceee!").

(2009: Devitos Pizza  
2010: Gamla Smiðjan)

### Best place to go for ice cream Ísbúðin Ísland

Last year Ísbúðin Ísland managed to scoop up (ha!) the 'best ice cream' award due to their inventive flavours and charming straight from the farm philosophy (it also helped that Ísbúð Vesturbæjar's newfound 'institution' status made way for new places). Not much has changed, so they take the prize again. However, there are new contenders on the horizon, so Ísland might want to watch it...

Runners-up: Ísgerðin ("they just opened up and I am quite enthralled. You make it yourself and then pay by weight"), Sandholt bakery ("their coconut ice cream deserves an award of its own").

(2009: Ísbúð Vesturbæjar  
2010: Ísbúðin Ísland)

### Best bakery Sandholt

A vote by our panel (and one on our Facebook page) determined that Sandholt is yet again the king of Reykjavík's bakeries (although only by a margin this time around, with 2009 winners Mosfellsbakarí polling closely behind). Sandholt might not be the cheapest bakery, but they always deliver some of the finest baked goods in a country with some fairly high baked-good standards. Extra marks for serving fresh stuff all day long.

(2009: Mosfellsbakarí  
2010: Sandholt)

### Best Indian food Austurlandahraðlestin

Let's be honest: there are not a lot of restaurants serving Indian food in Reykjavík, and one of them has already made 'institution' status (thereby rendering it ineligible). But the competition is still fierce, and our crew of advisors, commenters and emailers made some very reasonable arguments for why Shalimar ("a proper curry"), Indian Mango ("a real treat"), Kitchen ("not technically Indian, but very definitely delicious every time") and Austurlandahraðlestin ("the taste of Austur Indíafélagið for a portion of the price") deserved 'best of' status—and also why they should

not. In the end, Austurlandahraðlestin won the popular vote by a slim margin. (2009: Austur-Indía félagið  
2010: Shalimar)

### Best Thai food Ban Thai

This one was no contest. Ban Thai is apparently Reykjavík's favourite Thai restaurant. Those polled cited several reasons (everything about the place, including its interior decorations, got mentioned—except for the service, which is reportedly "inconsistent"), but the main underlying reason for people's satisfaction with Ban Thai seems to be the food they serve ("always fresh made, always delicious") and its authenticity.

Runners-up: Krua Thai ("Thairific!"), Núðluhúsið ("great prices"), Na-Na Thai ("Ban Thai's take out service"). (2009: Ban Thai  
2010: Ban Thai)

### Best Kebab Habibi

This is a new category, and it divided the crowd. Many professed a love for Alíbabá's delicious falafel while others are loyal to the originators of the 'Reykjavík kebab', Kebabhúsið. Though not in the fast food category, Eldhrímur also got high commendations for their kebab ("it will last you the weekend, the thing is huge and delicious!"). However, Habibi won the popular vote, with a special nod to their shawarma sandwiches ("they do both the classic spice kebabs and a Syrian kebab", "subtle and fresh", "even though they messed up my last three orders, I love them").

Runners-up: Kebabhúsið, Eldhrímur, Alíbabá  
(New category)



### Best coffeehouse Kaffismiðjan

Last year, someone remarked: "Kaffismiðjan OWN Reykjavík coffee these days. Why are we even debating this?". This year though, Kaffismiðjan came under some fire: "They have uncomfortable seating", an email remarked. Then added: "... oh what am I thinking, their coffee is unparalleled! Yum!"

Runners-up: C is for Cookie, Babalú  
(2009: Kaffismiðjan  
2010: Kaffismiðjan)

### Best coffee to-go Kaffifélagið

Kaffifélagið on Skólavörðustígur seems to be the perfect place to step in for some take-away. Last year's winners, Café D'Haiti, got a lot of votes, but one commenter remarked that their coffee is just as good as the person making it, while Kaffifélagið have a sort of standard going for them. "Also, they always ask how much milk I want in my latté. This is important. They always cater to your specific needs".

Runner-up: Café D'Haiti  
(2009: Kaffifélagið  
2010: Café d'Haiti)

### Best place for coffee and cakes Babalú

Babalú is a local favourite, especially among expats and English-speakers since the atmosphere is very inclusive and they often serve as a nice introduction to the Icelandic-int'l community. But their winning trump, according to mail-ins, is the cakes and baked goods: "That's where I go for cake. It's all baked on the premises. Except the chocolate cake, that's baked by an old woman in Hafnarfjörður!"

Runner-up: Café Flóra ("the best place for cake, to be sure. Pity they are only open during summertime")  
(New category)

## Best new coffeehouse

### C is for Cookie

We love C is for Cookie, and apparently so do our readers and friends. So we made up a category for them. They are new and they sort of rule. This one's for you, C is for Cookie. Stay strong! (New category)

## Best tea

### Te og kaffi

This is the first time we have done 'best tea'. But tea is pretty great and getting GOOD tea is often harder than one would think (making good tea does not sound like such a gruelling task, what with the portioned sacks and whatnot). Te og kaffi seem to be the popular pick here, as their baristas are trained at making tea and also because "they serve great mate, which is hard to come by in Iceland". However, Lítli Bóndabærinn reportedly have a British tea expert on staff, so they are definitely "one to watch". (New category)

## Best sushi

### suZushii

Picking 'best sushi' has never really been a problem, until now. See, we had a bunch of filmmakers sitting in on our 'discussion session', and it turns out that Icelandic filmmakers are really, really, really opinionated when it comes to the subject of sushi. They argued and argued and often contradicted themselves, but in the end both them and our write-ins agreed that suZushii in Kringlan offer the best sushi in Reykjavík today. Why? "suZushii are consistent, fresh and have everything you need. Even though you have to go to effing Kringlan to get it".

Runners-up: Sushibarinn ("a local favourite, and for a reason", "they offer a really nice selection of sake, better than what you get elsewhere"), Fiskmarkaðurinn ("good service, a perfect atmosphere... go there for lunch sushi").

(2009: Sushismiðjan  
2010: Sushibarinn)



## Best vegetarian

### Gló

Gló are "fresh, new, inventive AND reasonably priced. This is why my vote goes their way", remarked one vegetarian friend of the paper in a letter. The write-ins for Gló were so numerous this year we sorta wondered whether they had started a campaign to win. But then we went there for lunch. Congratulations, Gló. You are awesome.

Runners-up: Á næstu grösum ("the king of Reykjavík vegetarian"), Krúska ("I plain love it").

(2009: Á næstu grösum  
2010: Á næstu grösum)

## Best hangover meal

### The Truck at Grái Kötturinn

Last year, like the year before, we wound up hopelessly deadlocked, OJ trial-style, between the 'trucks' at Grái kötturinn and Prikið (for the uninitiated, 'a truck' usually entails bacon, eggs, pancakes and various other fried delicacies). Last year we went with Prikið, because they are a tad cheaper and they won the vote, but this year Grái Kötturinn reclaims the throne! Why? Because even though it comes with a price, "there is nothing like it. It's even pretty great when you're sober".

(2009: The Truck at Grái kötturinn  
2010: The Truck at Prikið)

## Best soup

### The soups at Kryddlegin Hjörta

Kryddlegin Hjörta not only offer what some claim to be "the best view in Reykjavík", their soups are also hearty,

inventive and "always delicious".

(2009: Lobster soup at Sægreifinn  
2010: Most soups at Súpubarinn)

## Best place for a fancy meal

### Dill

People running fancy restaurants in Reykjavík: don't be sad that Dill takes the prize once again. Even though the rest of you are absolutely lovely (we firmly believe that the people of Reykjavík are spoiled when it comes to fine-dining choices), Dill is still a step beyond the rest. Is it their "location that will make you happy to live in Reykjavík for once"? Is it the "organic, fresh and novel ingredients"? Maybe, but mostly, "the sheer quality of Dill's dining experience" makes them the top contender.

Runners-up: Fish Company ("service can be a trip, but the food is always superior"), Fiskmarkaðurinn ("head chef Hrefna is the shining star of Icelandic culinaria"), Primavera ("the superior Italian").

(2009: Gallery Restaurant at Hótel Holt  
2010: Dill)

## Best place to go for a date

### Ítalia

Popular vote and mail-ins ensured that Ítalia reclaimed their title from Pisa after a year in the dark. That's not to say that Pisa has gotten any worse, just that Ítalia's decorations, service and atmosphere touched enough folks this year to place them a bar above the rest. "Candles, smooth music, relatively private seating... if I ever start dating again, my first date will be at Ítalia."

(2009: Ítalia  
2010: Pisa)

## Best newcomer restaurant

### Sjávargrillið

Everyone is in love with Sjávargrillið right now. And why wouldn't it be? They offer tasty and thought out authentic-style dishes inspired by and made out of the best ingredients Iceland has to offer (shop local!) at a fair price. Emailers agree that "while their menu isn't that far removed from what other Reykjavík seafood restaurants offer, they still manage to take it a notch further", noting that "while the service is often dangerously krútt-like, that's maybe why their prices are tolerable."

(2009: Saffran  
2010: Noodle Station)

## Best goddamn restaurant

### Ban Thai

This one posed a huge problem. On the one hand, we felt that there really wasn't a restaurant out there that fit our qualifications for 'best goddamn restaurant' (i.e. 'on the cheaper side', 'consistent', 'tasty' and 'available'). On the other, both restaurants we have awarded this prize have somehow gone under (Segurmo) or noticeably decreased in quality (Saffran, likely due to the fact that "they are running franchises all over town now and don't have oversight over their cooking" as one reader put it), so we are sort of hesitant to award this prize to anyone (last year we wrote: "Frankly, we were afraid to even include this category, seeing as our 'BEST GODDAMN RESTAURANT OF 2009,' closed down pretty much right after we picked 'em. We're afraid it might be a jinx-category...")

Then our restaurant mail-ins, when perused closely, started forming a coherent message. That message read, in various shapes, sizes and forms: "restaurants come and go, but Ban Thai has not faltered for so many years". Whether the category was best cheap restaurant, best place to grab a bite, best Thai restaurant or best goddamn restaurant, Ban Thai grabbed votes in every category... lots of them. "They're cheap for a sit-down meal, and they're super authentic," wrote one friend while another remarked "it's properly spicy, which for 'ethnic foods' in Iceland is almost an anomaly".

So we thought: since they've been

good for so long and since our readers and associates like them so much, they can't possibly be jinxed by this prize. So here's to you, Ban Thai. Don't go opening up any (more) franchises, please!

(2009: Segurmo at Boston  
2010: Saffran)



## Best family restaurant

### Laundromat Café

"Grapevine, I swear if Laundromat aren't picked as best family restaurant, I WILL NEVER READ YOU AGAIN OR BELIEVE ANYTHING YOU SAY! HAVE YOU BEEN TO THEIR BASEMENT AREA? HAVE YOU?"

Runner-up: Lauga-Ás ("it's where I take my family, food for everyone and a relaxed atmosphere").

(2009: Hornið  
2010: Piri-Piri)

## Best place to grab a bite

### Mamma Steina

Surprisingly enough, Mamma Steina's 'authentic Icelandic home-cooking' got many, many votes for this category (because, really, 'authentic, Icelandic home-cooking'? ). It is true, they are cheap and tasty and some of that old-school Icelandic stuff tastes pretty good. "it's probably not very good for you, but it's tasty and it's cheap. Your grandma might be serving this, in a good way!" Maybe those ancient Icelanders had something going for them?

(2009: Santa María  
2010: Deli)

## Best cheap meal

### Noodle Station

The soups at Noodle Stations are filled with noodly goodness, meat, veggies and various other stuff we're not sure of. Apparently, it's so good, "you can even drink the broth!". And it's on the cheap side: "it's under 1000 krónur and it leaves you satisfied and full for a long, long time. It's maybe not a miracle, but it's still awesome value for money!"

Runners-up: Subway ("they've left 101, and their price has gone up, but their monthly offers are still excellent value for money!"), Balkanika ("why is everyone not eating there all the time?") (2010: 'Sub of the month' at Subway)

## Best brunch

### Vox

It's a little pricey, but Vox's brunch buffet is definitely worth it on account of having everything you'll ever want to brunch on, in unlimited quantities. Remarkable comment: "going there makes me ashamed of ever attempting homemade brunch".

(2009: Vox  
2010: Nitjanda)

## Best restaurant chain

### Serrano

Serrano specialize in huge and tasty burritos that come in all sorts of flavours, and they're supposedly rather healthy, too. Much like last year, and the year before, everyone agrees that "Serrano is home-grown, cheap, lovely and wonderful if you're hung-over!".

(2009: Serrano  
2010: Serrano)

## Best seafood

### Við Tjörnina

Við Tjörnina know how to handle their seafood, and the atmosphere is of the 'classic Icelandic' variety in such a way that we had more than one email saying that something amounting to "if I had foreign guests stopping over for a single day, this is the place I'd take them", with one writer adding: "I'd make them get the steinbítur".

Runners-up: Fishmarket are lots of people's "personal favourite", as are Fish Company and Icelandic Fish and

Chips.

(2010: Fish Company)

## Best place to go with a group of friends

### Tapas Bar

A moderate pricing policy, a late night kitchen and an atmosphere that ensures you'll be in no hurry to leave even after you've ordered seconds on your seconds keeps Tapas Bar at the top of this game yet another year.

(2010: Tapas Bar)

## Best all-day hangout

### Hressó

Because the location is awesome, because you can sit outside or inside, because you can drink coffee or get drunk, because the specials are often special and just because, Hressó remains Reykjavík's designated all-day hangout.

(2009: Hressó  
2010: Hressó)

## Best must try dining experience

### The svið at Fjót og Gott, BSÍ

"Leaving Iceland without feasting on seared sheep heads seems like a waste of air travel". Also, we can't recommend the 'Moby Dick on a Stick' at Sea Baron anymore because whale lovers might get upset. Fortunately, nobody cares about sheep (in fact, "sheep lover" sounds fairly criminal).

(2009: Bæjarins Bestu  
2010: Moby Dick on a Stick at Sægreifinn)



## Best tourist one-stop-shop

### Kolaportið

At Kolaportið (an institution to be sure, but you know, it's really big), you can try every crazy Icelandic dish in a uniquely Icelandic environment. And then you can shop for used DVDs and Linkin Park t-shirts. What's not to love?

(2010: Kaffi Loki)



## Best pool (all-round)

### Neslaugin, Seltjarnarnes

For the good people of Reykjavík, pool-going is as about close to a 'religion' as you'll get with this bunch of atheists. Everyone has their favourite, so picking 'the best one in town' is always a hard task. After a long and heated debate, we decided to bend the rules a tad so the non-Reykjavík based Neslaugin swimming pool could reap the benefits of all the points and mail-in votes it got on account of it being really charming and nice (Seltjarnarnes is practically in Reykjavík anyway). To sum up the arguments: Neslaugin has everything needed for a satisfying pool experience. It's small but never too crowded, you can properly stretch out in the hot-tub, it's great for tanning, they use saltwater instead of chlorine, there's a proper water-slide for kids and, according to several tips, it's the cleanest pool in the city.

(2009: Laugardalslaug  
2010: Laugardalslaug)

## Best pool (for hot tubbing, lounging)

### Laugardalslaug

Laugardalslaug wins this category due to its diversity. As one reader puts it: "Laugardalslaug is the Tivoli of hot-tubs". Need we say more?

(2009: Sundhöll Reykjavíkur  
2010: Sundhöll Reykjavíkur)

## Best art museum

### Einar Jónsson museum and sculpture garden

Einar Jónsson was Iceland's leading sculptor and his museum on Skólavörðuholt is the first of its kind in Iceland. So it's very understandable that it holds a special place in the hearts of the people of Reykjavík and their visitors. The sculptures also look awesome. "It's a dramatic experience. The outside garden with the impressive sculptures is breathtaking. The architecture is groundbreaking. The exhibition inspiring. Einar Jónsson's museum has it all in one package", remarked one email. We won't argue with that.

(2009: Einar Jónsson museum and sculpture garden  
2010: Listasafn Reykjavíkur)

## Best gallery

### i8 Gallery

At the risk of repeating ourselves (ha ha ha), i8 win this one again, "for being consistently great".

(2009: Gallery Kling og Bang  
2010: i8 Gallery)

## Best museum

### Icelandic National Museum

Anyone interested in Icelandic history will enjoy the highly ambitious exhibition at the National Museum, which offers an adventurous insight into Iceland's history and heritage, where the past meets the future. The museum shop on the ground floor is also the best one in town, where you'll find quality Icelandic design as well as objects related to the exhibitions on display.

(2010: Þjóðmenningarhús)

## Best place to spend a rainy day

### Bíó Paradís

Hot-tubs are still awesome, rain or shine, but there's a new chill-out in town that outdoes the rest on a rainy day. With its selection of alternative films, shorts and old Icelandic classics—and a nice café where you can sit down with a beer before or after the show, Bíó Paradís is simply put "exactly what Reykjavík has been missing!" Also, their popcorn portions are gigantic!

(2009: Borgarbókasafnið  
2010: A hot tub)

## Best place to rent a movie

### Aðalvídeóleigan

Laugarásvídeó are still strong, but two years without Aðalvídeóleigan and its expert staff/excellent selection getting a nod is TOO DAMN LONG.

(2009: Laugarásvídeó  
2010: Laugarásvídeó)

## Best biking tour

### Harpa-Laugarnes

The way from the old harbour along Sæbraut all the way to Laugarnes is an ideal biking route for many reasons. There is a marked biking path and the coastline view on a sunny day is just magnificent. Please take a minute or two to admire our brand-new concert hall Harpa before you bike along, after all, we spent millions of billions on it—you might as well enjoy it!

(2009: Grandi-Nauthólsvík  
2010: Ægisíða-Elliðaárdalur)

## Best place to go for a walk

### Kringlan

You've been through Laugardalur, paying special attention to the botanical gardens and the swimming pool. Then you strolled through Þingholt, greeting the cats and taking extra care not to step into any vomit left there



by partying suburbanites over the preceding weekend. Now it's time to try something new, to meet and greet THE PEOPLE OF ICELAND. So it's time to go to the mall. PS: if you buy something, it doesn't count as a walk. (2009: Laugardalur 2010: Þingholt)



### Best romantic walk Grasagarðurinn

"Lovers and flowers, how can you go wrong?" one of our romantic experts commented. And we have to agree. Although Reykjavík can be a really romantic city given the chance, strolling lazily hand-in-hand through the Botanical Garden while breathing in the scent of pretty flowers, trees and plants, can't fail to add some magic to the air.

Runner-up: Hljómskálagarðurinn scored some points here too, mostly because the garden is empty most of the time, and there are plenty of hidden corners for snogging.

(2009: Öskjuhlíð 2010: Sæbraut)

### Best place to go for a jog Laugardalur:

Laugardalur has some very nice routes in a peaceful and beautiful area, and is one of few spots in Reykjavík where the wind barely blows (what counts for 'barely blows' in Iceland anyway). A huge bonus is the Laugardalslaug pool and its hot-dog stand, where one can relax ones muscles in the hot-tub and satisfy a hungry stomach after a hearty jog.

Runner-up: Only the most hardcore joggers will battle the hills of Mt. Esja but anyone with a pair of runners on can at least sprint down and feel awesome afterwards!

(2009: Elliðaárdalur 2010: Laugardalur)

### Best place to go fishing Reykjavík harbour

You might wanna think twice before sending out the dinner invites, but Reykjavík harbour is definitely "the most fun and scenic fishing spots to be found" in the area. You might also meet some fairly interesting characters while dipping your bait in the water.

(2009: Elliðaárdalur 2010: Reykjavík harbour)



### Best place to enjoy a Zen moment Húsdýragarðurinn

Stare a seal, pig or sheep straight in the eye. Focus. Ahhh. (2009: Reykjavík Botanical Gardens 2010: Alþingi)

### Best place to cheer up Swimming in Nauthólsvík

Stripping down to your underwear and running into the freezing-cold North-Atlantic might not sound very uplifting, but we promise you, "the heroic battle with the ocean will get rid of any negative thoughts in a heartbeat" (seriously, your heart will skip a beat).

Not convinced? After the swim, relaxing in the hot-tub with some free lukewarm coffee will surely lift your spirit.

(2009: Húsdýragarðurinn 2010: Húsdýragarðurinn)



### Best place to drink like a pro Kaffi Grand

Drinking like a pro. It's all about sort of disappearing into the void, slowly blacking out from existence while pondering your purported ill fortune. Or just getting shitfaced by yourself. You choose.

A pattern seems to be forming with this category. We pick a place, it goes out of business. Why is this? Maybe because our readers and friends like to nominate places that serve dirt-cheap alcohol and you are not likely to meet anyone you know? Because drinking like a pro means drinking a lot on an empty pocket, and drinking alone. This is why Grand Rokk won in 2009 and this is why Live Pub won in 2010. And this is why Kaffi Grand wins in 2011. Hopefully they'll stay strong. Because we need a place to get shitfaced every now and then.

(2009: Grand Rokk 2010: Live Pub)

### Best mainstreamer bar English Pub

Austur took the prize for 'mainstreamer bar' last year, but we've come to realise (through countless emails and Facebook tips) that while Austur is maybe the place mainstreamer heroes and celebs go to get fucked up (the older of that crowd apparently go to B5), English Pub is where the mainstreamers themselves go. Even with its LEVEL FIVE TROUBADOUR ALERT, "English Pub is a fun place for any Icelander or friend of Icelanders". Why? Because "people are there to get drunk and talk to one another", that's why. There is zero posing, and lots of unadulterated fun (plus: unadulterated adultery!). (2010: Austur)

### Best place to start the night Nýlenduðorverzlun Hemma & Valda

Still a staff favourite, still a reader favourite; H&V's "cosy atmosphere", "friendly service" and "nicely eclectic selection of background music" have kept them on top, right where we left them. Pop by for a drink, wind up somewhere with your underpants on your head—it's all in the game. (2010: Nýlenduðorverzlun Hemma & Valda)

### Best cheap bar Den Danske Kro

This is tricky, because Den Danske Kro's list price is pretty average (and they also rank very high on the TROUBADOUR ALERT scale). However, their daily 'happy hour' is both very easy on the wallet and it draws a nice and mixed crowd of everyone you'd like to meet (plus some people you don't at all want to meet, but then that's life). (2009: Hemmi og Valdi)

### Best all-round Bar Bakkus

Wow. This was a strange trip. It seems like not one commenter really 'wanted' to pick Bakkus ("they've gone downhill", "why is it filled with children and hnakki-types?", "what happened to the... what happened to it?"), yet they all did because... it's "still the best thing going" (and: "it's where I go to meet my friends", "the weekday programme is great" and "the only place to hear decent new music", and

"their concerts are often legendary" and "it still fucking rules, man. It's a bar nice bar in a town of not so many nice bars, people go there, what do you expect?"). So you win again, Bakkus! Stay fun!

Runners-up: Barbara/Trúnó ("as a complex, it will provide the best, most diverse times around", "like a mall complex of nightlife fun!"), Boston ("not for everyone, but for those who dig it, it's the best"). (2009: Karamba 2010: Bakkus)

### Best club NASA

There is not a lot of competition in this category, but even if there were, NASA would probably take still the prize every time because it regularly plays host to some legendary concerts and club nights, and "the architecture of the place seems to breed sheer insanity and fun!" "BUT," as one FB friend remarked, "STAY AWAY FROM THE BATHROOMS!". (2009: Jacobsen 2010: NASA)

### Best newcomer bar Faktóry

Last year, we made up this category and called it 'most welcome nightlife initiative' in an attempt to heed all those folks that had written in urging us to celebrate what was then Reykjavík's only live rock music venue. We still love Sódóma, but a new rock venue has since opened its doors, and it's pretty damn great too. Faktóry isn't quite Grand Rokk (then again, Grand Rokk was a very unique establishment), but their live shows are usually top notch, and it also functions fairly well as a bar too. We are thankful for anyone willing to put up with the city's rock bands and their followers, and so we are thankful for Faktóry. Welcome! (2010: Sódóma Reykjavík).

### Best place to watch sports over a beer Hvíta perlan

A fine and basic menu (the burgers are quite good), some nice happy hour offers and a unique 3D sportswatching experience (!) ensure Hvíta Perlan retains its place. 3D is so cool. (2009: Bjarni Fel 2010: Hvíta Perlan)



### Best place to shop for touristy stuff Geysir

If you need to stock up on Icelandic souvenirs, Reykjavík's centre unfortunately now has way too many tourist shops. Our readers agree that the Geysir shop on Skólavörðustígur is the most tasteful option because "it offers way more exciting stuff than you'll find in any puffin-shop around". This nicely laid out shop offers plenty of unique Icelandic objects and memorabilia that will put a smile on any tourist face.

Runner-up: Last year's winner, Handprjónasambandið, still deserves two thumbs up for providing Icelanders and their visitors with unique and reasonably priced hand-knitted woollen sweaters of highest quality for decades. (2009: Handprjónasambandið 2010: Handprjónasambandið)

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Above the second hand shop



### Best place to get a trendy haircut

**Barber Theater**  
Sit down with hairstylist Anna Sigga and ask her to do “just do her thing”, and you will most certainly walk out with a trendy new look. Barber Theater got the most votes this year because Anna Sigga “has a unique take on hairstyling” and “designs her own hair trends that will always stand out”. (2010: Rauðhetta og úlfurinn)

such items. It comes with a price, but then so does eating Euroshopper for every meal.

Runner-up: Yggdrasil is still the best downtown choice, and Jurta-apótekið is a lovely wonderland.



### Best second hand shop

**The Salvation Army store**  
Nothing has changed in this category since last year. When it comes to second-hand shopping, The Salvation Army store still offers the best bargains. The shop continues to be a local favourite because “it’s free of pretentiousness, usually stocks some true gems, and most importantly, still respect the second-hand price-tag!” It can be a bit of a hit and miss but it’s cheap, and that’s why we love it. (2010: The Salvation Army store)

### Most welcome addition

**Jet Korine**  
Jet’s environmental take on design won her the most points here. In her shop on Skólavörðustígur her unique creations continue to grab the attention because “the clothes are not only beautiful but they are all made from organic fabrics and she only uses natural colours”. As an alternative to the environmentally-unfriendly consumer culture in the vein of greats like Aftur, Jette’s shop is a very welcome addition (and yet another proof that Reykjavik is infinitely enriched by each and every new útlendingur that decides to make it home). (2010: Fiskmarkaðurinn við gömlu höfnina)

### Best shop to stock up on local design

**Kraum**  
For an overall local design experience, Kraum boasts the largest selection by far. “It’s more like a design gallery than a shop” one reader commented; you’ll find stationery, books, handbags, clothing and an array of pretty little things by household names in the local design industry. (2010: Kraum)

### Best shop to stock up on local fashion design

**Kiosk**  
Run by a collective of young Icelandic fashion designers, Kiosk is such a welcoming addition we felt the shop deserves its own category. Kiosk is a co-op shop and serves as a first step for young local designers to sell their creations. It’s not only the cool designer wear and accessories that make the shop a great pick, but since the designers take shifts behind the counter you can always guarantee to meet a young new talent.

Runner-up: Keep your eyes open for the many Pop-up stores where well known as well as newly established local designers sell their designs in random bars and back gardens. (new category)

### Best shop for ‘high fashion’

**KronKron**  
KronKron keeps right on ruling this category, and the reason is simple: “There’s no real competition. KronKron is the only shop left with a decent selection”. Selling high-end fashion labels such as Mark Jacobs, Sonia Rykiel, Vivienne Westwood, not to forget Icelandic label Kron by KronKron, this shop is the local fusionist’s candy-store, and is priced accordingly. But if you’re into that whole ‘Tax-Free’ rebate thing, we’re told that the clothing is cheaper than in most European cities.

### Most fun shop

**Kisan**  
Our readers agree here, shopping in Kisan is always super fun. “It’s a shop with a unique character. You can find some unbelievable items in here and they all look so pretty!” Carefully selected pieces from around the world, one often comes across items that can’t be found anywhere else in Reykjavik. From clothing and accessories to stationery, CDs and books and funky odds and ends for the home. BUT WE STILL MISS HAVARÍ, DAMN IT! (2010: Havarí/Útúrdúr)



### Best haberdashery

**Herrafataverzlun Kormáks & Skjaldar**  
There’s no real competition here either. Herrafataverzlunin continues its trend of being all awesome and stylish, the perfect place to “poke around for hours on end, admiring the stylish staff and fashionable items”. Cool clothes, friendly staff, plus, we hear that loyal regulars get free whiskey (not that we’ve ever gotten any...grrrr). Well, they’re still a winner! (2010: Herrafataverzlun Kormáks & Skjaldar)

### Best place to shop organic

**Frú Lauga**  
Straight from the farm, right in the heart of Laugardalur, Frú Lauga has won our hearts over with their nifty selection of organic veggies and other

### Best bookstore

**Eymundsson, Austurstræti**  
Eymundsson’s outlet on Austurstræti won this time, because of its outside patio. “It’s the perfect spot to linger for an afternoon, with an iced-coffee and a stack of magazines and books. It’s one of the best kept secrets in the city centre” (SO WHY ARE WE TELLING EVERYONE!?!).

Runner-up: Although Útúrdúr doesn’t have the biggest book selection, it’s still the most interesting bookshop in town, where you can get your hands on some rare collectibles and inspiring coffee-table books.

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# Step into the Viking Age

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## AURAL ECSTASY ATTACK



A lot of bitching and griping has gone on in the metal and hardcore scene as of late regarding the inclusion of For a Minor Reflection on tonight's bill, and for good reason. While not as abysmally offensive to the inner ear as the naysayers (who spent their opening set downstairs from the venue, at Bakkus) would have it, their appearance tonight is horribly out of context. Even though their sounds can be quite gripping during the eerie ethereal parts and passably shaking during the more driven passages, the growing audience pays but lip service to their performance. I, for one, would like to have seen a band comprised of long time Converge fans (such as Celestine, Klink, Manslaughter, I Adapt, etc.) receiving the much sought-after honour of acting as support to the mighty Converge.

As segueing from the mellow mood of FaMR to the jarring aural assault of the almighty Converge was deemed unwise, the billing was switched around so that Logn explode as the act immediately preceding Converge. And a fearsome job they do of it too. My previous experience of these teenage lads has been mostly in form of me being violently awakened by their hellish ruckus on Sunday mornings (they live and practice next door to me), but the Logn du jour have come a long way from their earlier grindcore manifestation, and their set list tonight contains not only violent high speed ditties but heaving dirty dirges of catchiness far

exceeding that presented during the forays into power-violence and borderline crust-core. Kick ass as they are, audience appreciation is a bit lacking, to say the least. No pit erupts and the response is just south of a golf clap. Their force however is totally unreasonable, as the drum kit makes several escape attempts and the drumsticks keep stealing away from the violently thrashing drummer's grasp.

Next up are Converge. This show has been a long time coming—seven years, more precisely—and for this legendary crew of hardcore heroes to match the ferocity of their last appearance on these shores a minor miracle must occur.

Right out of the gate frontman Jacob Bannon displays an utter contempt for the idea of taking prisoners, and one can but wonder how any man can possibly kindle the same inexorable level of rage as this guy has and continues to exhibit through hundreds of shows and a twenty-year career in the profession of screaming his lungs out. As 'Dark Horse' escapes the backline as if out of a barn on fire, Converge suffer no lack of Grade A material to draw on as they burst out with hit upon feral hit, borrowing even from 'When Forever Comes Crashing', the 1998 precursor to 'Jane Doe', the critically acclaimed '01 release that cemented the band as the leader of the hardcore pack.

In the sold-out venue the intensity reaches an impossible pitch with a ter-

*Converge,  
Logn,  
For a Minor Reflection*  
Sódóma Reykjavík 20/6/2011

**Words**  
Bogi Bjarnason

**Photography**  
Hössi H

rifying pit ebbing and flowing, writhing, kicking and spitting in mouth foaming convolutions of aural ecstasy. The band continues to exert a forceful grip on the raging crowd as numbers from all their albums (and some yet unreleased ones) spill over the astounding musical brim donned by Jacob and cohorts, and after the last tones die out over the crazed noise of a rampant audience the cheer of "Meira, Meira" arises to egg the band on to further onstage glories, Converge are only happy to comply, and do so with a two-song encore terminating in the classic tune of 'Last Light', which ushers the spent fanbase out the door into the un-setting sun. ☘

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### Special | Best Of Reykjavík: Word On The Street

Compiled by: JH, FG, and MB

**Helga**

(Iceland)



**Best bar?** Bakkus, it's really popular these days.

**Best store?** Kjark, it's a collection of new designs/designers.

**Best kept secret?** I won't tell you, because if I do everyone will go there.

**Halldór**

(Iceland)



**Best bar?** Bakkus. There are some nice bartenders and the music is good as well.

**Best store?** Actually I don't go to stores but there's one. It's Kvosin, and I really like it because of the nice staff there.

**Best kept secret?** Indjánagil in Breiðholt. It's really nice.

**Sean**

(UK)



**Best bar?** Babalú. It's cheap, and has a very nice atmosphere.

**Best restaurant?** Icelandic Fish and Chips was really good. We had Icelandic wolf fish. The sauce and the skyr...I've never eaten anything like it before.

**Best store?** Geysir. The balaclava with the moustache is really cool!

# Tómas Boonchang Is The Real Deal



**Ban Thai**  
Laugavegur 130, 101 G8

Ask for chopsticks, a knife, or heaven forbid, soy sauce, and you shall not receive. Friendly Ban Thai owner and chef Tómas Boonchang is clear about that. He's not interested in compromising authenticity to please the uninformed patron.

When Tómas and his wife moved from southern Thailand to Iceland in 1987, he wasn't sure that Icelanders could really appreciate Thai food. In fact, he didn't go straight into the Thai food business. The first restaurant he opened in Reykjavík was called Ingólfsbrunnur and it served Icelandic cafeteria-style food.

It wasn't until four years later, in 1991, that he would buy the apartment building at Laugavegur 130, tear down some of the walls, and transform the space into what is now the highly acclaimed Ban Thai restaurant.

Though it gets rave reviews today, as Tómas displays proudly on the wall for customers to see, the restaurant wasn't an instant success story. Getting people to come was initially tricky, and sometimes he says patrons refused to pay for what they thought was too

spicy.

But rather than winning customers over by accommodating to their requests for less chilli or more bamboo shoots, Tómas has stayed true to his belief in delivering consistency and authenticity. "The key to success is being honest", he says.

That means flavour derives from real spices imported from Thailand rather than MSG or other additives. And when a customer makes an order, nothing has been prepared in advance. The meat has not been precooked and the vegetables have not even been chopped.

It would seem that many Thai food establishments in Reykjavík don't think you can taste the difference, but really, the green curry with chicken should taste different from the green curry with beef.

But do try something more exciting than the green curry. There are 156 items on the menu, most of them cannot be found elsewhere in Reykjavík, and some of them are exclusive Ban Thai specialities.

Yeah, we really have to thank Tómas for keeping it real.

ANNA ANDERSEN  
JULIA STAPLES / HVALREKI



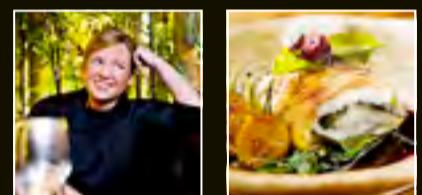
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## The Restaurant That Brought The Pizza Margherita To Iceland!



**Hornið**  
Hafnarstræti 15, 101 D4

Three decades ago, Icelanders couldn't go out for a pizza margherita or some spaghetti alla carbonara without first getting on an airplane. When Chef Jakob Magnússon opened Hornið in 1979, he was a real pioneer on the Icelandic restaurant scene.

In fact, he was breaking into an almost non-existent restaurant scene for that matter. "People went out to eat maybe once a month and it was an occasion to dress up for", Jakob says. Even so, he says it wasn't difficult to fill the place. "People were excited to get pizzas and pasta, which was all completely new".

Today Hornið is amongst the oldest restaurants in Reykjavík. Still standing in its original location on the corner of Hafnarstræti and Pósthússtræti, it opens for business every day between 11:00 and 23:30. And more likely than not, Jakob will be there running the show.

But if he's not here, Jakob could, as an internationally approved judge from WACS, be off judging in an international culinary competition like the Italian Pizza Olympics!

*Fun Fact:* Hornið bakes about 1000 pizzas every week! 🍕

✍ ANNA ANDERSEN  
📷 JULIA STAPLES

Special | Best Of Reykjavík - Best Place To Shop Organic

## Straight From The Farm



**Frú Lauga**  
Laugalæk 6, 104

Wedged between a 10-11 grocery store and an ice cream parlour, Frú Lauga on Laugalækur road is the closest thing you will find to a farmer's market in Reykjavík. It's also certainly the only place that carried blood oranges from Italy this winter.

Though it's tempting to think that the store is run by a frú ("mrs.") Lauga, it's actually the brainchild of couple Arnar Bjarnason and Rakel Halldórsdóttir, who opened shop two years ago. Arnar has a PhD in music theory and composition and Rakel studied art history and museum studies. Neither of them have backgrounds in farming, but they both

have a taste for good food and wine.

They personally shop from 40 different individuals, mostly farmers, who come from all over the country. As far as he knows, Arnar says Frú Lauga is the only place like it in Reykjavík, where people can shop for these kinds of products in one spot. Not only that, but they also import their favourite products from abroad, including wines, olive oil and mustard that simply put cannot be found elsewhere on the island.

Everything in the store is labelled so that the customer knows exactly what they are eating and where it comes from. For instance, there's frozen yogurt with blueberries from Holtssels-Hnoss, rhubarb from Langamýri á Skeiðum, bacon from Laxárdalur and lamb from Brekkulækur, to name a just a few.

Frú Lauga a rare refuge for the food conscious in Reykjavík. And I wouldn't be surprised if there aren't any fresh expats jumping up and down to hear that the dismal looking vegetables at their local grocery store aren't their only option.

*Fun Fact:* Between the two of them, Arnar and Rakel have three grandmas who bear the name Lauga in one form or the other. The store is in part named after them and in part a reflection of their store neighbourhood where nearly everything also bears the name Lauga. 🍷

✍ ANNA ANDERSEN  
📷 JULIA STAPLES

Special | Best Of Reykjavík: Word On The Street

Compiled by: JH, FG, and MB

**Ramon** (Spain)



**Best bar?** I really like Barbara for dancing. I love the music and I feel so comfortable there. I am gay and I really like the atmosphere. Also, I usually go to Hemmi og Valdi for the delicious cakes and hot chocolate. It's a great place to meet young people.

**Best restaurant?** Hlíðlabátar is a great place to get a quick sandwich. When I want something more fancy I go to the Nordica Hilton restaurant, Vox.

**Best place in Reykjavík?** I like to walk around Tjörnin, Reykjavík's town lake.

**Best pool?** Laugardalslaug. I like it because it is conveniently located next to the gym I usually go to, and it is also the biggest in Reykjavík.

**Bertrand** (France)



**Favourite Restaurant?** The Sea Baron. The lobster soup is legendary. It must be one of the best in the world. And it's also relatively cheap.

**Best Burger?** I would say Hlíðlabátar. But their fish and chips with Béarnaise sauce is even better. I highly recommend it.

**Best museum?** Sadly I haven't been able to visit many museums here, but I very much liked the Reykjavík Museum of Photography.

**Best kept secret?** Without a doubt, the best-kept secret in Reykjavík is the little geothermal pool near the lighthouse in Seltjarnarnes.

**Loftur** (Iceland)



**Best bar?** Bakkus. This is the only place I go because of the atmosphere and the music. They have bad beer, but it doesn't matter.

**Best restaurant?** Noodle Station because when you're hung-over it's the best option.

**Best pool?** Sundhöllin on Barónsstígur, because it's small and I've always gone there. I don't really like the biggest one in Reykjavík, that is Laugardalslaug.

**Eva** (Finland)



**Best Bar?** I like Kaffibarinn because of the candles, the music and the people. Oh, maybe not the people. Be careful in the bars of Reykjavík, because people can be pretty violent.

**Best Restaurant?** Eldsmiðjan. I always have Campania pizza. It's the perfect mixture of basil and fresh tomato. It also has two floors, so you can always get high (giggles).

**Best Museum?** The Living Art Museum (Nýló). They have really nice pieces of art there and they also have performances.

**Freyja** (Iceland)



**Best bar?** Bakkus  
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**Best pool?** Vesturbærjarlaug. It's the best one. It's nice and small and it's outside, unlike Sundhöll Reykjavíkur.

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## "IT'S MY FESTIVAL AND I'LL BOOK WHO I WANT!"

The people behind metal-fest Eistnaflug deny that the 2012 edition will feature a Stone Temple Pilots cover band ...



It's a story that has passed into Icelandic music legend. Of how a young drummer named Stefán 'Stebbi' Magnússon, having moved to the Eastfjords village of Neskaupstaður, invited several of his musician friends to come and play and have a party out of sheer boredom. From this chaos, the mighty Eistnaflug metal festival was created, becoming one of Icelandic music's best-kept secrets. Now in its seventh year, and promising to be bigger than ever, we sat down with Stebbi and fellow organiser Guðný Lára Thorarensen to talk metal, tents and dancing to Mammút ...

**So how are the preparations going?**  
**Guðný:** It's been pretty good. We've been working on the festival for about eleven months now. Last year's festival was really professional, so we're trying to continue that for this year. After last year finished, we decided that we wanted more foreign bands and have it bigger and better.

**Are you finding it easier to do as the years go on?**  
**Stebbi:** It does get a bit easier as we're just better prepared, have more connections and a better reputation in the metal scene now, which is important when you're talking to foreign bands.

**This year's line up looks really diverse. Are you looking to open up the festival beyond the core metal audience?**

**G:** We do try to do that. The heavy metal guys that come, they want to bring their friends and girlfriends and we want to make sure they enjoy themselves too so that they'll come again next year. Plus, you can't really listen to death and black metal continuously for three days.

**S:** It's also rather funny seeing all the metal fans dancing away to the likes of Mammút!

**G:** But we've always tried to have a diverse line up. People forget that the likes of Agent Fresco and BOB actually played at Eistnaflug a couple of years ago. And don't forget Reykjavík! and Me, The Slumbering Napoleon last year. I think people's minds are a bit hazy and they tend to forget.

**Now there are couple of acts on this year's line up that have raised a few eyebrows, none more so that the Alice In Chains tribute band. So the question is, why??**

**G:** Stebbi LOVES the Alice in Chains band!

**S:** Yup it's just me!

**So what you're saying is that it's your festival and you'll have whoever the fuck you want on it?**

**S:** That is EXACTLY what I'm saying [laughs] 100%!

**G:** He always puts on some odd bands. Whenever I turn away to do something, I come back and these bands are written down on the list! And he goes: "It's my festival!"

**Another thing that's raised eyebrows, for different reasons, is that the original Icelandic metallers Eiríkur Hauksson is playing. How did you swing that?**

**S:** He's my uncle!

**A fair point...**

**S:** Well many of the younger people, they won't have seen him perform what he'll be doing at Eistnaflug.

**G:** Stebbi's even made a special band for him.

**But will he be performing his Eurovision Song Contest entry?**

**S:** God, no no no. What he'll be playing is some of his stuff from his Drýsill days, some tracks from his Norwegian group Artch, and some classic stuff.

**Nice one. So this year you've got four foreign bands playing, more than ever. Did having Napalm Death perform last year make it easier to get these guys to come and play?**

**G:** That, and we got a great review of the festival from Shane Embury [Napalm Death's bass player], as well as the festival appearing in magazines like Terrorizer and Metal Hammer.

But also Icelandic bands are talking about the festival to their friends in Europe. Secrets Of The Moon, for example, are really good friends with Sólstafr. And Secrets Of The Moon are also good friends with Triptykon, and Stebbi had already spoken to them about playing.

**S:** Triptykon was a big one for us to get. They're such a good band.

**G:** It was also interesting that all four of the bands kind of 'fell into our lap' so to speak. We didn't have to woo them specifically. They wanted to come and play here.

**There's been some talk for a while that with the festival increasing in size, it will be moved from Egilsbúð to the sports hall nearby. What is the situation with that?**

**S:** We're working on that, but we won't go there until we absolutely need to. For example, if we book a very big for-

eign metal band.

**G:** But we will definitely not turn it into a mainstream festival. Eistnaflug will always be a metal and rock festival.

**So is this going to be the best Eistnaflug yet then?**

**S:** I can ASSURE you that with this year's festival, we've never put as much work into this one that we have in previous years.

**G:** It's going to be fantastic! 🍀

BOB CLUNESS  
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### ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

**What is it?**  
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**Where is it?**  
Neskaupstaður, East Iceland.

**How to get there:**  
Car: Travel on Route 1, follow the road signs. Plane: Flights are available to and from Egilsstaðir (see www.airiceland.is). Bus: Coaches from Egilsstaðir to Neskaupstaður are available (www.austfjardaleid.is), but be aware that there is no bus service on Sundays.

**Who's Playing:**  
Agent Fresco, Celestine, Atrum, Benny Crespo's Gang, Dr. Spock, HAM, Eiríkur Hauksson, Skálmöld, Sólstafr, Innvortis, Mammút, Manslaughter, Momentum, Black Earth, Brain Police, Carpe Noctem, Chao, Dánarbeð, Dimma, Elin Helena, Gone Postal, Muck, Offerings, Plastic Gods, SH Draumur, Saktmóðigur, Sign, Trassar, Witches, Secrets Of The Moon (GER), The Monolith Deathcult (NL), Triptykon (SWI), Hamferð (FOR)

**Attendees:**  
Approx 1500-1750  
**Website:**  
www.eistnaflug.is

### STEBBI'S TOP TIPS FOR SURVIVING EISTNAFLUG!

**Check the weather:** This is Iceland. The climate in Neskaupstaður is different from Reykjavík, and it's been pretty cold this year. Prepare for pretty changeable weather.

**Take your time to get there:** One of the great things about Eistnaflug is the road trip, which can be up to 12 hours by car. That can often be as much fun as the festival itself. Make sure you buy beer in Höfn as well!

**Bring swimming trunks:** The pool at Neskaupstaður is a perfect hangover cure. The sight of so many metalheads in the hot tub is a fun one to behold.

**Bring a tent that works!** You will be thankful for this if it starts raining.

**What happens in Eistnaflug stays in Eistnaflug:** Have a great time and take part in fun, crazy shit. But please make sure you're careful, lest you have an annoyed partner waiting for you when you get home!



**Jóhann Jóhannsson**

The Miners' Hymns

www.johannjohannsson.com

A eulogy to the cause of the working man.

While Jóhann Jóhannsson's status as a musician and producer in Iceland is assured, his soundtrack albums in the past, while sounding "nice", suffered from a lack of depth and emotional resonance that can leave you cold. However with his latest work, 'The Miners Hymns', he captures a real feeling of fury and bereavement.

Written as the score to Bill Morrison's film about the destruction of mining communities in North East England, Jóhannsson eschews the

usual instruments associated for melancholy (strings) and instead taps into the power of brass, which has a strong cultural and political significance in the area.

Jóhann utilises his knowledge of space and atmosphere from his ambient work to create the sound of ghosts from a windswept industrial past coming back to haunt the present with a warning (think Ingram Marshall allied with The Caretaker). When the force hits on 'An Injury To One Is A Concern

To All', it has the grandeur of Holst with the attack of Sunn o)))). Despite the despair, the hope and confidence of the final track, 'The Cause Of Labour Is The Hope Of The World', walks us out of the dark into the light with its heart-aching harmonies.

With the 'The Miners Hymns', Jóhannsson has made music that radiates strength, anger and a strong political conviction not seen in his previous work. Essential listening.

✂ - **BOB CLUNESS**



**Guðmundur Steinn Gunnarsson**

Hörpma

www.slatur.is/gudmundursteinn

An intense listen, but not for everyone.

The latest composition from S.L.Á.T.U.R member Guðmundur Steinn Gunnarsson is a strange, almost impenetrable beast with avant-garde plasma running through its veins. Everything about this composition is unorthodox, from the use of numerous stringed instruments and unconventional tunings to create an imaginary 56-string harp instrument (just what IS a Langspil by the way?), to the varying 3 note riffs and time intervals throughout.

The end result is one febrile chaos, with its continuously changing rhythms and tones. The first movement feels a lot like several inner monologues all churning inside your head until a doctor provides a sedative two-thirds of the way through as the dissonance and clutter begin to fade.

After several listens, you do begin to tease out individual tunings, nuance and structures. But it feels a bit like a piece that's to be endured more than enjoyed, and for a lot of people who are used to normal Western melody, structures and rhythms, they're likely to find this perplexing and frustrating.

✂ - **BOB CLUNESS**



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# The World's Only Elf School

An evening with Headmaster Magnús Skarphéðinsson



## You Laugh But...

Just last week elves in the remote Westfjords town of Bolungarvík were in the news. They apparently have a beef with the construction company Ósafi, which built the tunnel between Hnífdalur and Bolungarvík last year and are now working on an avalanche barrier.

Medium Vigdís Kristín Steinþórsdóttir told DV reporters that the elves were upset that nobody asked for their permission before beginning construction. They would apparently have liked to pack up their bags before their home was obliterated.

To appease them, Vigdís called for a meeting between the elves, construction workers, town residents and parish priest Agnes M. Sigurðardóttir. The priest reportedly said a prayer and asked for the elves' forgiveness. Unfortunately, Vigdís said they weren't buying it, and coincidence or not, rocks from the avalanche barrier construction site rained down on the town the following day.

While Vigdís claims it's the doing of angry elves, Leó Jónsson from Ósafi says he doesn't believe in elves. In any case, elves in Iceland are real enough to make the news.

off. But, he returns with a plate full of freshly baked waffles with jam and whipped cream and then continues to recount another series of inexplicable events, that is, unless you believe in the existence of hidden people.

Leaving the Elf School, diploma in hand, I wonder what to make of it all and recall a 2002 documentary I once saw called, 'Investigation Into The Invisible World'. Appearing in the film, Iceland's former president Vigdís Finnbogadóttir says quite diplomatically:

"I have never seen elves or invisible people. I haven't yet encountered a ghost but I have often heard about them. This type of belief no longer exists in France or Spain because they are Catholic countries. Catholicism is so powerful; it leaves no room for other beliefs. In the Middle Ages, the Icelanders adapted Catholicism to fit their pagan heritage and continued to tell stories of hidden people, elves and ghosts. The existence of elves, ghosts, extraterrestrials and of a life after death has never been proved. It's the same thing with God. No one has proved whether he exists or not."

ANNA ANDERSEN  
STEINGRÍMUR GAUTI INGÓLFSSON

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"People come to me with their stories and they swear to me that they're not a drunk, they're not on drugs, and they're not a pathological liar", Magnús Skarphéðinsson says. Headmaster of the Elf School for the last twenty years, Magnús has met over 700 people who have seen elves, hidden people and other nature spirits.

"I never planned to create the Elf School", he says. "As more and more people inquired about my work, I just started telling everyone to come by on Fridays and that's how it all began". By now he says 8.000 people have graduated from the school and received his Diploma in Elves and Hidden people Research Study. Note: This is possibly both the easiest and most enjoyable diploma you will ever earn.

## A QUICK LESSON

Magnús invites us into his classroom and we sit down around a table. Surrounding us are shelves bursting with old books and trinkets. There are no less than five different lamps sitting on the windowsill, along with more trinkets of every which kind. "Welcome to the Elf School", Magnús says. To the best of his knowledge, it is literally THE Elf School, with no counterpart anywhere else in the world.

He begins class by describing himself as a neutral scientist who collects testimonies from people who have had encounters with "álfar," which translates to elves, but is used as an umbrella term for elves, hidden people, light-fairies, dwarfs, mountain spirits,

and gnomes.

In the booklet Magnús gives us are sketches of these nature spirits, whose appearances Magnús says have been confirmed by countless testimonies. In all, there are thirteen species of elves, two species of dwarfs and three species of hidden people. While elves are from 8 to 80 cm tall, hidden people are said to look just like humans, only they dress in old-fashioned clothing.

"There are many things we still don't know about elves and hidden people", Magnús admits. "What we do know, we have learned from people who have had decades of friendships with them and have been invited into their homes". After thirty years of collecting these experiences, he says he doesn't know anyone who knows more about the subject than he does.

## AND IT'S STORY TIME

About 75% of the encounters he has recorded involve hidden people, which exist as Modern, Blue, Ancient species. Yet, Magnús says nobody has ever spoken to the Ancient or Blue types. "They always run away", he explains, and after a short pause, he continues, "They run away, yelling, 'You, you bank robbers!' And then turns to the American in class and says, 'You imperialists!' Well, at this point we laugh because we think he must be joking. In fact, he's full of jokes this evening.

Magnús, who by the way should not be confused with his brother, Minister of Foreign Affairs Össur Skarphéðinsson, is an excellent storyteller. We pass the evening listening to stories of one encounter after the other. At some point without warning, he disappears and we wonder if he hasn't just taken

**'Investigation Into The Invisible World' (2002), Jean Michel-Roux explores Iceland's beliefs in the supernatural:**

"I've won the title of the world's strongest man four times now. I believe in elves and invisible forces. These forces support me when I make physical efforts."

- Magnús Ver Magnússon, athlete

"Many people used to have intimate relationships with hidden people. Women would go into some rocks and come out pregnant. Today, that is known as visiting rights but, in the

old days, they had to visit the elf man every nine nights."

- Björn Sigurðsson, police officer

"In 1993, the extraterrestrials came as planned but didn't show themselves to the reporters. They were on another frequency. Their huge spaceship stayed for 36 hours above the glacier. The humans who had left their bodies during the night were able to observe a lecture by the extraterrestrials from a circular gallery. They wanted to warn people on Earth that "grey" extraterrestrials want to enter our atmosphere to infiltrate the world of finance and politics. Some of them are already here. Their aura is dark and gloomy, so we should be able to identify them.

But there are already so many evil human beings that it's hard to spot them."

- Erla Stefánsdóttir, piano teacher and seer

"Sometimes, mediums contact the office nearest to a work site to warn us that elves are living there. They usually offer to act as go-betweens to help things go smoothly. We try to keep everyone happy like when we have to cross a farmer's field. Sometimes we wait until the elves move on. Such courtesy doesn't cost the road office much."

- Helgi Hallgrímsson, head of the Icelandic Road Administration

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## The Best Places For Skateboarding In Reykjavík

*Introbeats on skating*



Skateboarding is doing great in Reykjavík these days. There are some new spots and people making some nice skating videos, me being one of them (search Facebook for 'First try fail Mondays')... I even hear some people are signing sponsorship deals. This makes me pretty happy.

Telling everyone about the best skating spots in Reykjavík kinda bugs me, because it means they might fill up with people. But still, Iceland is small country, so I'll let it slide...

### Harpan, 101 Reykjavík

The lot around Harpa, Reykjavík's new concert hall, is absolutely the best skateboarding spot Reykjavík has seen for a long time. There are rumours that one of the people responsible for designing the area spent a lot of time looking at skateboarding magazines

and the like—I have no idea if that's true, but the entire grounds are certainly great to get up to some skating. The benches, the pavement... Do the house authorities mind? They don't seem to, but we are sort of waiting for them to take notice and drive us away. Hopefully that won't happen—the skaters around there are contributing life and fun to the area.

### Ingólfstorg, 101 Reykjavík

Ingólfstorg is always a classic. It's really Reykjavík's first skate central, save for a couple other places. It is excellently situated in the middle of 101, in fact a lot of sessions start out there, and the environment provides ample opportunities for skating. This is probably the best place to go if one wants to hook up with Reykjavík's community of skaters. Harpan and the skating area at Fifan

(in Kópavogur) are also fine places to check in on the skating community.

**The skatepark at Fifan, Kópavogur**  
Technically, this ain't in Reykjavík, but it's close enough and they offer some excellent facilities. Recommended.

### Háskólinn í Reykjavík, Öskjuhlíð

The lot around there has some nice skateboarding spots. Lots of gaps, flowerbeds and stuff to ollie over, and also some benches—although those could do with a little modification....

### The benches at Grandi

I'm not going to tell you anything more about those. It's one of the better spots, and if you're interested, you'll just have to find 'em.

✍️ HAUKUR S. MAGNÚSSON  
📷 JULIA STAPLES

## The Secret Ingredient Is Love



### Gamla Smiðjan

Lækjargata 8, 101

E4

When we had a meeting leading up to the making of our Best Of issue, and the question was raised regarding best pizza, it seemed there was the closest thing to total consensus you could expect from a group as diverse as the one we had assembled. To be sure, in a town with as many pizza places as Reykjavík, the title of 'Best Pizza' is no small feat. So how do Gamla Smiðjan do it?

I called owner Ásgeir Blöndal to find out exactly that. Ásgeir said he'd been making pizzas for some 20 years, and knew that some day he would open his own shop. When this dream finally came true, he took the job very seriously.

"Everything is made right on the

premises", he said, explaining Gamla Smiðjan's success. "I make the dough, the sauce, the garlic oil. It's all done here. Plus, we only use high-quality ingredients".

Ásgeir also wanted to point out that his pizzas are cooked in a wood-burning stove, using birch from Hallormsstaður, Iceland's largest forest.

So while plenty of pizza companies are available to you—with choices ranging from the international to the domestic—you can count on Gamla Smiðjan to deliver, as Ásgeir put it, "Heaven in pizza form". 🍕

✍️ PAUL FONTAINE  
📷 JULIA STAPLES

## Reykjavík's Best Spots To Catch A Live Show

*Kamilla Ingibergsdóttir, Iceland Airwaves PR & Marketing Director*

Pondering this question got me thinking hard about all my favourite concert experiences in Reykjavík through the years—and surprisingly enough, I found that most of them had taken place in the city's churches. I think the fact that Reykjavík's churches are so open to hosting pop and rock concerts is pretty unique; it made me think that since we're not really that Christian, our churches should just be turned into concert venues. Jóhann Jóhannsson at Hallgrímskirkja or Sufjan Stevens,

Wildbirds & Peacedrums or Hjaltalín at Frikirkjan—those were some of the best shows I've witnessed and definitely some memorable, once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

Thus I have to recommend that if people have the chance to catch a concert in a church, for instance at Frikirkjan, while in Reykjavík, they take it. Even though you don't necessarily know the musician. You can be pleasantly surprised.

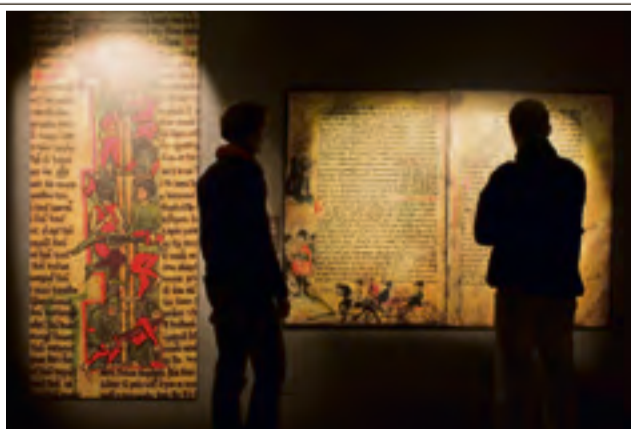
Of course, visiting some of the city's

many bars and clubs for concerts can be a great experience too. My personal favourite is Rósenberg. It has a cosy environment, not unlike being in someone's living room, and they have shows every night ensuring that most people can find something that appeal to their tastes. They also serve dinner, so you can have a complete night out there for that matter.

✍️ HAUKUR S. MAGNÚSSON  
📷 VANESSA SCHIPANI



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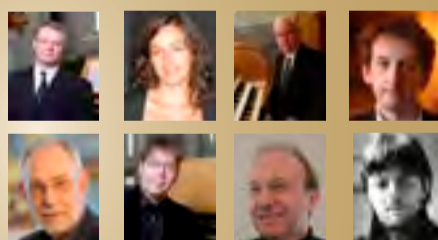
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## Jómfrúin: Where You Go For Lunch



### Jómfrúin

Lækjargata 4, 101

E4

I admit I'm not really familiar with the concept of Danish smørrebrød, the open-faced sandwiches that are a part of the nation's character. To me, a sandwich involves edible stuff between two slices of bread, not one, and are more about taste than appearance. Jómfrúin, the first restaurant to sell these famed sandwiches in Iceland, has proven me wrong.

Located on Lækjargata, you can

walk past there any given lunchtime and see the dining room packed with guests. They get plenty of regulars, too, and will likely make some new ones. So how did such a specialised restaurant come to be?

I spoke with owner Jakob Jakobsson about the origins of Jómfrúin. Living in Copenhagen in the early '90s, he originally intended to become a chef, but the recession made this an impossibility. So instead, he got a job at Ita Davidsson, a restaurant well-known for its smørrebrød. After working there three years, he decided to bring the concept

to Iceland.

"Due to our special connection with Denmark", he told me, "there are plenty of Icelanders who are familiar with the Danish open-faced sandwiches, but there were no restaurants selling them. We opened in 1996, and the positive response really surprised me".

"So, let's say I stroll into your restaurant, with no idea what smørrebrød is", I asked. "What do you recommend I try first, if you could pick only one dish?". To this, Jakob's answer was immediate: the fried plaice on dark bread with tartar sauce, shrimp, smoked salmon,

asparagus and dill. Just hearing the description was enough to sell me.

Jómfrúin recently expanded their hours to be more in keeping with the shops in the area—now open until 18:00, you used to be out of luck if you went there after 15:00. Why the reluctance to expand the hours, if the place is so popular? "Traditionally, smørrebrød is what you have for lunch. You don't eat something like this for dinner. We wanted to stick with the tradition".

While Jómfrúin has no plans to expand, despite offers to open branches in London and New York, they do have

a spin-off place, Munnharpan, which is a coffeeshop/bar located on the first floor of Harpa, and run by Jakob's son. We would also be remiss if we didn't mention that since 1996, Jómfrúin has hosted live jazz concerts every Saturday afternoon from 15:00–17:00, located behind the establishment (during summer).

Jómfrúin may be a Danish import, but it's a restaurant that's 100% an Icelandic institution.

✍ PAUL FONTAINE  
📷 JULIA STAPLES



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## The Swimming Pool That Has It All



### Laugardalslaug Sundlaugavegur 30, 104

If there's one swimming pool in Reykjavík that has something for everyone, it's Laugardalslaug in 104 Reykjavík. With the biggest swimming pool in the country, numerous hot tubs, and a killer water slide, it's no wonder that this pool is also the most visited one in the whole of Iceland.

Many of the visitors are regulars who have been coming to the pool ev-

ery day at the same time for years or even decades. When the staff open their doors at 6:30 in the morning, they say there's always the same group of a dozen or so elderly citizens waiting to begin their day with a few laps, some time spent chatting in the hot tubs and then a post-swim coffee and kleinur break.

Another group that the staff speaks fondly of are "hádegiskarlarnir" or "the noon guys", as they like to call them. This group of middle-aged men meet at the hot tubs every weekday to discuss

politics before they get out and order the same asparagus soup for lunch. If their taste in gossip is more exciting than their taste in soup, this could be a good time to hit the hot tub, though you're almost always guaranteed to learn something interesting in an Icelandic hot tub.

In addition to the regulars who are there rain or shine, or snow, the pool is packed to the brim on a sunny day. It's perhaps a little known secret that Laugardalslaug often has the best conditions for sunbathing. The concrete sta-

dium style seating that many would like to do away with actually blocks out the cold northerly winds, which incidentally also bring sunny to partly cloudy skies in Reykjavík.

But let's be honest, many of us go to Laugardalslaug for its killer 8-metre tall and 85-metre long water slide. Replacing the old slide in 2009, the new and improved one, called 'Thunder and Lightning', is completely covered and features a crazy light show before spitting you out.

As a kid you learn that wedgies are

the way to achieve maximum speed, but you should know that there is no age limit. Take it from the pool's deputy director Bjarni Kjartansson who takes the occasional slide himself: "There may be taller slides in the country, but no slide is more fun".

Tip: Don't forget your towel in the locker room. It's the most commonly left-behind item.

ANNA ANDERSEN  
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# Bolungarvík Is The Bird Nerd's Paradise

*And Ísafjörður ain't half-bad, either*



“On a clear day”, she told us, “you can see all the way to Greenland”. Unfortunately, it was not a clear day.

When most visitors to Iceland—or really, most people living the capital area—think of the Westfjords, Ísafjörður is usually the first place to spring to mind. Arguably the capital of the region, this is a town that, to me, feels more like a mountain town than a seaside town. I wish I could adequately explain why this was; it might be because the downtown area looks very much like my hometown, which is way up in the Pennsylvania Appalachians, or maybe because the town is surrounded on three sides by tall, stark mountains, while the fjord upon which it rests is dwarfed by comparison. Either way, plenty has been written about Ísafjörður, a town that has come to embody the spirit of the Westfjords.

Not as well known is Gamla Gistihúsið (“the old guesthouse”), often overlooked by the better-known and more modern Hótel Ísafjörður. Gamla Gistihúsið, true to its name, is a converted house that dates back to the 19th century. It was first a hospital, and then a home for the elderly, before becoming a guesthouse in 2000. The accommodations were the ideal blend of old-timey and modern—the panelling and wooden fixtures for the stairs were very early 20th century, but the place has open WiFi. We slept like rocks, and were treated to quite a spread when

it came to breakfast, replete even with shots of lýsi (cod liver oil), which I was personally very grateful to see.

Heading north, along the western coast of the Ísafjarðardjúp fjord, we came to Bolungarvík. An Ísafjörður native had remarked that when he was younger, the smell from the fish rendering plant in the town was almost overpowering, but we encountered no such smell when we arrived, so either they've found a solution to the fish rendering odour problem, or ceased operations altogether. Either way, it should be said that this is quite the ideal place for bird nerds—the vast shoreline and interior wooded area make for fine birdwatching opportunities, but if you're lazy or pressed for time, you can always check out the Natural History Museum in town. There, you will find literally dozens upon dozens of stuffed birds (and their eggs) from all over the country. This includes birds that are not native to Iceland but by chance ended up here, such as a pink flamingo that apparently arrived here via the UK.

When we asked the curator what she would tell a foreigner to go see in her town, her reply was immediate: Bolafjall, an imposing mountain that looms over the town. “On a clear day”, she told us, “you can

see all the way to Greenland”. Unfortunately, it was not a clear day. It was cloudy, windy and cold, and the idea of climbing a mountain filled us with dread. We learned soon enough that you don't need to actually climb the mountain to get to the top; there is a well-worn road, built by the US Army (that used to operate a still-standing radar station on the mountain), that winds up there fairly quickly. We decided to explore.

We passed snowbanks before even reaching the foot of the mountain, and by the time we drove to the top, there was snow everywhere. Keep in mind this is in late May. Sitting at the top of this mountain is an enormous metal geodesic sphere—the aforementioned radar station, now being used by the Icelandic government. There are warnings all around the facility that you are being videotaped, and that you must not enter, so we were cautious about exploring the area. Despite the heavy cloud cover, the view was spectacular, so much so that it was easy to forget the biting cold we felt. So, word to the wise: if you do drive up to the top of this mountain, put on some warmer gear first. [↗](#)

## Words

Paul Fontaine

## Photography

Thorsten Henn / Maroesjka Lavigne



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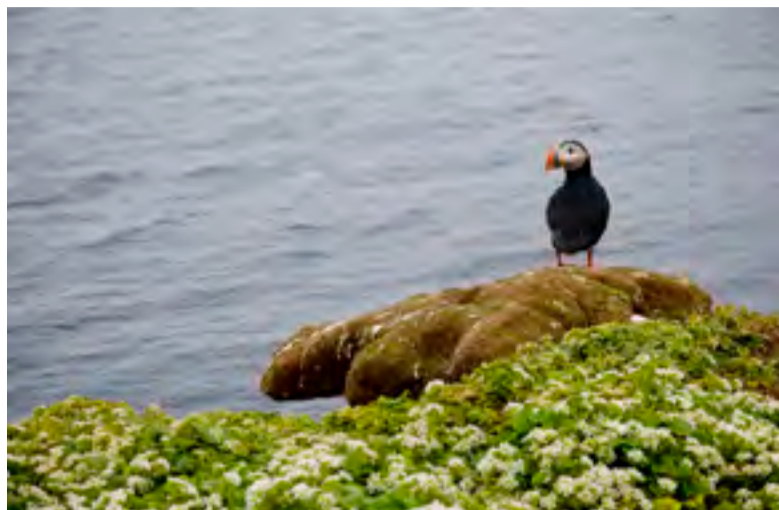
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# Grímsey: There And Back Again

*A true tourist's tale*



“We went across the country and the Arctic Circle, saw amazing birds, visited the capital of the North, and came back again in around seven hours

A trip to Grímsey—Iceland's northernmost island—from Reykjavík seems less than appealing at first. In order to get there, you have to traverse an entire country, to stand on this micro-island with its approximately 100 inhabitants. Would accommodations need to be secured? Would I need Dramamine for the ferry ride over? The answers to these questions were rather surprising.

#### AIR TRAVEL: SURPRISINGLY EASY

This particular bird watching tour of Grímsey is operated by Air Iceland, so we naturally embarked from Reykjavík airport (which is conveniently located right in downtown Reykjavík) to get to the island. Domestic air travel in Iceland is nothing like the air travel I have known through my years. My anxieties of getting to the airport early enough to check in, going through security and making it to the gate before it closed turned out to be entirely unfounded.

A domestic flight in Iceland seems more akin to taking the bus (except the planes are usually on time). The tour ticket recommended we show up half an hour before takeoff. Waiting in

line to get on the plane at Reykjavík Airport, people were checking in five minutes before the scheduled take off and just stepping into line to get on the plane. There is probably no other place on Earth where air travel is so easy.

The plane we got on was of the smaller variety. This had me nervous, as it is often said that small planes experience the worst turbulence. But this plane ride was one of the smoothest I've ever been on. And after this one-hour flight, there's another forty-five minute flight to Grímsey in an even smaller, 21-passenger plane (the number is deceiving, because it felt like it could barely fit the ten passengers that were on the plane). That flight was equally smooth.

#### ARCTIC EQUATOR AND PUFFIN CUTENESS AHOY

As soon as we were off the plane, our guide to the bird watching tour was there to greet us. Before we began any bird watching, we were led to a sign with the name of the island, and there were different arrows jutting out from the sign which had the names of major cities on them and how far away they are. This pole marks the

line where the Arctic Circle is. Once we crossed the pole, we were officially north of the Arctic Circle, and we got certificates to prove it.

On the trip, there are three separate puffin colonies that can be visited. Grímsey houses thirty different species of birds, but the two we got to see were the Arctic Tern, as it made attempts to bat at our heads (no injuries sustained, they didn't even really get that close), and the puffin. There were a lot of puffins there, and at the third colony one visits, it's possible to get quite close to them. We learned that the puffin has been leaving the southern part of Iceland and heading on up to Grímsey in greater numbers, due to the warmer weather down south. For this reason, our guide believes that Grímsey may soon house the island's largest puffin population (in fact, we were told that around 300,000 puffin reside on Grímsey at this very moment).

Apparently, the puffins all eat at the same time too. Our guide, the knowledgeable Katla Ásgeirsdóttir, told us that at times if the airplane is delayed, people will arrive at the cliffs only to see just a few puffins, because they all fly out to the water

to find food at the same time. This seems like it could be very frustrating for bird watching tours as well as pretty embarrassing for tour guides.

#### LAYOVER IN AKUREYRI

After stopping at the three puffin colonies, we return to the micro-plane for the journey back to Reykjavík. On the way back, though, there is an hour and a half layover in Akureyri, where you can spend your time sitting in the airport or take a cab into town and look around. You will have enough time to do this. The photographer and I stopped in at Brynju ís, which is purportedly the best ice cream shop outside Reykjavík, and even stopped at the church to take the 'Akureyri challenge', making it back in time for the flight. This is a good chance to optimise your time in Iceland and truly round out the trip.

The flight to Grímsey left at 10:30 and we arrived home by around 17:30. We went across the country and the Arctic Circle, saw amazing birds, visited the capital of the North, and came back again in around seven hours. Talk about using the time a tourist has in Iceland to its fullest potential! 🇮🇸

#### Words

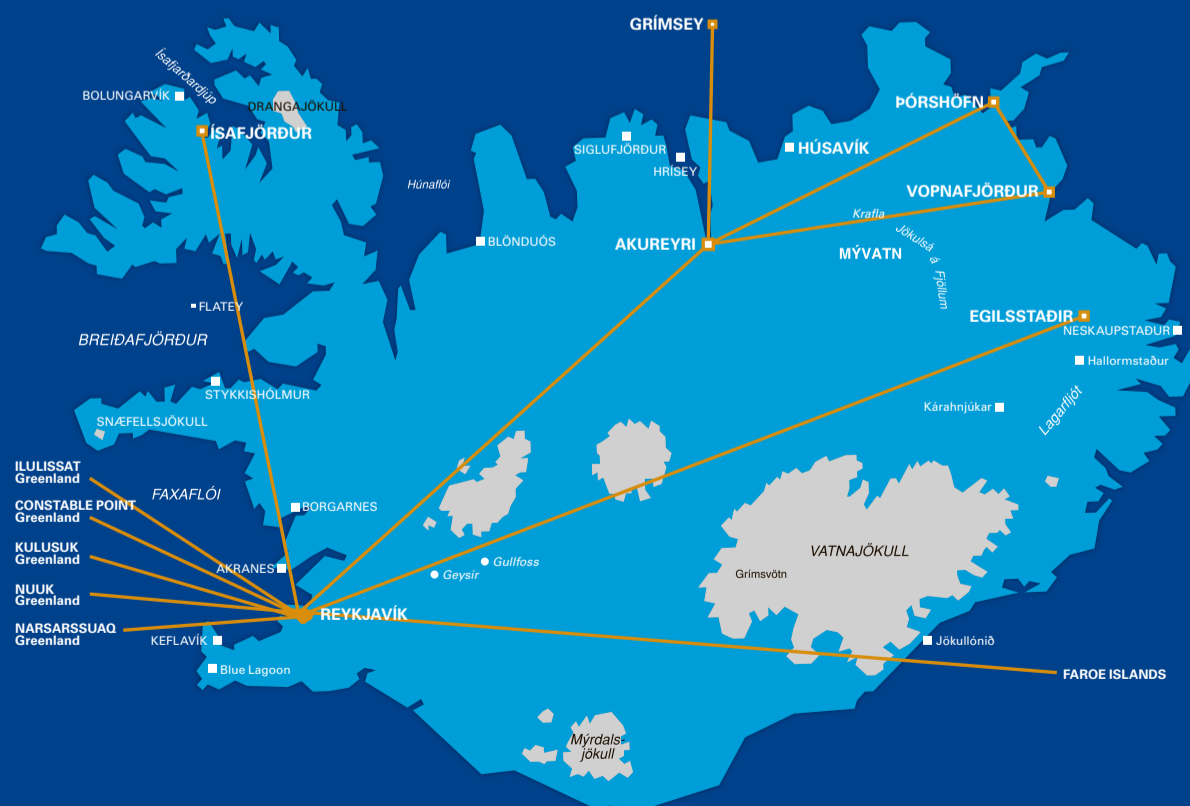
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#### Photography

Julia Staples

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# WHY I BOTHER

## Part 1



For the past year or so, my inner feminist has been developing at a pace I can hardly keep up with. This is something that happens to a lot of people during their late teens or early twenties—and it actually happened to me at the time too—but now I'm closing in on thirty and since this time last year people and the media have been fuelling my feminism to the point where I think I may explode.

I see perfectly outrageous examples of chauvinism and misogyny in the media all the fucking time. The reality is that when I try to right the wrongs of other people, any of these oh-so-very-obvious wrongs, someone will be there ready, willing and able to call me bitter or boring or a feminazi or an extremist. I even have the privilege of dealing with

people who pretend to sort of agree with my feminist principles but still feel the need to point out how I'm way off track this time, how it's perfectly normal for a news reporter to say that Dominique Strauss-Kahn's alleged assault of a maid in a NY hotel is "not the first time he gets into trouble with his communications with women".

So I'm here to tell you about some of the things that have been infuriating me. Tell you a little bit about why I bother being a militant feminist all day, every day.

Last summer, the head of the sex crime division of the Reykjavík police department, Björgvin Björgvinsson, said in an exclusive interview with feminist reporter at newspaper/tabloid DV, Ingibjörg Dögg Kjartansdóttir, that a part of the problem with sexual violence was that people didn't search within themselves, they were blind to the fact that drinking and using drugs exposed them to certain dangers. He said: "Most of the time these incidents have to do with heavy alcohol consumption and it's nobody's responsibility but one's own, to put oneself in a position where one can get into all kinds of trouble". For real. He then went on to describe how common it is for people to point to others when problems arise and try to make them responsible. He told us how people should try to look within themselves and take responsibility for their own actions. Björgvin never claimed to have been misquoted, nor has he tried to deny that he was indeed referring to rape victims.

If you're not sure what the man meant, please let me explain: When drunk people are raped or otherwise sexually assaulted, they have nobody to blame but themselves. Seriously. It's nobody's responsibility but theirs. They shouldn't try to make other people responsible. And in case you're wondering why this bothers me, here it is: If I get drunk, I'm responsible for getting drunk. If I get drunk and raped, I'm still only responsible for getting drunk. Not. Ever. For. Being. Raped. I'd like to live in a world where we could just all agree on that.

Two months after the aforementioned comments, Iceland's district attorney (yes, we only have one) was interviewed by the same reporter. And, while discussing sexual violence, explained to readers how it's absolutely essential if a man is to be sentenced for rape that it's considered proven that during the rape, he was fully aware that he was raping. That he in fact intended to rape. Here are a few quotes from the interview:

1. "A woman who's being raped does not ask for a condom".

2. "People have to realise what it means to press charges against another person. These days, people press charges for everything".

3. "Should a man just assume that a woman is against [having intercourse]? How is he supposed to know that? Should we necessarily go by how active she is in the bed? Whether or not she participates?"

Again, in case you're not sure why this is offensive for me (i.e. a woman or a feminist or a victim of many sorts of sexual misconduct), here's what's wrong with this:

1. If a woman asks for a condom and is penetrated without one, why on Earth should that not be called rape? If a woman has made it clear that she is willing to have intercourse AS LONG AS certain standards are met, that does not give a man the right to penetrate her without first meeting those standards.

2. Pressing charges when you feel like you've been sexually assaulted should be encouraged, not discouraged. The district attorney should know this, agree with this, practise this.

3. A man should not have to assume that a woman does not want to have sex with him, but he should always have to be absolutely sure before he assumes that she wants to. Really, demanding that a person does not have intercourse with another person unless they're a 100% sure it's welcome, is that too much to ask?

I'll continue this. Guys. Seriously. ♡

HILDUR LILLIENDAHL

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## Hamborgarabúllan: The Modest Burger



**Hamborgarabúllan**  
Lækjargata 4, 101 C3

Many Americans visiting Iceland respond to this country's version of the hamburger with a range of reactions, from surprise to bewilderment. Raw cucumbers? Why no tomatoes? And what's this weird pink sauce? While it's certainly true that when travelling to another country, one should always be willing to try other culinary takes on your favourite foods, some of us expats get homesick for cheeseburgers the way we're used to having them.

For this reason, Hamborgarabúllan is a godsend. Yellow mustard, dill slices, relish and other condiments seldom found in Icelandic homes let alone in a fast food place are among the things that set Hamborgarabúllan apart. What does the owner think?

Tómas Andrés Tómasson—or Tommi, as he is known—was very self-

deprecating when asked what makes Hamborgarabúllan special among Iceland's hundreds of hamburger joints. He says the restaurant's success has been based on "lots of luck, struggling, persistence, determination and hard work". When asked what makes Hamborgarabúllan different from any other burger joint, he said, "It's like Bæjarins bestu [famed hot dog stand]. They sell the same hot dogs you can get anywhere else, but you go there for the experience. That's what we offer. It's the atmosphere of the place."

To be sure, the interior of their best-known location, by Reykjavík harbour, is replete with Americana ranging from Frank Sinatra's teenage mugshot to a poster for the Sopranos to yet another poster, featuring E.T. None of this is put together in a purposeful, contrived manner – you can imagine the owner finding one of these things and just taking it up on a free space on the wall.

Tommi also believes specialisation has worked in their favour. "There are

plenty of places that sell burgers and other things. We pretty much just sell burgers. That's a benefit for us, we feel. You could go to a fancier place, but when you're in the mood for a fast burger, you come here".

Tommi's modest demeanour comes through in the understated and personal interior of his restaurants. But you don't need to boast when you sell burgers that taste this good. ♡

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# An Offer You Shouldn't Refuse

## Galtarviti lighthouse beckons



Located on the outskirts of Iceland, the Westfjords' lighthouse Galtarviti has inspired Icelandic musicians, artists and writers for years, as well as serving as a guiding light for the region's fishermen. Artist and mountaineer Sara Riel is one of them, and together with Galtarviti's owner and a collective of over 20 artists, she intends to pay homage to this dynamic place with an exhibition entitled 'Echo Of The North', opening on July 2. Since the lighthouse can't be reached by conventional methods, the team are offering guided hiking-tours twice per week from Skálavík (near Bolungarvík) to Keflavík, where Galtarviti lighthouse rules its majestic kingdom and guide travellers through contemporary art and some of the country's most astonishing landscapes. We caught up with Sara before she embarked on her journey to find out more.

### THE LIGHTHOUSE-KEEPER OPENS HIS HOME TO YOU

"There's something very special about this place. It's hard to put a finger on it, but I think it's a combination of its isolation and the beautiful yet dramatic nature surrounding it", says Sara Riel about Galtarviti. "There's no cell phone

reception or internet connection. Time stands still in a way and the area has some kind of supernatural powers. This seems to bring out the creativity in everyone who spends time here". Free from social obligations or the hassle of city-life, a number of Icelandic musicians, artists and writers have found exile in this remote place to work on their creations and sought inspiration in the dramatic landscape surrounding it.

Built in 1956, Galtarviti has been a bit of a secret among the artistic crowd, but for the month of July, adventurous travellers are invited to breathe in the clean air and creative energy and spend the night in the most remotely located lighthouse in Europe. Surrounded by majestic mountains on one side and the often rough and unfriendly ocean on the other, Galtarviti can only be reached by a challenging boat ride from Suðureyri, or a 3 to 4 hour hike across mountains and through valleys, a place where elves and other mythical creatures supposedly call home. On Tuesdays and Fridays of this month,

Sara and her dog will take hikers on a journey through Bakkadalur valley to Keflavík, where Galtarviti's owner, Ólafur Jónasson, will welcome visitors with

*"Built in 1956, Galtarviti has been a bit of a secret among the artistic crowd"*

hot coffee and some music that has been recorded in the lighthouse over the years.

### AN ARTFUL HIKE

The two-day trip starts in the town of Ísafjörður (a five hour drive or 45-minute flight from Reykjavík), where a bus from Vesturferðir will pick up the group and bring them to Sara at Skálavík. Sara is an experienced guide and has taken tourists on hiking treks across Iceland's highlands for years. She's used to everything.

"It's a bit of a steep hike up Öskubak (a mountain almost 500 metres high), but if you have good hiking boots and proper outdoor clothing—no jeans!—it shouldn't be too difficult. The path down to Norðurdalur is a pleasant walk

and we will try to imagine how life was for the farmers back in the days, in this isolated bay". She tells me that many odd things have happened in the area and numerous tales of elves and other magical beings are associated with the place. Interested hikers can learn about

these mythical inhabitants during the trip, but most of all, she says, the hike is supposed to be about experiencing the breathtaking scenery. "The atmosphere is indescribable and the landscape magnetic. On a clear day, you can see over to Hornstrandir and all the way to Greenland in the West".

After a short rest, Sara will guide visitors through the second part of the trip, the exhibition. The show features work by more than twenty well known names in the contemporary art scene, including Ólöf Norðdal, Sara Björnsdóttir, Karlotta Blöndal, Helgi Þórrsson, Sigryggur Berg, Lilja and Inga Birgisdætur, Órvar and Silla of múm and Goddur, to name just a few, and everyone involved has some relations to the lighthouse.

"Our idea for the project was to create an art-loving lighthouse-keeper and display his art collection, like he would do in his home. This imagined lighthouse-keeper has followed Icelandic art and cultural scene for the past five years, attended exhibitions, and decorated his home with all the pieces he collected. The exhibition is therefore very up-to-date", explains Sara.

The cherry on the top is the overnight stay. Galtarviti offers accommodation for 10 people but is rarely open to visitors. "We want people to enjoy the incredible feeling, sleeping in the lighthouse has to offer. It's a unique opportunity", concludes Sara. The next day the group will hike the same way back to Skálavík, where the bus will bring them to Ísafjörður.

Having visited Galtarviti on a number of occasions, we can't encourage you, reader, enough to join this tour. An impressive collection of contemporary art mixed with the country's most astonishing landscapes, all in one package. That seems worth the hike! 🍷

✍️ STEINUNN JAKOBSDÓTTIR  
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**PAGE 32**

There are many things we still don't know about elves and hidden people. What we do know, we have learned from people who have had decades of friendships with them and have been invited into their homes.

-Elf School Headmaster Magnús Skarphéðinsson has collected testimonies from over 700 people who have seen elves, hidden people and other nature spirits.

**PAGE 12**

After the crash a new consensus has been emerging, according to which the consumption boom was not so much a natural expression of innate national characteristics, but a form of disease or addiction. Icelanders became addicted to consumption.

- Consumer culture in Iceland: THE HEROIN OF THE NORTH?

**Page 22**

'Best drunken slice' gets our crowd arguing every time. Even though folks mostly agree on what a 'drunken slice' needs to offer (grease), they are very divided on which place brings the goods in a consistent enough manner to deserve their bingeing money.

-Yes, our BEST OF REYKJAVÍK has a category for 'best drunken slice'. What of it?

**PAGE 6**

If we had this "feels like" feature in our weather reporting, we would say that it "feels like" 40°C whenever the temperature reached 20°C, without exception. This demonstrates the importance of 'mentality' and 'attitude'.

-Jón Gnarr says:  
WELCOME TO REYKJAVÍK!

**PAGE 42**

There's something very special about this place. It's hard to put a finger on it, but I think it's a combination of its isolation and the beautiful yet dramatic nature surrounding it

-Artist Sara Riel thinks you should visit Galtarviti this summer. We agree.

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

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Issue 9 - 2011

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



## YES, WE HAVE A CIRCUS!

Sirkus Íslands puts on a funny three-day show at Tjarnarbíó. 'Ö Faktor' is the follow up to the staggering 'Sirkus Sóley' show they recently presented to great acclaim. It is a family show that features their usual mix of incredible acrobatics, crazy stunts, funny clothes and off the wall comedy. This show also introduces a new feature: a special 'children's area' for the more courageous and daring kids that want to accept the challenge.

Ö Faktor premieres on July 1 at 19:30, but they also have shows planned at 14:00 and 18:00 on July 2 and 3. Whether you're a child or a grandma, a teen or a family guy, Sirkus Íslands promises loads of fun.

Tjarnarbíó // From July 1 to 3 // 1900 ISK

# NEW AND UPCOMING



**FM BELFAST** *don't want to sleep*



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**SNORRI HELGASON** *winter sun*

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Brynjar Vatnsdal, Iceland Review

out  
July  
25th

**SIN FANG** *summer echoes*



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# MUSIC

## CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN JULY

### PRESCRIBING WITH LOVE MUSIC FOR YOUR LIVE EXPERIENCE

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

## 1 FRI

- Austur**  
22:00 DJ Jónas
- B5**  
00:00 Local DJ
- Bakkus**  
00:00 DJ Ór
- Bar 11**  
21:00 Cliff Clavin
- Bar 46**  
18:00 Pop Quiz
- Barbara**  
00:00 DJ Dramatík
- Boston**  
22:00 DJ Gisli Galdur
- Café Oliver**  
22:00 Local DJ  
23:00 Girls Just Wanna Have Fun, 3 for 1  
cocktails for ladies
- Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 My Sweet Baklava
- Celtic Cross**  
01:00 Live Music
- Den Danske Kro**  
Roskilde festival
- Dubliner**  
21:00 Budah Kavanagh  
00:30 The Smurfs
- English Pub**  
21:30 Live Music
- Esja**  
22:00 DJ Hlynur Mastermix
- Hressó**  
22:00 Kokteilkvartett Jakobs Smára,  
followed by DJ Elli
- Hvíta Perlan**  
24:00 DJ Solid
- Kaffibarinn**  
00:00 Local DJ
- Kaldalón, Harpa**  
17:00 Pearls of Icelandic song,  
3000 ISK
- Sódóma**  
22:00 Angist & Bastard, 1000 ISK
- Sólón**  
00:00 DJ Frigour
- Thorvaldsen**  
24:00 Local DJ
- Trúnó**  
20:00 Wall Street Night - Crazy cheap  
offers for seconds at the time - Become  
a Wall Street trader!  
23:00 DJ Unnur Andrea
- Vegamót**  
22:00 DJ Simon

## 2 SAT

- Austur**  
22:00 DJ Simon
- B5**  
00:00 Local DJ
- Bakkus**  
00:00 DJ Hashi & Kobbi
- Bar 46**  
22:00 Live Music
- Barbara**  
14:00 Pop Up Market - Icelandic  
designers  
21:00 Designer Bingo - Prizes from  
Icelandic designers  
00:00 DJ Kolla - Girls Only Gay Pride  
Dance, 1000 ISK
- Boston**  
22:00 DJ Maggi Lego
- Café Haiti**  
21:00 Jussanam - Brazilian Jazz  
Sessions
- Café Oliver**  
22:00 Local DJ  
23:00 Girls Just Wanna Have Fun, 3 for 1  
cocktails for ladies
- Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Live Music
- Celtic Cross**  
22:00 Live Music
- Den Danske Kro**  
Roskilde festival
- Dubliner**  
21:00 Budah Kavanagh  
00:30 The Smurfs
- English Pub**  
21:30 Live Music
- Esja**  
22:00 DJ Hlynur Mastermix
- Hressó**  
22:00 Timburmenn, followed by DJ Elli
- Hvíta Perlan**  
24:00 DJ Solid

- Jomfruin**  
15:00 Oskar's Swing Quartet
- Kaffibarinn**  
00:00 Local DJ
- Kaldalón, Harpa**  
17:00 Voces Mascarorum - Icelandic a  
capella, 3000 ISK
- Sódóma**  
23:00 Bloodgroup, Berndsen &  
Legend, 1000 ISK
- Sólón**  
00:00 DJ Rikki G
- Thorvaldsen**  
00:00 Local DJ
- Trúnó**  
23:00 DJ Lingerine
- Vegamót**  
22:00 DJ Hannes

## 3 SUN

- Bakkus**  
22:00 Whiskey and Guinness specials  
night
- Bar 46**  
22:00 Live Music
- Barbara**  
21:00 Queer Movie Night + Happy Hour  
until midnight & popcorn
- Café Oliver**  
22:00 Salsa Night
- Den Danske Kro**  
Roskilde festival
- Dubliner**  
21:00 Pálmi Trubador
- English Pub**  
21:30 Live Music

- Faktóry**  
21:00 Live Jazz
- Kaldalón, Harpa**  
17:00 Women in Icelandic music,  
3000 ISK
- Trúnó**  
21:00 Italian night + Happy Hour until  
midnight

## 4 MON

- Bakkus**  
22:00 Movie night: *Fantastic Planet*
- Barbara**  
21:00 Screening of *The Real L Word*  
(season 2) + dinner specials + happy  
hour until midnight
- Café Oliver**  
22:00 Margarita Night
- Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Heiða Árnadóttir & Mógil
- Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Live Music
- Dubliner**  
21:00 Pálmi trubador
- English Pub**  
21:30 Live Music
- Trúnó**  
21:00 American Independence Day - We  
go all American

## 5 TUE

- Barbara**  
21:00 Queer Night



### The Energy of Angist at Sódóma

Plus: Chao, Blood Feud, Bastard and Abominator

Sódóma

July 1, 22:00

1000 ISK

Attention, metalheads! Local up-and-comer deathrock outfit Angist are finally releasing their debut, an EP of five songs that hopefully kick as much balls as their live shows do. The good group needs y'all's help in funding the thing (making albums is costly work) so they're throwing a pre-release bash at Sódóma to raise some much needed ISK.

With quality acts like Chao, Blood Feud, Bastard and Abominator also performing (they all have super cool band logos that are kinda hard to decipher, but then that's the point), the night will hopefully blow some minds along with any spare eardrums. Do check it out!

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MAY - SEPTEMBER / DAILY

**A FULL LIST OF EVERY  
HAPPY HOUR OFFER IN 101**



- B5**  
Happy Hour every day from 17-19, beer and wine for 650 ISK.
- Bakkus**  
Happy hour from 16-22, beer 400 ISK and wine glass 500 ISK.
- Bar 11**  
Beers & shots for 450 ISK on Thursdays.
- Bar 46**  
Happy Hour every day from 16-19, beers and shots are for 500 ISK.
- Barónspöbb**  
Beer is 500 ISK until 19.
- Bjarni Fel**  
Mojitos 750 ISK every weekend from 23:00.
- Boston**  
Happy Hour every day from 16-20, two for one on beer.
- Celtic Cross**  
Thursdays, lager for 500 ISK. Inquire about the malt beer punchcards.
- Den Danske Kro**  
Happy Hour every day from 16-19, two for one. Shots for 500 ISK every Monday.
- Dillon**  
Happy Hour every day from 16-20, two for one.
- Dubliners**  
Happy Hour every day from 15-20, two for one Polar Beers, beer and shot for 1000 ISK.
- Faktorý**  
Happy Hour every day from 17-20, large Egils Gull 500 ISK.
- Hotel 101 Bar**  
Happy Hour is daily from 17-19, all drinks are 50% off.
- Hótel Holt Gallery Bar**  
Happy Hour every day from 16-19, beer and wine 50% off. Cocktail of the day is 50% off.
- Íslenski Barinn**  
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- Kaffibarinn**  
Red wine special on Wednesday evenings at 600 ISK a glass.
- Nýlenduvörver-zlun Hemma & Valda**  
Happy Hour every day from 16-20, Viking Beers for 550 ISK.
- Óliver**  
Happy hour every day from 23-01.
- Obla Di Obla Da**  
Happy Hour every day from 12-20, 500 ISK beers, 600 ISK shots and 800 ISK single + mixer
- Prikið**  
Happy hour every day from 17-19, large beer 400 ISK. Buy four large beers, get free nachos.
- Trúnó**  
Happy hour every day from 16-20, all beer and wine 500 ISK.
- Stofan**  
Refills on beer 600 ISK all day
- Pingholt bar (Center Hotel Pingholt)**  
Happy Hour every day from 17-19 as of June 1 (currently every Friday and Saturday), all drinks are half off.

RUN A 101 REYKJAVÍK BAR? IS YOUR 'HAPPY HOUR' MISSING? HAVE THE PRICES CHANGED? DROP US A LINE AND WE WILL AMEND.

- Café Oliver**  
22:00 Live Karaoke
- Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Mogadon
- Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Live Music
- Dubliner**  
21:00 Andy Garcia
- English Pub**  
21:30 Live Music
- Frikirkjan**  
20:00 Mógil
- Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum**  
20:30 Classical Concert/Vocal Quartet, 2000 ISK
- Sódóma**  
21:00 Hamferð & Skálmöld, 1500 ISK
- 
- WED**
- Bakkus**  
22:00 Pop Quiz - Cash Prizes, 500 ISK

- Barbara**  
21:00 Pub Quiz
- Café Oliver**  
22:00 Live Music
- Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Elin Eypórs
- Celtic Cross**  
22:00 Open Mic
- Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Live Music
- Dubliner**  
21:00 T Vilim Trubador
- English Pub**  
21:30 Live Music
- Hressó**  
22:00 Afró Kúbu
- Hvíta Perlán**  
21:00 Sleepless in Reykjavík concert
- Kaldalón, Harpa**  
17:00 Pearls of Icelandic song, 3000 ISK
- Sódóma**  
20:00 Sign and Fendrix, 1000 ISK

- 7 THU**
- B5**  
00:00 Local DJ
- Bakkus**  
22:00 DJ Einar Sonic
- Boston**  
22:00 DJ Andrea J
- Café Oliver**  
22:00 Ingó Verðurguð
- Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Lára Rúnars
- Celtic Cross**  
22:00 Live Music
- Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Live Music
- Dubliner**  
20:00 Irish Session  
22:30 Ingvar Trubador
- English Pub**  
21:30 Live Music
- Esja**  
22:00 Tapas and white wine day
- Hressó**  
22:00 Timburmenn
- Hvíta Perlán**  
21:00 DJ Mikki 'The Fox'
- Kaldalón, Harpa**  
17:00 Örn Arnarson & Sólveig
- Samúelsdóttir**, 3000 ISK
- Norðurljós, Harpa**  
19:00 Hárið, 3950 ISK



**5 July**

**The Journey To The Grave**  
Metal, metal, metal, death, metal!  
Sódóma  
July 5, 17:30  
1000 ISK

If your balls aren't aching too much from the Angist EP pre-release show, or for some reason you missed the ball-kicking extravaganza, make sure you make your way to the next metal event at Sódóma: Ferðin til Helja. On display are Iceland's finest metal acts Skálmöld and Hamferð. They're going to kick balls, ass, and bury some wimps who can't stand their ungodly, epic shredding.

If you think you have what it takes to withstand the speaker-bustin' gut wrenchin' sounds of this heavy metal duo, come out and get absolutely destroyed by the glory of metal. If not, stay at home, listen to your classical music, sip your red wine, and get yourself a manicure.

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

# MUSIC

## CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN JULY



### Disco From The Uncanny Valley

Robot Disco presents: Eargoggle and KAN3DA

Lucky Records and Bakkus

July 12, 16:00 (Lucky Records) / July 13, 21:00 (Bakkus)

0 ISK (Lucky Records) / 1.500 ISK (Bakkus)

Collective Robot Disco was recently founded in Reykjavík, staging club nights at Bakkus on a monthly basis since February. The music played is pure electro of schools both new and old, with the proposed aim of seeking out 'the roots' of electronic/dance music (they also appropriately project scenes from cult sci-fi flicks). The events have been fairly well attended, building tension on the dance floor and unleashing some rare gems deep from the vault. In attendance are among others a few devoted Icelandic electro-boogie lovers and people lucky enough to stumble in on DJ-sets of everything from the aquatic soundscapes of the seminal Detroit masters Drexciya, to the soulful, '80s madness of Egyptian Lover.

This summer, Robot Disco is importing two Swedish electro units from Gothenburg, Luke Eargoggle and KAN3DA, who are both on tour in Europe. They cook up a stew of icy electro, full of eerie melodies and mechanised-sounding abstractions. There is a warm-up gig at Lucky Records on Hverfisgata on July 12 from 16:00 to 19:00, with free waffles and coffee for attendees. The main concert is at Bakkus on July 13, at 21:00. Tickets are being sold for 1.500 ISK at Lucky Records and Spúút-ník on Laugavegur. Bring your dancing shoes and a robotised outlook on life.



### THE BEST FESTIVAL (TOO BAD 'BESTIVAL' IS TAKEN)

Everyone's playing!

The Best Festival

July 8, 15:00 – July 10 06:00

Pre-sale: 7.900 ISK / On-site: 9.500 ISK

There's a music festival in the South of Iceland next weekend and it claims to be 'THE BEST FESTIVAL'. That's its name in any case. Now, we have no way of assessing whether their claims are true (for one it hasn't happened yet, and also we don't really go to that many festivals so we wouldn't have a comparison) but their line-up looks rather impressive. For starters, they're hosting a comeback by the one and only Quarashi! Yes, Quarashi are back! Stick 'em up, y'all! This is fairly exciting for reasons that should be obvious to anyone who's somewhat familiar with Icelandic music.

But there's more! SSSól are playing! And GusGus! And XXX Rottweiler! And Steindi Jr! And Agent Fresco! And Valdimar! And Legend! And The Dandelion Seeds! And We Could Really Go On For A While Counting Band Names But We'll Stop Now However They Do Have A Website That Lists All The Bands And Attractions The Address Is Www.Utihatid.is.

So pack up a tent and some brennivín if this sounds like something you'd be into.

#### Thorvaldsen

24:00 Local DJ

#### Trúnó

20:00 HoMojito Night: DJ Óli - Golden Oldies

#### Vegamót

22:00 DJ Jónas

### SAT

#### Austur

22:00 DJ Jónas

#### B5

00:00 Local DJ

#### Sódóma

21:00 The Doons Tribute, 1000 ISK

#### Thorvaldsen

20:00 Salsa Night, mojito offer

#### Trúnó

20:00 Queer beer Night: DJ Blue

Screen - Electro night

#### Vegamót

22:00 DJ Símon

### FRI

#### Austur

22:00 DJ Bogi

#### B5

00:00 Local DJ

#### Bakkus

00:00 Local DJ

#### Bar 46

18:00 Pop Quiz

#### Barbara

00:00 DJ Manny

#### Café Oliver

22:00 Local DJ

23:00 Girls Just Wanna Have Fun, 3 for 1 cocktails for ladies

#### Café Rosenberg

22:00 Blue Monday

#### Celtic Cross

01:00 Live Music

#### Den Danske Kro

22:00 Live Music

#### Dubliner

21:00 T Vil Trubador

00:30 Hjaln n band

#### Eldborg, Harpa

20:00 Maria Joao Pires & Vengerov, from 6900 ISK

#### English Pub

21:30 Live Music

#### Esja

22:00 Resident DJ

#### Hressó

22:00 Silfur, followed by DJ Fúsi

#### Kaffibarinn

00:00 Local DJ

#### Kaldalón, Harpa

17:00 Voces Mascularum - Icelandic a capella, 3000 ISK

#### Norðurljós, Harpa

19:00 Hárið, 3950 ISK

#### Sólon

00:00 DJ Rikki G

### Grapevine Top 6 Most Played tracks during the making of this issue

**1 Converge**  
Dark Horse

**2 A-Ha**  
Hunting High And Low

**3 Fucked Up**  
Turn The Season

**4 Steve Reich**  
DOUBLE SEXTET MOVEMENT 3: FAST

**5 Squarepusher**  
My Red Hot Car

**6 George Michael**  
Fastlove



**EXTREME CHILL FESTIVAL 2011**  
**UNDIR JÖKLI 5-7 AUGUST**  
**HELLISSANDUR / SNÆFELLSNES**



# MUSIC

## CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN JULY

**Bakkus**  
21:00 Reptile and retard  
00:00 DJ Hellert

**Bar 46**  
22:00 Live Music

**Barbara**  
00:00 DJ Dramatik

**Café Oliver**  
22:00 Local DJ  
23:00 Girls Just Wanna Have Fun, 3 for 1 cocktails for ladies

**Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Maggi & KK

**Celtic Cross**  
22:00 Live Music

**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Live Music

**Dubliner**  
21:00 Hjalmar Trubador  
00:30 The Eipá band

**Eldbor, Harpa**  
20:00 St. Christopher Orchestra, from 2900 ISK

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live Music

**Esja**  
22:00 DJ Bogi

**Jomfruin**  
15:00 Guðrún Gunnarsdóttir sings jazz

**Hressó**  
22:00 Dalton, followed by DJ Fúsi

**Kaffibarinn**  
00:00 Local DJ

**Kaldalón, Harpa**  
17:00 Örn Arnarson & Sólvége Samúelsdóttir, 3000 ISK

**Norðurljós, Harpa**  
19:00 Hárið, 3950 ISK

**Sólon**  
00:00 DJ Frigour

**Thorvaldsen**  
00:00 Local DJ

**Trúnó**  
23:00 DJ Early

**Vegamót**  
22:00 Benni B Ruff

night  
**Bar 46**  
22:00 Live Music

**Barbara**  
21:00 Queer Movie Night + Happy Hour until midnight

**Café Oliver**  
22:00 Salsa Night

**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Þórunn Pálína

**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Live Music

**Dubliner**  
21:00 Sigi the Trubador

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live Music

**Faktóry**  
21:00 Live Jazz

### 11 MON

**Café Oliver**  
22:00 Margarita Night

**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Live music

**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Live Music

**Dubliner**  
21:00 Sigi Trub

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live Music

### 12 TUE

**Barbara**  
21:00 Queer Movie Night

**Café Oliver**  
22:00 Live Karaoke

**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Live Music

**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Live Music

**Dubliner**  
21:00 I Valgeirs

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live Music

**Kaldalón, Harpa**  
17:00 Women in Icelandic music, 3000 ISK



### A Most Religious Elvis Resuscitates For One Night Only

A night of Jesus-Elvis beckons!  
Guðriðarkirkja Church, Grafarvogur  
July 13, 20:30  
3000 ISK

Ye holy god of rock—wait...or was it king?—has descended from the skies to illuminate his children with a biblical concert at the Guðriðarkirkja church. Well-known local artist Bjarni Arason, who actually looks more like an Icelandic Rick Astley, will join a group of first class musicians and singers to perform an unforgettable night with plenty of Elvis Presley's gospel songs. Hallelujah.

Now, Bjarni probably won't dare perform 'Jailhouse Rock' considering the show's liturgical ambience, but listeners may enjoy hits like 'Crying In The Chapel' and 'Why My Lord'.

So, if you are a lover of The King's spiritual side, or if you don't have better plans for the evening of July 13, drop by Guðriðarkirkja and you just might experience a revelation. Amen.

### 10 SUN

**Bakkus**  
22:00 Whiskey and Guinness specials

### Music & Entertainment | Venue finder

<b>Amsterdam</b> Hafnarstræti 5   D4	<b>Dillon</b> Laugavegur 30   F7	<b>Næsti Bar</b> Ingólfsstræti 1A   E5
<b>Austur</b> Austurstræti 7   E4	<b>Dubliner</b> Hafnarstræti 4   D4	<b>Óliver</b> Laugavegur 20A   F5
<b>B5</b> Bankastræti 5   E4	<b>Esja</b> Austurstræti 16   E4	<b>Óstofan</b> Vegamótastígur   F5
<b>Babalú</b> Skólavörðustígur 22   F5	<b>English Pub</b> Austurstræti 12   E4	<b>Prikið</b> Bankastræti   E5
<b>Bakkus</b> Tryggvagata 22   D4	<b>Faktóry</b> Smíðjustígur 6   E5	<b>Rósenberg</b> Klapparstígur 25   E6
<b>Bar 11</b> Hverfisgötu 18   E5	<b>Ölsmiðjan</b> Lækjargata 10   E4	<b>Sódoma Reykjavík</b> Tryggvagata 22   D3
<b>Barbara</b> Laugavegur 22   F5	<b>Hressó</b> Austurstræti 20   E4	<b>Sólon</b> Bankastræti 7A   E5
<b>Bjarni Fel</b> Austurstræti 20   E4	<b>Bankinn</b> Hverfisgata 20   E5	<b>Thorvaldsen</b> Austurstræti 8   E4
<b>Boston</b> Laugavegur 28b   F6	<b>Kaffi Zimsen</b> Hafnarstræti 18   D4	<b>Trúnó</b> Laugavegur 22   F5
<b>Café Paris</b> Austurstræti 14   E4	<b>Kaffibarinn</b> Bergstraðastræti 1   E5	<b>Vegamót</b> Vegamótastígur 4   F6
<b>Celtic Cross</b> Hverfisgata 26   E5	<b>NASA</b> Þorvaldsenstræti 2   E3	<b>Vestur</b> Tryggvagata 20   D3
<b>Den Danske Kro</b> Ingólfsstræti 3   F5	<b>Nýlendumörverzlun Hemma &amp; Valda</b> Laugavegur 21   F5	

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

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

**Hafnarborg The Hafnarfjörður Centre of Culture and Fine Art**  
Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður  
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• Saturdays •  
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# MUSIC

## CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN JULY

**Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum**  
20:30 Classical Concert/Double Bass and Piano, 2000 ISK

### 13 WED

**Bakkus**  
21:00 Luke Eargoggle & Kan3da electro DJs, 1500 ISK

**Barbara**  
19:00 Hot Dog Party  
21:00 Pub Quiz

**Café Oliver**  
22:00 Live Music

**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Live Music

**Celtic Cross**  
22:00 Open Mic

**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Live Music

**Dubliner**  
21:00 Tryggvi Trubador

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live Music

**Guðriðarkirkja**  
20:30 Bjarni Ara - Elvis Presley Gospel, 3000 ISK

**Hressó**  
22:00 Afró Kúbu

**Kaldalón, Harpa**  
17:00 Voces Mascarorum - Icelandic a capella, 3000 ISK

### 14 THU

**B5**  
00:00 Local DJ

**Bakkus**  
21:00 DJ Harry Knuckles

**Barbara**  
22:00 DJ Unnur Andrea

**Café Oliver**  
22:00 Ingó Verðurguð

**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Live Music

**Celtic Cross**  
22:00 Live Music

**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Live Music

**Dubliner**  
20:00 Irish Session  
23:00 Valli Trubador

**English Pub**  
21:30 Live Music

**Esja**  
22:00 Tapas and white wine day

**Hressó**  
22:00 Böddi & Davíð

**Hvíta Perlan**  
00:00 DJ Mikki 'The Fox'

**Kaldalón, Harpa**  
17:00 Örn Arnarson and Sólveig Samúelsdóttir, 3000 ISK

**Norðurljós, Harpa**  
19:00 Hárið, 3950 ISK

**Thorvaldsen**  
20:00 Salsa Night, mojito offer

**Trínó**  
22:00 DJ Atli Roadrage

**Vegamót**  
22:00 DJ Símon

## ONGOING

**Restaurant Reykjavík**  
20:00 Let's Talk Iceland: Comedy Show. 2200 ISK. *Everyday*

**Iðnó**  
20:00 Cellophane Comedy show. *Thursdays*



### The Laugavegur Ultra Marathon

July 16

Landmannalaugar to Þórsmörk

Registration is 43.000 ISK, watching is free.

This is a gruelling 55 km race for the experienced runner only. From Landmannalaugar to the Þórsmörk nature reserve, the route takes you through beautiful scenery over challenging terrain of sand, gravel, snow and ice. This is a great opportunity to test your own limits and overcome them! If you can't run it, it is still probably worth seeing. At least you can say that you ran it vicariously. For more information, visit <http://www.marathon.is/ultramathon>.



### Brains and Brawns!

Go see a rugby match!

July 3, 16:00

Vodafone Stadium

Free

Were you the type of kid that beat up your little brother or sister? Were you not? Do you love rugby? Do you love sports in general? That's a lot of questions, and all of them are relevant! If you answered yes to any of them, then do I have an event for you! On July 3, Thunderbird School of Global Management's Thunderbird Old Boys Rugby Club will go head to head against our very own Reykjavik Raiders RFC. Thunderbird Old Boys Rugby Club hail from Phoenix, Arizona, USA.

Thunderbird School of Global Management is recognized as the top ranked school for international business by The Wall Street Journal, U.S. News and World Report, and the Financial Times. So these guys have brawn and brains! Prior to coming to Iceland, the team will travel to Cuba and Argentina to play against club teams in those countries. Seeing as it's 93 degrees Fahrenheit (33 degrees Celsius) in Cuba, The Raiders might have an advantage because the Thunderbirds won't be used to the climate. Win or lose for our Raiders, it should be a fun event!

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Sat. 2. júl. Baggalutur  
Thu. 7. júl. Svavar Knútur & Kristjana Stefáns  
Fri. 8. júl. Varsjárbandalagið  
Sat. 9. júl. Thin Jim & Margrét Eir  
Thu. 14. júl. Mood  
Fri. 15. júl. Alice in Chains-Tribute

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For further informations on upcoming events and concerts go to:  
[www.facebook.com/graenhatturinn](http://www.facebook.com/graenhatturinn)

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# OUTSIDE REYKJAVÍK IN JULY

## OUTSIDE MUSIC

**1 FRI**

**Græni Hatturinn, Akureyri**  
21:00 Baggalútur

**2 SAT**

**Græni Hatturinn, Akureyri**  
22:00 Baggalútur  
**Reykjahliðar, Mývatn**  
21:00 Summer concert

**3 SUN**

**Gljúfrasteinn, Mosfellsbær**  
16:00 Mógil

**6 WED**

**Folk Festival, Siglufjörður**  
21:30 Mógil

**7 THU**

**Deiglan, Akureyri**  
21:00 Mógil  
**Folk Festival, Siglufjörður**  
23:00 Varsjárbandalagið  
**Græni Hatturinn, Akureyri**  
21:00 Krisjana Stefáns & Svavar Knútur  
**Reykjahliðar, Mývatn**  
21:00 Summer concert

**8 FRI**

**Folk Festival, Siglufjörður**  
20:00 Duo Scandinavica  
21:30 Voces Thules  
23:00 Katla  
**Græni Hatturinn, Akureyri**  
21:00 Varsjárbandalagið

**9 SAT**

**Folk Festival, Siglufjörður**  
13:30 Thin Jin  
15:00 Brother Grass  
17:00 Tropicalia  
**Græni Hatturinn, Akureyri**  
21:00 Thin Jin  
**Reykjahliðar, Mývatn**  
21:00 Summer concert

**10 SUN**

**Folk festival, Siglufjörður**  
14:00 The Youth Symphony Orchestra  
**Gljúfrasteinn, Mosfellsbær**  
16:00 Þórarinn Stefánsson  
**Reykjahliðar, Mývatn**  
21:00 Summer concert

**12 TUE**

**Skafffell, Seyðisfjörður**  
21:00 Open Mic at the West Wall Gallery

## OUTSIDE ART OPENINGS

**Akureyri**  
**Medieval Trading Festival**  
July 16  
Four days of interactive medieval market life.  
*Runs until July 19*

**Akureyri Art Museum, Akureyri**  
**Call Home**  
July 2  
This exhibition is made up in part by the numerous works from the collection's library museum that has been divided into five smaller performances  
*Runs until July 15*

**GalleriBOX, Akureyri**  
**Duet-Duet**  
July 1  
Exhibition of works by Australian artist Adam Geczy  
*Runs until July 17*

**Gamla vélsmiðjan, Neskaupstaður**  
**Enter the Mayhemisphere**  
July 8

Off-venue heavy metal art events at the Eistnaflug festival, which includes art, music and performances.

*Runs until July 9*

**Hafnarborg, Hafnarfjörður**  
**Icelandic Museum Day**

July 10

There will be a workshop and guided tour at 14:00 around the current exhibition Ingenuity and an art talk about the collection exhibition on the lower floor.

**Skafffell, Seyðisfjörður**  
**Polish Movies**

July 1

The screenings include:

1. Pociąg/ Night Train (1959) – Jerzy Kawalerowicz
2. Salto (1965) – Tadeusz Konwicki
3. Nóż w wodzie/ Knife in the water (1961) – Roman Polanski
4. Rysopis/ Identification (1964) – Jerzy Skolimowski

All screenings are free and start @ 21:00

*Runs until July 3*

**Sláturhúsið, Egilsstaðir**  
**Polish Movies:**

July 8

1. Pociąg/ Night Train (1959) – Jerzy Kawalerowicz
2. Salto (1965) – Tadeusz Konwicki
3. Nóż w wodzie/ Knife in the water (1961) – Roman Polanski
4. Rysopis/ Identification (1964) – Jerzy Skolimowski

All screenings are free and start at 21:00

*Runs until July 10*

**Verksmiðjan, Hjalteyri**  
**Join the exhibition**

July 2

Display by Eygló Harðardóttir, Guðjón Ketilsson, Guðrún Pálína Guðmundsdóttir, Joris Rademaker and Jón Laxdal

*Runs until July 24*

## OUTSIDE ONGOING ART

**Akureyri**  
**Summer Festival of the Arts**

Concerts, visual arts, etc.  
*Runs until August 28*

**Búrfell Plant, Þjórsárdalur**  
**Geothermal Energy Exhibit**

An interactive exhibit about geothermal energy

**Flóra, Akureyri**

**Local fact 4**

Video-installation by Arna Valsdóttir.

*Runs until August 4*

**Galleri Lækjarkoti, Borgarbyggð**

Collection of watercolours, acrylics, photographs and video works by women artists Ása Ólafsdóttir, Bryndís Jónsdóttir, Kristín Geirsdóttir & Magdalena Margrét Kjartansdóttir  
*Open all summer from Thursday to Sunday*

**Gamli Baukur, Húsavík**

15:30 Comedy show about Iceland

*Everyday*

**Gljúfrasteinn - Laxness Museum, Mosfellsbær**

The home of Halldór Laxness, Iceland's

beloved writer who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1955. Open 09:00-17:00 daily

*On permanent view*

**The Ghost Centre, Stokkseyri**  
**Night at the Ghost Museum**

Guided tour for groups of ten people or more through the lowlands south of Selfoss where many ghosts, spirits and other spiritual beings live

*On permanent view*

**Hveragerði**

**Images of Þingvellir**

The exhibition deals with the various manifestations of Þingvellir in various art, design, cartography, photography, travel books and media of the day.

*Runs until August 21*

**The Icelandic Settlement Centre, Borgarnes**

**The Settlement Exhibition**

Tells the story of Iceland's settlement by Viking sailors who left Norway and settled in Iceland

**The Egils Saga Exhibition**

The exhibition concentrates one of Iceland's famous most famous Vikings and poets, Egil Skallagrímsson

**LÁ Art, Hvergerði**

Images of Þingvellir from various artists.

*Runs until August 21*

**Old Herring Factory in Djúpavík**  
**Pictures - And their sounds**

Combination of photographs and sounds by Claus Sterneck

*Runs until August 31*

**200+ pictures**

Collection of 200 pictures taken in Iceland by Claus Sterneck

*Runs until August 31*

**Pompei of the North, Westman Islands**

Excavations project at the site of 1973 volcanic eruption on the island of Heimaey

*On permanent view*

**Reykjanes Art Museum, Reykjanesbær**

*On permanent view*

**Safnahús Museum, Westman Islands**

This museum has mounted birds & fish, an aquarium, as well as a variety of rocks and minerals on display

*On permanent view*

**Skafffell, Seyðisfjörður**

**Unnar Örn exhibition**

Related performance event at the West Wall gallery on July 2 at 16:00

*Runs until July 8*

**The Narrative Collection**

A collection of narratives from inhabitants of Seyðisfjörður  
*Runs until August 13*

**Sláturhúsið, Egilsstaðir**

**Seasons (Vertíð)**

Music, art and stage art.

*Runs until August 13*

**Suðsuðvestur, Keflavík**

**Örn Alexander Ámundason**

*Runs until July 24*

## Outside Reykjavík | Venue finder

**Keflavík**

Suðsuðvestur  
www.sudsudvestur.is  
Hafnargata 22  
230 Reykjanesbær  
421-2225

**Borgarnes**

The Icelandic Settlement Centre  
www.landnam.is  
Brákarbraut 13-15  
310 Borgarnes  
437-1600

**Stykkishólmur**

Vatnasafnið / Library of Water  
www.libraryofwater.is

**Akureyri**

Akureyri Art Museum  
www listasafn.akureyri.is  
Kaupvangsstræti 12  
600 Akureyri  
461 2610

**Græni Hatturinn**

Hafnarstræti 96  
600 Akureyri  
461-4646

**Kunstraum Wohnraum**

Ásabyggð 2  
600 Akureyri

**Mývatn**

Mývatnsstofa  
Hraunveggi 8  
660 Mývatn  
464-4390  
www.visitmyvatn.is

**Egilsstaðir**

Sláturhúsið  
www.slaturhusid.is  
Kaupvangi 7  
700 Egilsstaðir  
470-0692

**Seyðisfjörður**

Skafffell  
www.skafffell.is  
Austurvegur 42  
710 Seyðisfjörður  
472-1632

**Hveragerði**

LÁ Art  
www listasafnarnesinga.is  
Austurmörk 21  
210 Hveragerði  
483-1727

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The Southcoast Museum

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# MAP

## Places We Like

### 1 Sægreifinn

Geirsgötu 8

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

### 2 Á Næstu Grösom

Laugavegur 20B

Á Næstu Grösom is an all vegetarian restaurant right in the city centre that features a friendly atmosphere and fair prices. There is always at least one vegan soup on offer and the daily special portions are big and always satisfying. There is even some organic wine on offer.

### 3 English Pub

Austurstræti 12

True to its name, the English Pub offers a wide variety of lager on tap and a whiff of that genuine UK feel. You may also try their famous "wheel of fortune" with the chance of winning up to a metre of beer with a single spin. Cheers!

### 4 Hamborgarabúllan

Geirsgata 1

Considered by some to be the best real hamburger in Reykjavík, "Bullán" does serve some mysteriously delicious burgers, guaranteed to take the edge off any hangover.

### 5 Boston

Laugavegur 28

Like an older sibling to the fabled (now deceased) Sirkús, Boston is a warm and mellow second-floor bar on Laugavegur that plays host to the arty party crowd. The baroque wall dressings and deep, rich coloured décor make this bar feel pretty swank, but Boston also serves up some reasonably priced food earlier in the evening, so it's not too swank.

### 6 Tíu Dropar

Laugavegur 27

If you're sick of all the arty cafés, filled with Sigur Rós wannabes and their Macs, browsing Facebook, go to Tíu Dropar. It's a back-to-basics Icelandic café that hasn't changed their interior since the 60s. Really proves the saying 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it.' Plus, the coffee's great. SKK

### 7 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

Weekends are somewhat overrated at Kaffibarinn if you ask me. Don't get me wrong, they can be brilliant if you're completely pissed, the DJ is fresh and the crowd is full-blooded, still the weekdays are better. It doesn't matter when you pop in, you're always treated like a pal rather than a customer, and you should always expect get caught in some shenanigan, whether it's a crazy Monday bender or a wacko Tuesday... well... bender.



### 8 Litla Jólábúðin

Laugavegur 8

Christmas store run year round. Established in a backyard on the little residential street of Grundarstígur in 2002, Litla Jólábúðin moved to Laugavegur a few years ago, but maintains a mom-and-pop store kind of feeling. Akureyri has Jólagarðurinn, Reykjavik has Jólábúðin.

### 14 Mai Thai

Laugavegur 118

Located across from Hlemmur Bus Station, Mai Thai imports and sells all sorts of products from South East Asia, particularly Thailand and the Philippines. Depending on the day, you might find fresh coriander, mint, chilies, bean sprouts, exotic fruits such as Durian, Carambola or Coconut, as well as year round products such as frozen spring rolls, various kinds of rice sold in bulk bags, sauces and spices galore, egg and rice noodles, Asian snacks, clothes and other knick-knacks. In short, a wide array of what are still considered rare and exotic treats in Reykjavik.

### 9 Nonnabiti

Hafnarstræti 9

Delicious and relatively cheap considering how massive and filling their sandwiches are. The Luxury Sub, with salty pork, veggies, sauce and pineapple is a brilliant combination of flavours for late-night munchies. It's just as satisfying and filling during more civilized hours as well. And the service is fast if you're in a rush.

### 15 Babalú

Skólavörðustígur 22

Located on the second-floor of a quirky little building on Skólavörðustígur, Babalú is an inviting, quaint and cosy café serving up a selection of tea, coffee and hot chocolate along with delicious baked goods and light meals. Food and drink aside, Babalú boasts colourfully decorated and super-comfortable surroundings and a genuinely friendly and likeable staff.

### 10 Núðluhúsið

Laugavegur 59

Although hardly breaking new ground in Thai cuisine, Núðluhúsið is a safe bet for a cheap, generously portioned, tasty enough meal. You can expect fresh ingredients and fast, courteous service. So if you're wondering which of the many Thai restaurants to choose from on a low budget, we recommend Núðluhúsið.

### 16 Habibi

Hafnarstræti 18

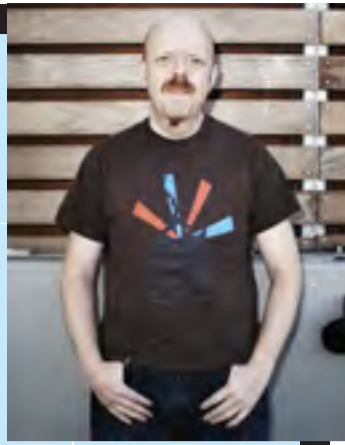
This small restaurant offers up a concise menu of delicious Arabic cuisine, from shawarma to kebabs and falafels. The staff is really friendly and accommodating of requests to kick up the spiciness or tone it down if the customer so desires. Habibi seriously hits the spot after hours of partying (or any other time of day) so it's convenient that the place is open until 6 a.m. Friday and Saturday.

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For a map of outside downtown Reykjavik visit [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is) or the Icelandic phonebook website [www.ja.is](http://www.ja.is)

If you have an iPhone, check out the cool Locatify app in the AppStore. It's got a FREE guided audio tour of the downtown area, courtesy of your pals at Grapevine.



## A DAY IN THE LIFE

**Dr. Gunni**

### What's up, Dr. Gunni?

I'm enjoying the Icelandic summer in the West, East, South and North. Also I'm on TV every Saturday night with my Poppunktur pop music quiz show, where Icelandic bands compete. Also I'm finishing up my gigantic Icelandic pop music book, 'Stuð stuð stuð', which will come out in the fall and be the greatest thing you've ever seen.

### EARLY MORNING >

I wake up so early that I have usually about 2 hours all for myself. I make coffee (Kirkland Starbucks coffee that I get from the Americanised grocery store Kostur in Kópavogur) and do all kinds of wonderful things you can do with your computer. Then everybody wakes up and I make oatmeal pudding, take the kids to school and then it's back to the computer. If I go out I usually meet people at Café Laundromat (Austurstræti 19). It just opened. It looks very "foreign" which is good; it feels like you're in Copenhagen. Good coffee and grub and a cosmopolitan feeling. In the morning it's not as crowded as at other times so you get seated easily and have the morning papers all for yourself.

### LUNCH >

Usually I go to the gym (World Class Laugar, Laugardalur) for a spinning session and then back home to make a blueberry smoothie for lunch. If I eat elsewhere it might be at the health store Maður lifandi (Borgartún 24), where I mix stuff in a box and take out, or if I wanna be extra good to myself I eat something nice and American at TGI Fridays (at Smáralind shopping centre) or Ruby Tuesday (Skipholt 19). The price is better at lunchtime there (and at many other restaurants), so it's good to eat out then. Better for your purse and digestion.

### MID-DAY >

I might go and check what's up with my pals at the second hand record stores, Lucky Records (Hverfisgata 82) and Geislaskabú Valda (Laugavegur 64). I might also get Turkish coffee at Café Haiti (Geirsgata 7b). That's the only place in Reykjavik you can get Turkish coffee and that will kick your butt nicely—it's just what you need if you woke up at five in the morning.

### AFTERNOON >

If the family goes out to eat we might go to either Hamborgarafabrikkan (Höfðatún 2)—a very nicely pulled-off Icelandic version of a hi-class hamburger joint (too bad it's always so crowded that you have to be there at about 5 pm to get a seat without hassle)—or Saffran (Glæsibæ, Álfrheimar 74)—a good "healthy food" place where the price is fair. If the wife and me go to eat fancy we'd probably go to Austur-Índíafjelagið (Hverfisgata 56), which is probably the best Indian restaurant in the world.

### HEAT OF THE NIGHT >

My dancing days are over, so the hippest thing I might do is go with the family to buy ice cream. And true to its name, Iceland has some happening ice cream shops. In Reykjavik, the ice cream nerd has to visit Ísbúð Vesturbæjar (Hagamelur 67) and get a cone of the "old" ice cream. Also visit YoYo Ísbúð (Snorrabraut at Egilsgata) for a "mix it yourself" yogurt ice cream orgasm. If you're in Akureyri you should go get yourself a cone of Brynjú's legendary ice cream (Aðalstræti 3) or drive to Holtel in Eyjafjörður, where there's an ice cream parlour just above the cow ranch where the cows are that supplied the cream. Ask for "skyr-ice cream with Icelandic blue berries", which is without a doubt the best ice cream in the universe.

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### 11 Barbara

Laugavegur 22

At Laugavegur 22, above Trúnó, Barbara serves up a lively atmosphere for Reykjavik's gay community and anybody else who just wants to dance and have a good time. The first level is made for dancing and is often packed with sweaty bodies, while the second level of the bar offers a place to sit, drink and chat with another and in which to smoke.

### 17 Hressó

Austurstræti 20

You know, Hressó is basically the only place I go for coffee. Why? Their coffee is decent to excellent, but their forte is surely their wonderful patio, where you can enjoy the spring breeze in the sun, wrap yourself in a blanket beneath an electric heater in January and at all times: smoke. They boast of quite the prolific menu, but I'd reconsider the playlists to tell you the truth, too much of Nickelback really hurts. SKK

### 12 Kryddlegin Hjörtu

Skúlagata 17

The restaurant Kryddlegin Hjörtu, "Spicy hearts", specializes in healthy and rich gourmet soups, homemade spelt bread and an exclusive salad bar. They are located by the seaside with a spectacular view of the mountains to the north. They are located in a newly built house at Skúlagata 17. Designed with great taste and a lot of love. Closed on Sundays.

### 18 Hemmi & Valdi

Laugavegur 21

The "colonial store" Hemmi and Valdi was probably 2008's most surprising crowd pleaser. The cosy hangout advanced from being a toasty retreat, where you could get cheap beer and have a quiet chat, into being a chock-full concert venue and an all-night party place. And believe me, the new atmosphere is brilliant. SKK

### 13 Kaffismiðja Íslands

Kárástíg 1

Old fashioned charm is the style of Kaffismiðja, in everything from the decor to the coffee grinders. Off the beaten track, this popular coffee shop is a great spot to sit and read or have a chat with friends. The owners Ingbjörg and Sonja take great pride in the beans they use and the coffee is top notch. You can buy fresh grounds too, in case you just cant get enough. EF

### 19 C is for Cookie

Týsgata 8

This cosy new café owned by Polish couple Agnieszka and Stanislaw is the latest addition to the Reykjavik café scene and already looks set to become a favourite with the locals. Ideal for an early lunch or spending a lazy afternoon deciding which of Agnieszka's delicious home baked cakes you want to try next. I'd go with the cheesecake, it's pretty fabulous. EF

Raggi from the band Árstíðir is the unstoppable...

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Live music - every night  
Live soccer  
Special beer offers  
And our infamous Wheel of Fortune

THE ENGLISH PUB

Austurvöllur



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## HUMARHÚSIÐ RESTAURANT

### Lunch menu

**Cream of lobster soup** 1490.-  
*Garlic roasted lobster*

**Lobster & escargot "ragout"** 1590.-  
*Mushrooms, garlic*

**Whale "sashimi" dip sauce** 1290.-  
*Mushrooms, herbs, ginger, red beets*

**Lobster "maki"** 1590.-  
*Avocado, mango, cucumber, chilli mayo*

**Lobster salad** 1490.-  
*Rucola, pumpkin seeds, fruit chutney*

#### VEGETARIAN

**Veggie steak** 1790.-  
*Red beets, potatoes, parsnip*

#### FISH

**Catch of the day** 1990.-  
*Please ask your waiter*

**Lobster grill** 4890.-  
*200 gr. lobster, horseradish, salad*

#### DESSERTS

**Chocolate "2 ways"** 990.-  
*White and dark chocolate, fruits*

**"Lazy-daisy"** 990.-  
*Coconut, yoghurt*

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## ART

### GALLERIES & MUSEUMS IN JULY

## Live Road Guides: At Your Service!



This summer, the city of Reykjavik is offering young people the chance to work as something called 'live road guides'. What's a live road guide then? Well, Reykjavik's team of live road guides counts eleven youngsters that base their operations at the Tourist Information Centre in 101 Reykjavik. From there they will venture every day and spread around the city with the declared aim of helping tourists, giving information and answering questions—absolutely free of charge.

The group's members are definitely easy to spot in their blue fleece sweaters (this is funnily appropriate, since as Icelanders share a silent, almost subconscious understanding of colourful outdoor clothing as being strictly 'for tourists'). Along with guiding tourist passers-by downtown, the crew will also welcome the passengers of cruise ships and airport buses.

One of the group's projects is the experimental 'Reykjavik Green Table'. It

is a collaborative effort with Reykjavik City Hostel in Laugardalur. At the 'Green Table' one may find information about eco-friendly tourism; tips on travelling green around the country, where to get healthy foodstuffs and the like.

We spoke with the group of guides about the project, which was started in 2006. Then, they were fresh out of the preparatory introduction week, where they visited the main museums and historical sites. "Most of the time, the tourists don't come up to you and ask questions. You have to approach them in a polite way, make it clear that the service is free of charge and that we're not selling anything," says Davíð Þór Katrínarson, an 18-year-old road guide. The kids agree that, so far, the job has taught them much about the city itself, its history, and how to live an eco-friendly lifestyle.

ÞÓRÐUR INGI JÓNSSON

## Pingvellir Launches Contest: How To Share & Safeguard The National Park

On a short stopover to Iceland, you'll likely be advised to do the so-called 'Golden Circle'. Not only is it relatively close to Reykjavik, but it also features three prototypical Icelandic attractions in one fell swoop—namely, a waterfall, a geyser, and a national park.

While Icelanders are proud to show off these sites to thousands of people every year, it's inevitable that all those heavy-duty hiking boots are going to leave their mark. So, the national park Pingvellir is now calling on people to come up with ideas about how to receive the busloads of guests without, yes, spoiling the experience for the future busloads of guests.

In case you're not familiar with Pingvellir, the stakes are high. It's one

of the most spectacular places to walk, snorkel or dive between the North American and Eurasian continental plates. Not to mention, it's where the world's oldest parliament, Alþingi, convened in 930 AD. Really, the 'Golden Circle' would be a far less golden without it, and it might not even be a circle.

Send your ideas to the Pingvellir committee by August 22 and if you're clever enough, you could win 200,000 ISK. More information about the contest rules can be found at [www.thingvellir.is/hugmyndaleit](http://www.thingvellir.is/hugmyndaleit) (Unfortunately they are in Icelandic, but you know, Google is getting better and better at translating).

ANNA ANDERSEN

## Reykjavík Literally

### A Guided Walking Tour

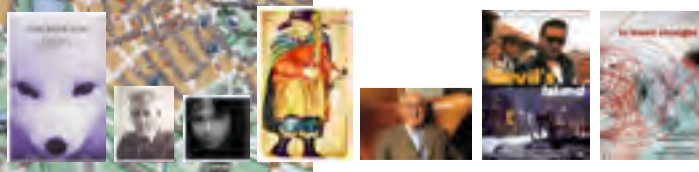
Every Thursday in July and August at 5 pm.



Join us for a fun introduction to Icelandic literature, with a bit of history mixed in. This 90 min. walk is at an easy pace and suits everyone. Starts at Reykjavik City Library in Tryggvagata 15.

Free of charge.

Reykjavik City Library  
[www.literature.is](http://www.literature.is)  
Tel. 411 6100



## COCKTAIL PLEASURES AND VISUAL STIMULATION

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

## OPENINGS

### Hönnunarsafn – Museum of Design

**The Icelandic Museum Day**  
July 10  
Free entrance on Museum Day in Iceland

### The Nordic House Relations

July 9  
The title refers to the relations between different kinds of phenomena. The works are mixed media on canvas  
Runs until August 14

### Paintings by Agneta Ekholm

July 9  
The Swedish artist opens an exhibition of selected paintings in the main entrance of the gallery  
Runs until August 14

### Tjarnarbíó

**Ó Faktör**  
July 7  
Sirkus Íslands presents this show featuring their usual blend of amazing acrobatics, crazy costumes, insane stunts and off the wall comedy  
Runs until July 3

## ONGOING

### Café Babalú

**Reykjavík In Colour & Line**  
A photography exhibition by Clemence Floris, a 22 year old from France who has been living in Reykjavik for a short time. Open daily between 11:00 and 23:00  
Runs until July 13

### ASÍ Art Museum

**The ASÍ 50 Years Anniversary**  
Runs until September 11

### The Culture House

**Millennium - phase one**  
Selection of pieces from the collection of the National Gallery displaying a variety of works by Icelandic artists from the last two centuries

### Medieval Manuscripts - Eddas and Sagas

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

On permanent view

### Child of Hope - Youth and Jón Sigurðsson

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

On permanent view

### The Library Room

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

On permanent view

### Galleri Fold

### Marta Rosolska Photography

Runs until November 14

### Galleri Tukt

### Yellow, Red, Green and Blue

For the last five years Sigrún Guðmundsdóttir has been working with different media, from painting to performance art. In this exhibiton there will be paintings exclusively

Runs until July 9

### Gerðarsafn

### Fellow Icelanders Installations

Exhibition by Icelandic artists Árni Páll Jóhannsson and Pétur Finnbogason.

Runs until July 31

### Gerðuberg

**Gagn og gaman**  
Exhibition of works produced by children who took part in 'Gagn og gaman' craft and activity courses in the period 1988-2004

Runs until August 28

### Hafnarborg

### Ingenuity - Einar Thorsteinn

Exhibition of works by Icelandic architect and artist Einar Thorsteinn Ásgeirsson.

Runs until August 14

### From Hafnarborg collection

Display of works by the most important Icelandic artists from the early 20th century

Runs until August 14

# ART

## GALLERIES & MUSEUMS IN JULY

### Hönnunarsafn – Museum of Design Our Objects – from the Museum's Collection

Objects acquired by the museum since its opening in 1998 will be put on display in the exhibition area. Objects include Icelandic and foreign furniture, graphic design, textiles, ceramics, and glass, to name a few  
Runs until October 16

### 18 Kristján Guðmundsson

Kristján is an artist who uses very bare, basic drawings to challenge assumptions of what drawings actually are

### Knitting Iceland

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

### The Living Art Museum

#### Carl Boutard

An exhibition displaying Boutard's works, which are closely related to nature, science and language  
Runs until July 3

### Mokka Kaffi

#### Edda Guðmundsdóttir – Seasons Exhibition

The paintings in this exhibition were painted between 2006 and 2011. Edda's works are inspired by the seasons  
Runs until June 23

### National Gallery of Iceland

#### Femme – Louise Bourgeois

28 works by Louise Bourgeois, principally installations or "cells" and sculptures, but also paintings, drawings and textiles.  
Runs until September 11

### Kjarval, from the collection of Jón Þorsteinsson and Eyrún Guðmundsdóttir

Exhibition of paintings by Jóhannes S. Kjarval  
Runs until September 11

### Strides

Changes in Icelandic painting from the late 1800s to the 2000s  
Runs until December 31, 2012

### The National Museum

#### The Making of a Nation – Heritage and History in Iceland

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

#### BE YE WELCOME, MY GOOD FRIENDS!

Collection of carved Nordic drinking horns  
Runs until December 31

#### Carved Coffers

From the collection of the National Museum  
Runs until August 31

#### Make Do and Mend

Repaired objects from the collection of the National Museum  
Runs until September 1

#### Don't Touch the Ground

Exhibition on the games of 10 year old children  
Runs until July 24

#### Pétur Thomsen exhibition

Collection of Pétur Thomsen's photographs  
Runs until October 2

### The Nordic House

#### The Library

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

#### Project 0

Paintings, sculptures, drawings, installations, video works by Randi Nygård, Tommy Johansson, Maja Nilsen, Jørgen Aase Falkenberg  
Runs until June 26

### Reykjavik Art Museum

#### Ásmundarsafn

##### From Sketch to Sculpture

Drawings by Ásmundur Sveinsson  
Runs until April 22, 2012

##### Magnús Árnason – Homage

Runs until April 22, 2012

### Hafnarhús

#### Erró – Collage

Runs until August 21

#### Perspectives – On the Borders of Art and Philosophy

Comprehensive exhibit that represents the breadth and diversity of styles and artistic media pursued in Iceland today  
Runs until September 4

#### Tomi Ungerer – Posters and Drawings

Tomi is an award winning illustrator known for his social satire  
Runs until July 24

### Kjarvalsstaðir

#### Jóhannes S. Kjarval – Key Works

Runs until January 15, 2012

#### Jór! Horses in Icelandic Art

Runs until August 21

### Workshop

Open and informative workshop for children and families in connection with the exhibition Jór! Horses in Icelandic Art. Make a reservation in advance by email: fraedsludeild@reykjavik.is  
Runs until August 21

### Reykjavik City Museum

#### Reykjavik 871 +/- 2 (The Settlement Exhibition)

Archaeological findings from ruins of one of the first houses in Iceland and other excavations in the city centre  
On permanent view

### Reykjavik Maritime Museum

#### From Poverty to Abundance

Photos documenting Icelandic fishermen at the turn of the 20th century  
On permanent view

#### The History of Sailing

Iceland's maritime history and the growth of the Reykjavik Harbour  
On permanent view

#### The Coast Guard Vessel Óðinn

Display of vessels that took part in all three Cod Wars  
On permanent view

#### Baiting Bright Fishhooks

Exhibition about the Little Fishing Book by Jón Sigurðsson, containing guidelines to fishing equipment and processing  
Runs until December 31

#### The Herring Adventure

This exhibition explores the adventurous herring era, using the photographs by Haukur Helgason from 1953-57, the short film of Sigurður Guðmundsson from 1941 and various objects related to herring fishing  
Runs until September 18



### THE VIKING : INFO

Laugavegur 1 • Reykjavík • 581 1250  
Hafnarstræti 3 • Reykjavík • 551 1250  
Hafnarstræti 104 • Akureyri • 4615551  
Aðalstræti 27 • Ísafjörður  
Eden • Hveragerði

email: theviking@simnet.is



## Art | Venue finder

**ART67**  
Laugavegur 67 | **F7**  
Mon - Fri 12 - 18 / Sat 12 - 16

**Artótek**  
Tryggvagata 15 | **D4**  
Mon 10-21, Tue-Thu 10-19, Fri 11-19, Sat and Sun 13-17  
www.sim.is/Index/Islandska/Artotek

**ASÍ Art Museum**  
Freygata 41 | **G6**  
Tue-Sun 13-17

**Árbæjarsafn**  
Kistuhylur 4

**The Culture House**  
Hverfisgata 15 | **E5**  
Open daily 11-17  
www.thjodmenning.is

**Dwarf Gallery**  
Grundarstígur 21 | **F4**  
Opening Hours: Fri and Sat 18-20  
www.this.is/birta/dwarfgallery

**The Einar Jónsson**  
Eiríksgröta | **G5**  
Tue-Sun 14-17  
www.skulptur.is

**Gallery Ágúst**  
Baldursgröta 12 | **G4**  
Wed-Sat 12-17  
www.galleriagust.is

**Gallery Fold**  
Rauðarástígur 14-16 | **G8**  
Mon-Fri 10-18 / Sat 11-16 / Sun 14-16  
www.myndlist.is

**Gallery Kaolin**  
Ingólfsstræti 8 | **F4**

**Gallery Kling & Bang**  
Hverfisgata 42 | **E5**  
Thurs-Sun from 14-18  
this.is/klingogbang/

**Gerðuberg Cultural Centre**  
Gerðuberg 3-5  
Mon-Thu 11-17 / Wed 11-21 / Thu-Fri 11-17 / Sat-Sun 13-16  
www.gerduberg.is

**Hitt Húsið – Gallery Tukt**  
Pósthússtræti 3-5 | **E4**  
www.hitthusid.is

**i8 Gallery**  
Tryggvagata 16 | **D3**  
Tue-Fri 11-17 / Sat 13-17 and by appointment. www.i8.is

**Living Art Museum**  
Skúlagata 28 | **D6**  
Wed, Fri-Sun 13-17 / Thu 13-22. www.nylo.is

**Hafnarborg**  
Strandgötu 34,  
Hafnarfjörður

**Mokka Kaffi**  
Skólavörðustíg 3A | **E5**

**The National Gallery of Iceland**  
Frikirkjuvegur 7 | **F4**  
Tue-Sun 11-17  
www.listasafn.is

**The National Museum**  
Suðurgata 41 | **G2**  
Open daily 10-17  
natmus.is

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

**Núttímalist Galleria**  
Skólavörðustígur 3a | **E5**  
**Restaurant Reykjavík**  
Vesturgata 2 | **D3**

**Reykjavik 871 +/- 2**  
Aðalstræti 17 | **D3**  
Open daily 10-17

**Reykjavik Art Gallery**  
Skúlagata 28 | **D6**  
Tuesday through Sunday 14-18

**Reykjavik Art Museum**  
Open daily 10-16  
www.listasafnreykjavikur.is  
**Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum** Sigtún  
**Hafnarhús** Tryggvagata 17 | **D3**  
**Kjarvalsstaðir** Flókagata | **D7**

**Reykjavik Maritime Museum**  
Grandagarður 8 | **B2**

**Reykjavik Museum of Photography**  
Tryggvagata 16 | **D3**  
Weekdays 12-19 / Sat-Sun 13-17 - www.ljosmyndasafn-reykjavikur.is

**Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum**  
Laugarnestangi 70

**SÍM, The Association of Icelandic Artists**  
Mon-Fri 10-16  
Hafnarstræti 16 | **D4**

**Spark, Design Space**  
Klapparstíg 33 | **F5**  
www.sparkdesignspace.com





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## HOW TO DRIVE SAFELY IN ICELAND

### ALCOHOL & DRUGS

Under no circumstances, is it permitted to drive when alcohol or other drugs have been consumed. Severe penalties can be expected if you commit such a crime.

If driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs you will not be entitled to compensation in case of an accident and will have to bear the total cost of the accident yourself.

### SPEED LIMITS

High-speed cameras are present on most roads and the police also keep a scrupulous eye on speeding.

Fines for drunk driving or exceeding speed limits can be very high not to mention a possible suspension of driving license.



Unpaid fines are not waived simply because a driver has left the country and returned home.

The speed limit is as follow:

- 50 km/hr in urban areas except when speed limit sign show something else.
- The main rule on highways is that gravel roads have a speed limit of 80 km/hr.
- Paved highwayroads have a speed limit of 90 km/hr. Signs indicate if other speed limits apply.



See further instruction on [www.drive.is](http://www.drive.is)



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### Elding Whale Watching schedule - all year round

EL-01 / EL-02 / EL-03

Jan-Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct-Dec
	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	
				10:00*	10:00*		
	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00
				14:00*	14:00*		
			17:00	17:00	17:00		
			20:30**	20:30**			

\*10:00 and 14:00 departures from 1 July to 10 August.

\*\*20:30 Midnight Whale Watching from 15 June to 31 July

- **EL-04 Sea Angling** 1 May - 30 September at 11:00
- **EL-05 Puffin Tour** 15 May - 15 August at 9:30 and 15:00
- **EL-07 Ferry to Viðey** all year round

Free entry to the Whale Watching Centre

[elding.is](http://elding.is)



# ART

GALLERIES & MUSEUMS IN JULY

### The Call of Sagas

A exhibition from Finland about an adventurous voyage in an open boat from Finland to Iceland, honouring the old Viking shipping routes  
*Ongoing*

### The Watercolours of Ólafur Thorlacius

Ólafur worked with the Icelandic Coast Guard for many years as a mapmaker. He is now retired and paints beautiful watercolours in his free time  
*Ongoing*

### Reykjavik Museum of Photography

#### Valdís Thor

100 photographs on display  
*Runs until June 29*

#### The Photographs of Leifur Þorsteinnsson

Exhibition of work by Icelandic photographer Leifur Þorsteinnsson  
*Runs until August 28*

#### Reykjavík Citizens - Photos from a working man

Karl Christian Nielsen's exhibition depicts photos of everyday life between



7 July

9 July

### Rocking In The East Coast...Yeah!

Eistnaflug metal festival

July 7-9

Neskaupstaður

5000 ISK one-day pass, 9000 ISK three-day pass

When tourists admire for the first time the breathtaking beauty of Icelandic fjords, metal rock is unlikely the kind of music they will think a suitable soundtrack for that moving experience. But contrasts can be exciting! If master filmmaker Stanley Kubrick dared to mix Mozart and Beethoven pieces with extremely violent scenes, why not try the opposite and combine lovely eye-catching landscapes with Alice in Chains' tunes? It could be really cool.

That's what Eistnaflug organisers thought when they came up with the brilliant idea of putting on a hard-rock festival in Neskaupstaður, a town located on a beautiful fjord in east Iceland. Every year this little town doubles its population with people coming from everywhere just to enjoy three days of good metal, hardcore and punk music, provided by both Icelandic and foreign bands. It promises to be a contrast between sight and sound that will surprise those eager for new experiences.

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# ART

## GALLERIES & MUSEUMS IN JULY

1916 and 1950  
Runs until August 28  
**Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum**  
Sigurjón Ólafsson's Pillars & "Icelander"

The pillar in its various forms is one of the leitmotifs of the work of sculptor Sigurjón Ólafsson, from his first independent work in Copenhagen in the 1930s to his final works of 1982  
Runs until August 28

**Spark Design Space**  
Thread

Spark is presenting two generations of jewellery makers  
Runs until September 1



6  
July

10  
July

### Folk Music Brings Its Best To Iceland!!!

Siglufljóður Folk Music Festival

July 6-10

Siglufljóður

Free

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## Reykjavik Art Museum

Perspectives - On the Borders of Art and Philosophy.  
Claudio Parmiggiani, Untitled, 2008.

Erró - Collage

18 Sept. 2010 - 21 August 2011  
**Erró - Collage**

Magnús Árnason - Homage

30 April 2011 - 15 April 2012  
**Magnús Árnason - Homage**

Tomi Ungerer - Drawings and Posters

21 May - 4 September  
**Perspectives - On the Borders of Art and Philosophy**

3 May 2010 - 15 January 2012  
**Kjarval - Key Works**

21 May - 24 July  
**Tomi Ungerer - Drawings and Posters**

7 May - 21 August  
**Jór! Horses in Icelandic Art**

7 May - 21 August  
**Colours of the Horse**

28 July - 28 August  
**Erró - Assemblage**

30 April 2011 - 15 April 2012  
**From Sketch to Sculpture - Drawings by Ásmundur Sveinsson**

From Sketch to Sculpture - Drawings by Ásmundur Sveinsson

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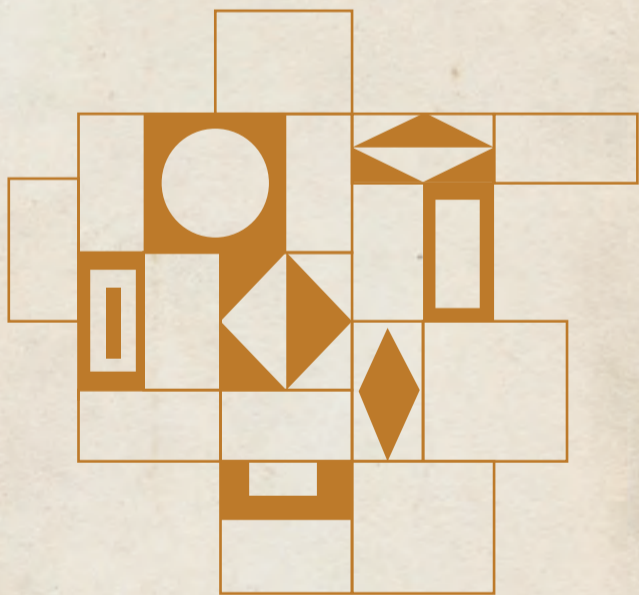
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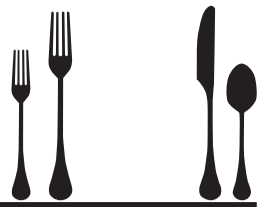
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# DILL REIGNS SUPREME

Grapevine's restaurant critic visits her favourite restaurant



**Madeleine T:** This is Grapevine's annual best of, top of the pops issue. Now, I am not one for superlatives. I continually come back to Dill. Dill is on the top of my list. There is nothing that compares to it in Iceland. I rather inactively choose not to take part in this, as I do not believe in this gold star dunce cap reward system. I find that really boring. Dill does reign king of haute cuisine in Iceland. For our readers that have not had the pleasure of dining here, can you talk about the mission and spirit of Dill?

**Gunnar Karl Gíslason:** We opened up two years ago. Then, the whole thing was about this Nordic Kitchen. We were going to open this Nordic restaurant, and of course we did. Both me and Óli [Dill Sommelier and co-founder Ólafur Örn Ólafsson] had worked at Vox before, so it was logical to come here and open up a restaurant in the Nordic House. It was probably the perfect way to move on.

We had our things at Vox, but we wanted to take it further. I wanted a smaller location so the whole thing would be more personal. When Nordic House director Max Dager offered me the location, I really could not say no. First of all, the house, location and the view are unbelievable. We had some investors who were coming into this project with us. Then came the crisis,

and the investors dropped out, so it was only Óli and I left. We were thinking that maybe it was too much for the two of us to handle, but we could not say no. We had to find a new strategy.

When we opened, we noticed that because of the crisis, the prices on all of the imported ingredients from the other Nordic countries started to go up, not only a little bit, but a lot. So our Nordic restaurant is thus probably more Icelandic than Nordic. We basically try to find ingredients in Iceland, and if we cannot find them here, then we look to the other Nordic countries. It is much more Icelandic than it was in the beginning, and it is much more Icelandic than the things we were doing at Vox.

In addition, I think in these two years since we started here, I have started to focus more on the traditions: the traditions of making the food. I am looking at the producers and I try to find producers that are making things in the really old tradition. For example, we only buy fish from one guy in Hauganes, and this guy makes a beautiful bacalao. He is the third generation in Hauganes, using the same methods. It's a one-year process. Some places have started to actually inject the cod with salt; which of course is not the same. So we have chosen to use his products. The same with harðfiskur, which is dried outside, as

opposed to using an oven.

**WHERE IS THE FRESH FISH IN ICELAND?**

**MT:** Maybe that wouldn't be such a problem, injecting salt into the bacalao, if that was strictly our export bacalao. The problem would be in Portugal, and maybe then they would re-establish their fish salting tradition.

It is so difficult for us to find fresh ingredients here in Reykjavik, especially fresh fish and seafood. I find this absurd. I have lived in several cities around the world, and have always had easier access to fresh seafood than in the capital city one of the world's largest fish exporters. Everything is packed and shipped off for export. It is becoming slightly easier to find, especially if you own a car, but you still have to hunt.

**GG:** It is getting easier now, especially for restaurants. I learned to cook at a restaurant in Akureyri, and it was impossible to get fresh fish, this was a long time ago, you more or less had to buy it frozen. Now the situation is much better. Here we get everything fresh, everyday.

**MT:** With the abundance of geothermal energy that we have in here in Iceland, we have the ability to produce most of our agricultural needs and become once again a nation with a self-sustainable food supply. With greenhouses using

## Food & Drink | Venue finder

<b>3 Frakkar</b> Baldursgata 14   <b>G5</b>	<b>Íslenski Barinn</b> Pósthússtræti 9   <b>E4</b>	<b>Gata</b> Laugavegur 3   <b>E5</b>	<b>Indian Mango</b> Frakkastígur 12   <b>F6</b>	<b>O Sushi</b> Lækjargata 2A   <b>E4</b>	<b>Sushibarinn</b> Laugavegur 2   <b>E5</b>
<b>Aktu Taktu</b> Skúlugata 15   <b>E7</b>	<b>Bar Ellefu</b> Hverfisgata 18   <b>E5</b>	<b>Gletan book café</b> Laugavegur 19   <b>E5</b>	<b>Jómfrúin</b> Lækjargata 4   <b>E4</b>	<b>Pisa</b> Lækjargötu 6b   <b>E4</b>	<b>Sushimiðjan</b> Geirsgötu 3   <b>C3</b>
<b>Alibaba</b> Veltusund 3b   <b>D3</b>	<b>Café d'Haiti</b> Tryggvagata 12   <b>D4</b>	<b>Grái Kótturinn</b> Hverfisgata 16A   <b>E5</b>	<b>Fjallkonubakarið</b> Laugavegur 21   <b>F5</b>	<b>Pizza King</b> Hafnarstræti 18   <b>D4</b>	<b>Svarta Kaffi</b> Laugavegur 54   <b>F7</b>
<b>American Style</b> Tryggvagata 26   <b>D4</b>	<b>Café Loki</b> Lokastígur 28   <b>G6</b>	<b>Grillhúsið</b> Tryggvagata 20   <b>D3</b>	<b>Kaffifélagið</b> Skólavörðustígur 10   <b>E5</b>	<b>Express Pizza</b> Vallarstræti 4   <b>E4</b>	<b>Sægreifinn</b> Verðúð 8, Geirsgata   <b>C3</b>
<b>Argentina Steakhouse</b> Barónstígur   <b>F7</b>	<b>Café Paris</b> Austurstræti 14   <b>E4</b>	<b>Habibi</b> Hafnarstræti 20   <b>D4</b>	<b>Kaffitár</b> Bankastræti 8   <b>E5</b>	<b>Gamla Smiðjan</b> Lækjargötu 8   <b>E4</b>	<b>Tapas</b> Vesturgata 3B   <b>D3</b>
<b>Austurlanda-hraðlestin</b> Hverfisgata 64A   <b>F7</b>	<b>Café Roma</b> Rauðarárstígur 8   <b>G8</b>	<b>Hamborgarabúlla</b> Tómasar ("Bullar") Geirsgata 1   <b>C3</b>	<b>Kaffivagninn</b> Grandagarður 10   <b>B2</b>	<b>Prikið</b> Bankastræti 12   <b>E5</b>	<b>Thorvaldsen</b> Austurstræti 8   <b>E4</b>
<b>Á Næstu Grösum</b> Laugavegur 20B   <b>F5</b>	<b>Delí</b> Bankastræti 14   <b>E5</b>	<b>Híolla Batar</b> Ingólfstorg   <b>D3</b>	<b>Kofi Tómasar Frænda</b> Laugavegur 2   <b>E5</b>	<b>Ráðhúskaffi</b>   <b>E3</b> Tjarnargata 11	<b>Tíu Dropar</b> Laugavegur 27   <b>F5</b>
<b>B5</b> Bankastræti 5   <b>E4</b>	<b>Domo</b> Þinghóltsstræti 5   <b>E4</b>	<b>Hornið</b> Hafnarstræti 15   <b>D4</b>	<b>Kornið</b> Lækjargata 4   <b>E4</b>	<b>Santa María</b> Laugavegur 22A   <b>F6</b>	<b>UNO</b> Hafnarstræti 1-3   <b>D3</b>
<b>Bakkus</b> Tryggvagata 22   <b>D3</b>	<b>Einar Ben</b> Veltusundi   <b>D3</b>	<b>Hótel Holt</b> Bergstaðarstræti 37   <b>G5</b>	<b>Krua Thai</b> Tryggvagata 14   <b>D3</b>	<b>Serrano</b> Hringbraut 12   <b>I5</b>	<b>Vegamót</b> Vegamótastígur 4   <b>F5</b>
<b>Ban Thai</b> Laugavegur 130   <b>G8</b>	<b>Eldsmiðjan</b> Bragagata 38A   <b>G5</b>	<b>Humarhúsið</b> Amtmannstígur 1   <b>E4</b>	<b>La Primavera</b> Austurstræti 9   <b>E4</b>	<b>Shalimar</b> Austurstræti 4   <b>E3</b>	<b>Við Tjómína</b> Templararsund 3   <b>E4</b>
<b>Babalú</b> Skólavörðustígur 22A   <b>F5</b>	<b>Fiskmarkaðurinn</b> Aðalstræti 12   <b>E3</b>	<b>Hressó</b> Austurstræti 20   <b>E4</b>	<b>Mokka</b> Skólavörðustígur 3A   <b>E5</b>	<b>Silfur</b> Pósthússtræti 11   <b>E4</b>	<b>Vitabar</b> Bergþórugata 21   <b>G7</b>
<b>Bæjarins Beztu</b> Tryggvagata   <b>D4</b>	<b>Geysir Bar/Bistro</b> Aðalstræti 2   <b>D3</b>	<b>Icelandic Fish &amp; Chips</b> Tryggvagata 8   <b>D3</b>	<b>Nonnabiti</b> Hafnarstræti 9   <b>D4</b>	<b>Sjávarkjallarinn</b> Aðalstræti 2   <b>D3</b>	
	<b>Garðurinn</b> Klappastígur 37   <b>F5</b>			<b>Sólön</b> Bankastræti 7a   <b>E5</b>	

fresh Icelandic water, and leaving almost zero carbon footprint from field to fork, we have the ability to produce the cleanest and tastiest fruits and vegetables while eliminating costly, tasteless imports. Do you champion this idea? I think obviously you do.  
**GG:** Definitely.

#### THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT

**MT:** I think it a great idea to subsidise our Icelandic farmers and encourage local greenhouses rather than import everything from Holland or America. Perhaps if we offered cheap energy deals like we do with heavy industry, and subsidised greenhouse construction we could stimulate local economy while enjoying the benefits of fresh produce for a change. What can be the first steps we can take to facilitate this?

**GG:** One farmer could arrange a deal with four restaurants and produce a lot of things for them, he could even sell the rest at Bónus. It shouldn't be a big risk for him if the restaurant pays the bill. It is the same thing with mostly everything in Iceland. If one person starts making something, and it goes very well for him, everybody has to do the same, instead of thinking that ok, this is really nice then I should do something else, but do it with the same passion, love and respect for the ingredients, and then I will sell the same amount as him.

**MT:** So this sheep mentality has probably been the pitfall of something like this. We now have greenhouses filled with a surplus of cucumbers and tomatoes instead of one person focused on producing seven varieties of basil or heirloom tomatoes.

**GG:** You could have so many varieties. It is really boring. I don't understand it.

#### HOMEGROWN DELICIOUSNESS

**MT:** I see you have a garden out back, can you speak a bit about your garden and what you are growing.

**GG:** We have six different types of dill. Then we have a good variety of herbs. I think dill is the only herb that we put down at the beginning of summer. The rest of them just come again, like the arctic thyme, chervil, angelica, etc... What do you call those herbs that come up again and again?

**MT:** Perennial. I see you have a small greenhouse as well, do you grow vegetables in there?

**GG:** We are starting to, along with apples as well. We produced three apples last year.

**MT:** Congratulations. That is already an achievement, as it isn't easy finding a breed that withstands our harsh climate and short growing season. Do you want to expand your gardening efforts here?

**GG:** Not here. It would be fun to have more vegetables and larger herb garden. We don't have the space, and

it already almost takes a gardener to take care of it. If we would expand it, and hire a gardener, we could do it somewhere outside of Reykjavik. But not this summer at least.

**MT:** That is a great long-term plan. There are a few restaurants that come to mind, some of my favourites that actually have a garden on location. You pass by the seasonal vegetables on approach to the entrance, and have an idea of what to expect inside.

**GG:** That is nice.

#### THE ARTISTIC PROCESS

**MT:** Can you tell us about your creative process?

**GG:** When I do the menus, I like to be alone with a blank piece of paper in the library here. Then it is just write and write and write.

**MT:** The menu is seasonal.

**GG:** Definitely, that is why we change so often. There are always new things coming in the garden, or a friend with a goose he caught. That is the good thing with a small menu. We just change the menu and print in-house.

**MT:** If you consider cooking an art, is there a particular movement or artist that you can identify with?

**GG:** I have thought a lot about this, cooking and art. I think cooking is art. It is quite hard to compare it to painting. I can understand this comparison to cooking and jazz and painting as well, when you begin with a base and build on top of that. Eggert Pétursson makes very beautiful paintings, and I can very much relate to them.

**MT:** His paintings are quite organic. My experience with the cuisine at Dill has been a bit along the lines of post modernism, deconstructionist really, in the way that you interpret Nordic cuisine. Is this your intention?

When I say deconstructionist, I am thinking of Dill taking Icelandic cuisine back to the basic raw ingredients, and reworking them individually in new ways.

**GG:** Do you mean instead of blending celery, carrots and parsnip?

**MT:** Exactly. Instead of blending the usual suspects with a kitchen wand, you tend to explore each ingredient individually.

**GG:** Yes, definitely.

**MT:** Some may cite Ferran Adria of El Bulli or Noma of Copenhagen as influences. Do they inspire you?

**GG:** Noma definitely. René is a good friend. But, I have never been to El Bulli. I have one of his books. I really like to listen to him talk about food. He once ended an interview by saying: "At the end of the day, we are doing the food I love." I think that is what we are doing here. Some years ago, I just stopped cooking for others, and started making the things I really like.

**MT:** That is why his menu changes daily. He has contributed a lot to

modern cooking, but that is a great thing to walk away with. Cook what you enjoy cooking. Many have borrowed other elements from Ferran, as he is responsible for developing this progressive cuisine that challenges the meaning of food and dining with molecular gastronomy and the kitchen as laboratory. This style has rapidly become a ubiquitous part of modern cooking. Foams are turning up everywhere, like the balsamic glaze of the nineties drizzled all over a dish. This abuse risks the style becoming little more than whimsical. When you are creating a new dish, does flavour and texture precede presentation?

**GG:** Definitely. That is really important. We are only two in the kitchen at Dill. I start with the basics. I never make things on the plate where the taste and texture is second. There are a lot of restaurants that misunderstood the whole thing with foams. They taste like nothing. If you are going to do it, make sure it tastes like something, or just don't put it on the plate.

#### ACT LOCAL

**MT:** In your opinion, what is the most exciting or innovative thing happening in kitchens across the world?

**GG:** Slow food, slash Nordic manifesto. The whole thing is about using the things that you have around you, instead of importing what is far away. A lot of the restaurants have their own gardens. This is something I feel very strong about. People are really waking up and starting to think locally.

**MT:** This leads right back to what we spoke about earlier about growing locally and not relying on Europe or America to feed us.

**GG:** It is unbelievable. We have Icelandic customers that come and eat seven courses. Everything that they get on the plate is Icelandic more or less, yet they talk about how new and exotic everything was.

**MT:** And they do not realise that this is in their back yard. We have a chance to have one of the cleanest and healthiest cuisines on earth. What advice do you have for the home cook or the inspired young chef?

**GG:** Go out in your back yard, see what you have, and just use it.

**MT:** When I go on a hike, I am constantly grazing like a sheep and wondering how this tastes, and would it make a nice tea.

**GG:** We are actually starting to make our own tea.

**MT:** What else can we expect from Dill in the coming year? You mentioned a larger garden.

**GG:** Yes a larger garden with vegetables and a lot of varieties. We just want to continue doing what we are doing and avoid all big changes.

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📷 MADELEINE T

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