



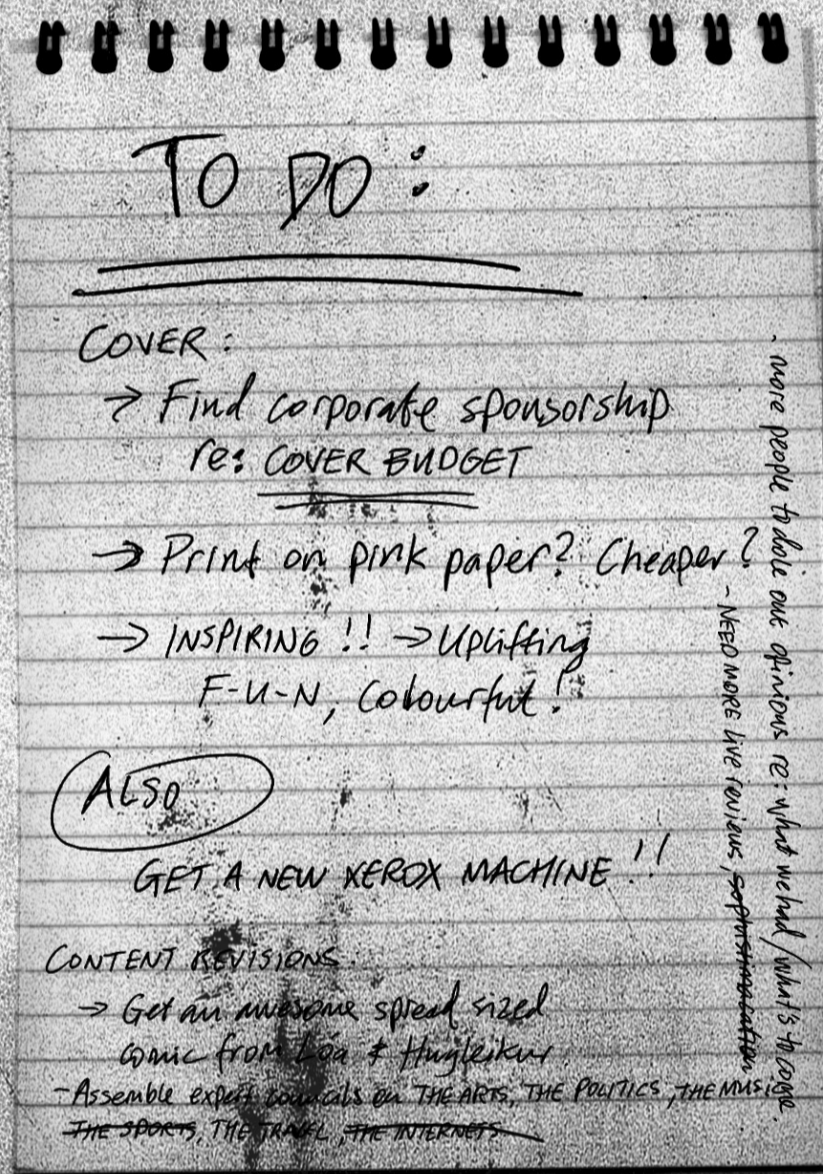
The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

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Issue Nº 1 - January 9 - February 5 - 2009 + COMPLETE CITY LISTINGS - INSIDE!

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"WE ARE ONLY BROKE ON MONEY"



33 ICELANDERS HAVE THEIR SAY ON WHAT WE HAD, AND WHAT'S TO COME

+ Our expert councils reflect on art, music, politics and travel

Direct Action: Things are heating up. Will they boil over?

Records reviewed // restaurants rated // listings listed

THEIR ANSWERS

The Grapevine posed a question to dozens of Icelanders, old and new. We asked them "What we had", and "What we can expect". We hope that when read together, they may give a broad idea of how Icelanders as a nation perceived the events of the last twelve months, and how they feel about the next twelve. PG. 6.



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Haukur's 1st Editorial!

Yes, this is my inaugural editorial as editor of the Reykjavík Grapevine – this very magazine! Fancy that!

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of my predecessors for making this publication what it is today: Valur Gunnarsson, Bart Cameron, Sveinn Birgir Björnsson – I am lucky to stand on your shoulders, and I hope I can live up to the ginormous standards you have set. And Birgir: thank you for your guidance and company over the past couple of years. It has been a pleasure and an honour to work with you, and I hope to do it again. Thanks, y'all!

So. Now. A mission statement:

As editor of the Reykjavík Grapevine, I promise you reader types out there to do my very best to keep it an honest, truthful, empathetic, vigilant, insightful, humorous, tumultuous, alert, informative, dumb, punk-rock, reflective, DIY, understanding, gimmicky, unprejudiced, rebellious, senior, scathing, agile, dumb, multi-layered, rocking, witty, reliable, informative, snarky, defensive, political, cultured, kick-ass, clever, trite, true, corrosive, insubordinate, shameful, reliable, youthful, sXe, HxC and THC read. At the very least an honest one, one that strives to reflect the community it springs from and the multitude of perspective that make it. This is a goal.

If I for some reason fail you, reader, we still have a great design team, so you can enjoy the colourful pictures and top-notch layout if nothing else.

So there you go. No changes to the Grapevine are planned as of yet, save for maybe updating our web site a tad more often (but if you've got any good ideas lying around, please drop us a line so we can take credit for 'em).

As for this issue, I hope it speaks for itself. We wanted to make a year-end issue, an attempt to give an overview of all of the wonderful and interesting and neither-wonderful-nor-interesting stuff that went on in 2008, and pack it into a single, thirty-two

page volume. And we thought the best way to accomplish this was to get the community we serve to reflect on itself. So check out what our councils have to say, and check out what the assembly of 33 has to offer. They are us and we are he as you are me and we are all together and so on and so forth.

ALSO you must turn to page 14 RIGHT AWAY to check out what our resident comic artists, Hugleikur Dagsson and Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir, turned in when we asked them to make us a version of "Áramótaskaup" (FYI, "Áramótaskaup" is a humorous television program broadcast on Icelandic State TV every New Year's Eve, where the national comic elite reflect on the previous year's goings-on). It is hilarious!

Happy New Ears, y'all!
HSM

Cover



Cover
"We are only broke on money"
A quote from artist Gabríela Friðriksdóttir.

On Cover
A Xerox of issue #1, 2009.

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Masthead

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RE-04 - 09:00

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  All Year

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RE-62 - 21:00*

Northern Lights Tour

 Winter

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*From 1 January 2009, new operation time: 11:00-14:00.

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RE-81 - 09:00

Take a Walk on the Ice Side

  All Year

SUN WED FRI SAT 

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RE-24 - 12:30

Gullfoss - Geysir Direct

  All Year

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT 

If you want to spend your afternoon in the countryside join this tour with us and we will show you two of Iceland's most famous attractions - the queen of Iceland's waterfalls, Gullfoss and the world famous hot spring Geysir. Don't miss out on this one.

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RE-08 - 09:00

Saga Circle

  All Year

SAT 

This tour is perfect for all Saga enthusiasts. On this tour we take you around the area where one of the Icelandic Sagas took place - along with enjoying spectacular landscape. Come and follow in the footsteps of the Vikings with us.

Price **17500** ISK

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RE-15 - 09:00

South Shore Adventure

  All Year

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT 

This tour takes you along the sandy coastline of the south with a taste of Icelandic nature. On this tour you breathe in the fresh air on a black beach just before seeing striking waterfalls that mesmerise you while gazing at them.

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LETTERS

Sour Grapes

SAY YOUR PIECE, VOICE YOUR OPINION, SEND YOUR LETTERS TO LETTERS@GRAPEVINE.IS

I was privileged enough to have the opportunity to spend summer 06 and 07 in Iceland, together with my wife Alicia Wilson who played soccer for KR. I messed the Icelandic summer this year. I hope to come in the near future with our daughter, Kiana Esja, and show her the reason why we gave her that middle name. I certainly miss Iceland and all its natural beauty and wonders.
Oscar E. Lopez

We miss you too, man. Come back soon.

I am interested in helping your economy by buying Icelandic products. Do you have a Rotary or Chamber of Commerce that is promoting exports. I am a small business person and would be happy to see if there was something you produce that I could sell here in California.
Bob Alderman

Readers: This guy Bob really means well. If any of you want to do commerce with him, write us a note and we'll pass it on to him. Who knows, it just might save our collective ass.

Some observations on Icelandic character trait development during the recent financial crises.

I love Iceland, the people and the attitude and want to stay permanently. Unlike a newly wed, I would like to note a few points about the characteristics of the object of my affections. It seems to me, as a temporary Icelandic citizen (I like to consider myself as such), since my arrival in January 2008, that the recent financial crises has brought to the fore a number of endearing national Icelandic traits that I have observed periodically over the last 10 months.

These traits have surfaced previously only intermittently over the last 10 months, during both my business day and during my social life, and I feel tempted to document them. Naturally, following great journalistic tradition, these are only my opinions, with no substantive evidence to support these comments, yet I shall say them as if they were the only truth, sent from on high. To pontificate without substance is the prerogative of the foreigner.....especially an English one.

I call the first trait, the not invented here syndrome. This trait could be described as reinventing the wheel and involves ignoring known alternatives in favour of an Icelandic solution. The benefits of this approach can be seen in an entrepreneurial active can do attitude to business which ignores the nay-sayers. This can be seen in the rapid growth of the Icelandic high tech sector and the decision to open a website selling the entire population of the meddellin cartel range rover specials to the rest of the world, now that the ISK has made them moderately less expensive than they were before.

The downside of this trait can be described as poking a lion with a short stick.... Not a good move unless you are faster than the lion. This is most evident in the excessive prices that were paid with borrowed money for assets, by these canny entrepreneurs (same effect as the drunk sailor with a credit card on a Friday night out in town). The Japanese did the same thing in the 1980 ties.
However, I should be balanced, and note that you have taken up a number of English habits and traits that will serve you well.

The ability to spin....I.e. inform people of the facts that best suit your position rather than give a complete position. In the UK, this is standing Government policy and is fairly evident from the drip drip of information concerning what actually happened during the nationalisation procedure. Word of warning...when a politician says that it is too early to look to blame or that more important things need to be done, this is usually a euphemism for acknowledgement of some fault for the situation.

The sheer quality of political stock. Like UK politicians, you get the feeling that they would be out of their intellectual depth in a car park puddle. (I can be gratuitously rude about politicians as they do not care what I think and so I can only return the complement.)

Blaming someone else (foreigners are good targets, especially for politicians as they do not vote for them as a rule). This is known as the SUN rule (naked after UK literary establishment, although narrow mindedness with a hint of xenophobia can be rightly known as the Daily Mail rule.

The UK banks were just as greedy and short sighted as the Icelandic banks. We just have someone to right a big enough check, which you dont. But that is not a reason for some attempt at cultural superiority or one upmanship.

We in the UK have a glorious history of borrowing peoples countries (yours included apparently), taking what we want, rewriting history and then leaving the recipients with the mother of all inferiority complexes. If we are on top form, we will also have partitioned your country so that you spend the next 20 years fighting yourselves rather than hating us. The skills and traits that we have developed to provide such success in this field can only... well,, lets just say we consider ourselves legends, (that is why you get over weight drunk English tourists, sardonically challenged, whose vocabulary skills can only be described as stunted before they started drinking, expecting people to respect them, because they are English... just like Lord Nelson was!

When I look at it like this, I can feel pride that , although Iceland has many new behavioural traits to learn, that they too can aspire to what we English are. On this basis, my love affair with Iceland continues.

Andrew Khan Jackson

This is a fun letter Andrew, although I don't understand a lot of it. Still. Letter of the month! Cool. Let's do that. Just write to the usual address to receive your prize of a delicious Shawarma sandwich from the excellent Habibi.

To whom it may concern,
I had a dream that I was a lizard training with other lizards to fit through a hole in the wall. I had a dream that I was a lizard training in the air force. When I talk to people I use evasive maneuvers. I had a dream that one day, wait, Wrong dream.

My dream is we will wake up. A hippy is lost in a world of capitalist vampire cannibals. Don't lose hope, even though half of the 21st century has gone into making humanity more efficient killers. You have the right to believe what you want. Your brain is a chemical reaction of imaginative power. You have the right to power it with what you will. Your time is your life. Your breath is proof of your existence. Your muscles are your vehicle. Your mind is your freedom. Your actions are your legacy.
Dan

Sorry Andrew Khan. Dan's letter is far superior to yours and has hereby been named Letter of the Month! It has lizards and airplanes and vampire cannibals, Andrew, so I am sure you understand! Now, Dan, please write us to receive your complimentary Shawarma. You can have one too, Andrew, if you want.



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2K8 Round Table Round Up Bonanza Extravaganza Madness!

So this is the New Year. Aught nine. Seems pretty dark and rainy thus far, but then again most Icelandic years start out that way. And given the present situation, all the cold, rainy darkness seems to fit in perfectly with the sentiment of the times, which amounts to a sort of unknowing dread for what waits 'round the corner for little old Iceland. One still gets the feeling that ringing in the New Year was a relief for most, that there is an unbridled joy in seeing 2008 fade and ultimately vanish in our collective rear view mirror. "Let us speak no more of this evil year," they say.

But still. Even though the last couple of months really left a mark, we certainly saw a lot of good, excellent or interesting things happening in 2008 – stuff we shouldn't forget if we can help it. Some awesome albums were released by formerly unknown artists (as well as a lot of established ones), a mass of fine literature and poetry saw publication, the local art scene kept on burgeoning and hundreds of thousands of foreign visitors graced our shores for the first time and had a fine time of it. And as per usual, politics and politicians were as callous, dumb and useless as we've come to expect.

In the spirit of celebrating the good things about 2008, and remembering the bad stuff (which makes great lesson fodder for you observant types), we present the Grapevine 2008 Round Up. So as to spare you readers our own amateurish opinions on 2008, we put together four expert panels on our favourite subjects: Music, Arts, Politics and Travel. Our panellists are all dedicated and active participants in their fields, and each and every one of them is a respected voice in his or her own right. We value their opinions, whether we agree with them or not, and so should you.

The following is an account of our panels' series of conversations during the last days of 2008. Thanks to Hressó for the coffee, and all of these fine people for agreeing to help us shed a light on glorious 2008.

INTERVIEWS

Haukur S. Magnússon

PHOTOGRAPHY

Julia Staples
Jói Kjartans

What We Had

// What We Can Expect: 33 Icelanders Have Their Say

The Grapevine posed a question to dozens of Icelanders, old and new. Members of every single political party (for some reason, only the Left-Greens cared to respond), ministers, mayors and machinists alike. We asked them to tell us – in their own unique ways, from their own unique perspectives – what summed up the year 2008, and what they expected of the coming one. 2009. We asked them to tell us "What we had", and to follow with "What we can expect". Or not. There were no restrictions, our correspondents were free to answer in any way, language and format. From their hearts or from their minds.

Spread over the following pages are the replies we received. Every last one of them. We hope that when read together, in the context of one another, they may give a broad and even enlightening view of how Icelanders as a nation perceived the events of the last twelve months, and how they envision the next twelve turning out. Each and every one speaks for itself, and each one tells a story. Enjoy.

SINDRI ELDON, MUSICIAN

I really don't know.

I spent most of this year slavishly devoted to promoting my shitty rock band SLUGS, and was therefore largely ignorant of events occurring around me. When I wasn't groping for the slimy, diseased cock of public recognition or being drowned in a sweaty orgy of negative album reviews, I thought about how disgusting the price of beer is in this subarctic wasteland we call a country. 800 ISK – it's enough to make you want to vomit. It's shameful. It makes me ashamed to have been born here. It's inhuman.

Or maybe inhuman isn't the right word. You wouldn't charge a horse 800 ISK for a brew. And I don't think I'd feed the watered-down offal they serve at restaurants here to anything with a backbone, never mind a horse or a human being. I bought a beer for over 500 ISK for the first time ever last Saturday. It sucked. I felt guilty to pay for it, and sick after drinking it, in more ways than one.

I think beer prices will go up in 2009. It's inevitable. It's a shame that only a select few bars are giving us the opportunity to buy beer at a reduced price at certain times. In foreign lands, they refer to said times as "happy hour". Note how the adjective "happy" is employed to describe a positive effect on the psyche of those involved. For a depressed nation burdened with an inept government and five hours of sunlight a day, "happy hour" would be a cause to celebrate.

Plus, we'd drink less. If beer cost less at a certain time every week, we wouldn't be drowning our sorrows in it constantly. We'd wait until that time, and let loose. Or maybe I'm just speaking for myself here. I for one don't buy beer downtown anymore. It's a waste of time, money, dignity, body heat and dry clothes. The only fun to be had there is either immoral, inappropriate or illegal. Belly's was the last hope for a dying nightlife, and the bastards closed it. I don't know who closed it or why, but for some reason it's closed. Someone should find out why. Someone well-informed. Maybe a journalist or something. I don't know.

I really don't know.

DR. GUNNI, MUSICIAN, JOURNALIST

2008: For months we had the Prime Minister trying to ignore a depression creeping in. Then suddenly he said GOD BLESS THE ICELANDIC NATION in a dramatic TV appearance. Everybody started to talk about NEW ICELAND which would be much better than the old one. Equality and fairness would rule in the new one, not just "the richest win" situation we have had.

2009: We will either have NEW ICELAND or the old shit. We will probably have elections and as usual there will probably be no one to vote for, just crap. So we'll end up having the old Iceland as usual. And a lot of people will move out the country.

SGIGGI PÖNK, MUSICIAN, ACTIVIST, NURSE

What we had: I quote a friend who said "With full respect for those of us who are struggling with money, this was the best thing that could have happened to Icelandic society." Just imagine the disaster if this credit-blob (remember the film *The Blob*?) would have lasted longer. Then there would be a whole generation of helpless and desperate puppets that regarded credit as something valuable. What we will see: Most people will be wandering the wasteland of Icelandic politics looking for democracy. Many radical groups will form, and people will organise themselves into collectives around many issues, both political and economical. Anarchists and other non-hierarchical radicals will form popular movements. Democracy will reform with leftist leanings, with strong opposition from right-wingers.

BRYNDÍS BJÖRGVINSDÓTTIR, EDITOR OF UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND'S STUDENTBLAÐIÐ

We had: Czech crystal, two-way-tickets, tanning stations, Dr. Phil – his wife and two sons. Concept-shopping, plexi-glass, passion fruit and ten not so different variations of apples from three very different continents, not to mention Apple. ALVINE, RIPA, FRÖTTO, ASKER, BEKVÂM, and new and improved BILLY, along with something hip 'n' cool from Japan, respectable from France and slave-made from China.

This year we had everything but justice.

What we can expect: Less apples and Apple, concept-shopping and FRÖTTOS. Less cheap slave-made things from poorer countries. We will have more one-way tickets though. And perhaps some very necessary and joyful changes – changes other civilized countries faced hundreds of years ago, when they defined the ideas behind democracy and decided to follow them. Although we will perhaps gain more functional democracy, I won't say we will see justice though. I mean, I think Icelanders will still be the same repressed and obedient numskulls they have always been, at least since the year 1200. What I won't expect to see is just what we've needed since medieval time: revolution.

EVA HAUKSDÓTTIR, WITCH, ACTIVIST

The year 2008 revealed that time has come for direct action in

Iceland. Locked doors will not stop activists from going where we intend to.

As for 2009, I do not believe "the shit will hit the fan in February". I feel the masses will wait endlessly for everyone else to boil over, and maintaining a proper resistance in Iceland will be left to around 250 people, as usual.

SNORRI ÁSMUNDSSON, ARTIST

2008 was a great year. When I watched the savage killings of the polar bears in June, I knew that it was finally time for the Icelandic nation to undergo a thorough re-evaluation of itself. Alas, we are a blind nation of consumers, so we do not notice such warnings. Hopefully, we can now connect to the spirit rather than matter and learn to read life. The past year was magnificent for us, for we saw and learned that we need to reconsider our values.

2009 will be the year of spiritual awakening for Iceland. The chances we now have are innumerable, and we shouldn't miss them. We need to surrender to our weaknesses and build an ideal society. We should clean away the filth, clean up the garbage and get rid of it. We need to see repentance from the guilty and we need to reconfigure our government. We need a brave and strong government, instead of the powerless gathering of bureaucrats we now have. Congratulations, Icelanders, and a happy new year.

KOLFINNA BALDVINSDÓTTIR, MEDIA PERSONALITY

Our Faroese cousins barely made it through a horrible recession a decade ago. Trapped in a net of corruption that permeated every aspect of their society, Eðvarð T. Jónsson describes the causes of their depression thusly in his book on the subject:

"Things went as they went because of deeply rooted flaws in their societal structure. Through misuse of wealth and power, people could control what they would in terms of law-making and execution, of banks and funds, of news and media discourse, and so on. This happened without any serious debate about the consequences, save for a precious few critical voices that were barely heard through the static of those who wished to preserve the status quo. The nomenclature utilized the public's apathy to have their way."

This is what we in Iceland had as well and still have, and those who didn't know it before the crisis, know it by now. But knowing is not enough. The silence is also criminal.

Cloaked in the deafening silence, the lack of knowledge, of understanding and of activism, is entrenched in the arrogance of power, of nepotism, corruption and self-interest – should I go on? We don't have much to expect. A deeply rooted fault in our societal structure calls for serious action.

I do not doubt that we will survive this, have never doubted it. Even though we will lose our homes, our jobs, our savings and our social welfare, sitting defenceless and helpless in the laps of people who do not listen – people who are lacking in trustworthiness and ability at home and abroad – is worse. We will not survive this, if our thirst for justice is not quenched.

If things will progress as they have thus far, we stand to lose more than we have to, and we will lose our most valuable possession first: the people. And they will leave if we don't have an election this year, the year that our very own depression will really start to show its real face. Elections that will not be "yet another elections" but our only tool to climb up from the pit we are sitting in. Then the work can begin.

"All these young millionaires were anarchists, of course: when a man possesses everything it is the supreme luxury for him to deny society: for in that way he can evade his responsibilities." –Romain Rolland, "Jean-Christophe: Revolt," p. 395

PORBJÖRG HELGA VIGFÚSDÓTTIR, CITY COUNCILLOR, INDEPENDENCE PARTY

"What we had"

We had an abundance of things and it made us lazy. We bought things that we ultimately did not afford. Democracy was on autopilot and politicians were too soft. We had media that told us numbers that were incomprehensible; if you were not in "útrás" you were not really doing anything cool. We lived fast and glamorous, a little like *The Bold and the Beautiful*. To meet the demands of society was fun for some but hard for most.

"What we can expect"

A loud demand for direct democracy and more active participation in decision making. Anger, sadness, tough times and some tears. But a healthy Iceland will emerge and we will find our roots, our strength and creativity. We will see new ideas; we will value our precious resources and cultural knowledge. We will need to think about things long term and hopefully the youngest generation will acknowledge that we are indeed a rich nation and will lead us into a new era.

ÓLÖF ARNALDS, MUSICIAN

What we had was a screamingly false upswing, with lots of insensible squandering – in many ways a fun and decadent time where everything was possible and money was never an issue. We are just beginning to comprehend the economic collapse and its consequences; so many things will be shittier and worse in around three months – and then just worse and worse for an unknown time after that. As far as the arts go, I am hoping for a more fertile and exciting environment, where expensive, macho, high production work methods make way for patient processes and more pandering. Everyone got a little high strung in this ocean of opportunities.

Hopefully, we will see city and state turn away from "events-based" cultural life and emphasis on conquering the world and start putting an emphasis on the foundations of cultural life, for instance by supporting artist workshops and studios.

GABRIÉLA FRÍÐRIKSDÓTTIR, ARTIST

"We are only broke on money."

KATRÍN JAKOBSDÓTTIR, MP, LEFT-GREENS

2008: The so-called Icelandic economic wonder crashed into a wall in 2008, leaving many wounded and hurt. The curtains of the financial life have dropped and now it seems that the Icelandic economic wonder was based mostly on belief. And that belief dwindled, and then the entire house of cards collapsed, as was to be expected. It was a year of great disappointment and anger – naturally, as the Icelandic public is left to pay an enormous bill for the financial sector at the same time as they are being told to accept lower wages, cutbacks in public welfare and education and dwindling employment opportunities. Hopefully, the anger will turn into a constructive force.

2009: The year 2009 will be hard for Icelanders. However, the main question is whether these difficulties will result in Icelanders changing their life values. Now, it is important that we settle our scores with The Old; with governmental responsibility and the responsibility of the business sector, come to terms with our faith in the economic wonder, endless GDP growth and inflation. Everything about the economic collapse needs to be investigated, cleaned out and put on the table. In the aftermath, we will have a chance to build a different society.

2008 Politics in 30 minutes

WHERE

Kaffi Hressó, right before Christmas

THE MOOD

Generally angry and contemplative

PHOTOS BY Julia Staples

PANEL



EGILL HELGASON

Egill Helgason has hosted Iceland's main political debate show (Silfur Egils, now showing on RÚV) for many years, and is often cited as the nation's top commentator on political and social issues.



HAUKUR MÁR HELGASON

Haukur Már Helgason is a philosopher and founding editor of web-based "communist newspaper" Nei. (www.this.is/nei), which he started in October. Since its inception, Nei has been growing in popularity and is thought to present a clear, concise view of the radical side of current debates.



PAWEŁ BARTOSZEK

Paweł Bartoszek is a mathematician and teacher at Reykjavík University. For the last decade, Paweł has been highly involved in Icelandic political debates and has written several articles and columns for respected right/libertarian leaning web site Deiglan.com. A native of Poland, Paweł has been an Icelander since 1988.

HAUKUR MÁR HELGASON: Looking back, it's interesting to note that if you look through all the front-pages of Fréttablaðið [Iceland's "free" newspaper], they never tell the main story there. There was never a day where it said: "Glitnir nationalised!" or "Landsbankinn bankrupt!" or "Kaupþing falls!" They rather featured interpretations of who did what and why – always a postscript or comments, fitted to bend and shape our perception of the news – rather than the actual story. The way Icelandic media works, it never tells "the story". We could look at the covers of all of it over the past year and not see a single straight story."

EGILL HELGASON: We are now faced with the fact that the year 2008 will be perceived as a turning point in Icelandic history; it might even prove to have been one in world history, we still cannot tell if we now face the biggest world depression since 1929. If this turns out to be the case, it is likely true what they say, that Iceland served as a canary in the coal mine. We are witnessing the collapse of a lot of things we believed to be good and true, and at the same time the end of a certain prevalent ideology in Icelandic society.

PAWEŁ BARTOSZEK: Are you referring to neo-libertarianism? I definitely want that to be over, so we can go back to libertarianism.

EH: I am saying that the ideology of the Independence Party, as it has been run for past decades, is over for now. All the party credo – privatisation of state assets and banks, opposition to the EU – all of it is gone. And now we are seeing the privatised-nationalised banks being returned to their former owners, the ones that just lost them, by way of even more trickery. This is going to leave a gaping wound on Icelandic society – we are entering a society of bitterness, frustration and anger, a society of hatred that's going to last for years, if not decades.

HMH: The anger running through Iceland today is a righteous one. Egill wasn't a revolutionary before the collapse...

EH: I am not a revolutionary now, but we are going through a revolution. Not one where people throw around Molotov-cocktails, it is rather a revolution in people's minds where everything that was once taken for granted is being questioned. If that isn't a revolutionary state, I don't know what is. At this point, it is important for people that justice is served and will prevail – nothing is worse than a failed, frustrated revolution...

PB: I would like to know what you are referring to in concrete terms, what sort of thought-revolution are we going through or in the need to go through?

EH: We cannot see the same parties owning society again. That is pertinent. We need to see a revolution in our party system, a revolution in our system of governance, a fair distribution of the wealth. At this time I could give a shit about the EU or whatever it is the Alliance Party is currently focused on. They are only avoiding talking about the troubles that are right in front of our noses right now. The EU is a straw man. Björgólfur Thor [Björgólfsson, businessman] proclaimed last April that he was waiting for Iceland to go on fire sale, these people are much smarter at business than the rest of us and it just might happen that they take everything from us at the drop of a hat, like they did in Russia.

It could happen over Christmas, while we decorate our trees.

HMH: What we have now is a lot of people realising that the Independence Party was never working in their interest, like the rest of the Icelandic party system; it is the result of an inbred, nepotistic community, a corrupt power regime that has prevailed in Iceland since we were under the Danes. This was never a real democracy. The half of the nation that voted for the party or subscribed to its credo thought they were part of the deal, but they weren't. The truck driver, the small grocer, those now face being left behind when the cut happened. There's maybe not a communist revolution in the works, but there is a middle class out there that is getting ready to make itself heard.

PB: I must refute that Iceland was never a democratic state. We must realise the difference between states that have it really bad in every way and what has happened here, which is basically that the public is paying for that a lot of people who bought a lot of things they couldn't afford. Let us not forget that capitalism has brought wealth, prosperity and democracy to a lot of nations that were previously ruled by iron fists. Politicians now show up and start distributing stuff, lowering overdraft interest by law – it's easy to fall back into the kind of state where it's impractical to save money. We can always print money to calm the public, and I have reason to be concerned about this, there are a lot of signs that this is about to happen. A lot of right-wingers won't behave in a very right-wing way in the coming seasons, not that they've been doing a good job of it thus far.

EH: These aren't just investment groups, insurance companies and airlines that are on the line right now. It isn't "abstract money" we're talking about. These people have been conning their way into the energy companies, for instance. All of our society's resources and valuables are at stake now, everything past generations have built up. As for what's going to happen in 2009, the situation will be grim. I understand the state treasury is empty, and we can foresee an emergency when state bonds reach their due date. The banks have been dried up. There is no one to tell us how bad the situation is, the government certainly won't. And these cutbacks the government is starting to make now, they are only a small percentage of what's to come.

HMH: I was reading through Davíð [Oddsson] and Árni [Mathiesen]'s request to the IMF. It says they plan to buffer the effects over the first year, to create a consensus. So the full shock won't hit us all at once. To make people less doubtful, to lessen opposition to their plans. It's a clever strategy.

PB: I am not as worried as you are. The coming times will prove bountiful for a certain type of person, those that didn't go on a spending spree during the inflation period. They have lots of money; the interest rate is high...

HMH: I certainly didn't go on a spending spree, and I don't have anything to show for it.

EH: I have a decent salary, but it has still decreased in value by 40 percent.

PB: It may have decreased in value, but now you can buy real estate for a lot less than before. I fail to understand why we should bail out everyone that

made bad decisions during the inflation period. There were lots of people that behaved in an insensible manner, and we are paying for it now.

- Do you believe that any of our 63 MPs could have prevented what happened? Could things have gone differently under different control? And do you see any of them successfully steering us back to safety?

EH: The conditions for the downfall were created in an unholy alliance of politics and business; politicians could see that the businessmen had all but taken over and were considered society's big shots. And they didn't want to be left behind. This is why we keep hearing more and more stories of politicians that were involved in shady deals on the stock market. They admired the businessmen and thus stood by gaping as they went about their business, a whole lot of "prosperity politicians" satisfied by going through the motions of empty "prosperity politics". Now it is hard to tell what will happen to these parties – currently empty shells – it depends on when we vote, whether it's in April or September or in 2011. Now we might have a chance for people to enter these parties and take them over, but I am not sure that will work. Their current elites probably aren't much interested in new people. New parties could of course be founded, but they are always at the risk of becoming terribly populist organisations. We see from experience that new parties also have the tendency to attract small, vocal groups that divert the energy. The anti-abortion alliance people are always the first to show up.

PB: It is also very financially difficult. The current system only works in your favour if you've had a party for forty years, one that's built a steady foundation and owns real estate and the like. Support for fledgling parties is very limited and difficult to attain.

HMH: Politicians have lost all connection to the public, and the public has lost all belief that they can participate in politics. A lot of people resigned from the Alliance Party when they realised it was different from the parties it was built of; that the common member wasn't expected to participate in forming the party politics, only needed as props for their yearly national conventions. I think people don't know or understand how to participate in politics from the ground up these days, and speaking for myself, I am not sure I am interested in participating in them myself.

EH: But isn't it the duty of good citizens to do something, in times like these?

PB: I don't know of any state on Earth where the general public is genuinely pleased with the politicians representing them. They might like their local government, or their state's representative, but overall politicians seem to be a class that's easily corrupted. They aren't likeable types, either. At this time, I can't think of anything a politician could do to gain popularity, save for resigning.

-What about other events of the year? Like Reykjavík City politics. Do you care to comment on them at all?

EH: City politics? At this time? We might as well talk about the polar bear fiasco. 🐻

Abandon our faith in unfettered capitalism and uphold social and green values. I hope that will be the case in 2009.

HANNES HÓLMSTEINN GISSURARSON, POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

What we had, was one of the most affluent economies (5th richest in terms of GDP per capita) and best societies (1st in living standards, according to the UN development index) in the world. This was destroyed by a combination of three external factors working almost simultaneously: a severe international financial crisis, a structural error in the EEA which did not provide for adequate central bank services across borders and the brutal and savage onslaught of the British authorities on the Icelandic banks in the beginning of October.

What we can expect in 2009 is a painful process of adjusting to new and lower living standards for a while (however not, much lower than they were on the average about 10 years ago), and then there is hope: Iceland has valuable natural resources, tolerably well managed, and an industrious and knowledgeable workforce. The present depression is like the Icelandic winter: it will eventually go away, although at times it does not look like it.

JAKOB FRÍMANN MAGNÚSSON, MUSICIAN

Rocking '08 & Rolling '09

Talk about ROCK and ROLL. In 2008 we were confidently ROCKING like there was no tomorrow. Then suddenly: A Big Bang in the fall (an appropriately named season this year)

Now we're most certainly ROLLING... seemingly somewhat downhill.

In Pop Music terms this may not necessarily spell an entirely bad thing: to be "like a Rolling Stone" from the Top of the World, rolling towards the Humber Walks of Life.

Let's remind ourselves where it all started a century ago: In the Southern regions of the US, where African slaves were sulking over their grim fate having been viciously moved from the freedom and comfort of their natural environment, to work day and night for someone else's advancement and benefit. Their misery blues is what most modern pop music stems from.

For the cotton clad luxury nation of Icelanders, 2009 may prove to be somewhat of an uncomfortable and rocky ride.

But on a brighter note: We've adapted to various global RHYTHMS through the years. Now we've also developed the blueprint for a real-life, home-grown BLUES. Couldn't this be the start of something great?

RÓBERT H. HARALDSSON, PHILOSOPHY PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

"What we had – What we can expect"

I firmly believe that we have formed a good society in Iceland over the past decades. If you have a hard time believing this now, take a good look at our schools, hospitals, courts, kindergartens, swimming pools, roads, opportunities for young people, universities, high-tech industries, etc., etc. It is hard for some of us to listen to how people talk about Iceland these days. There were, however, clear signs that we Icelanders had taken the wrong turn recently. The Iceland I grew up in was poorer but had a lot of time for family, literature, thought and reflection. The rich country I lived in for the past ten years had little time to spare for such things. We were beginning to talk as if we could not afford to think and reflect, to live a spiritual life. "If we take care of the money, the rest will take care of itself," seems to have become our slogan. Two years ago I sadly listened to a theologian telling me gleefully that greed was always good for you. Although we Icelanders have learned that we need to take better care of our money we have also learned, or should have learned, that this slogan is false, dangerous and silly. Our faith in mammon has been shattered. I hope that all the leading experts, domestic and foreign, speaking to us these days will not be able to rekindle our unquestioning faith in this deity.

I firmly believe that we can continue to have a very good society here in Iceland. It is most important that we accept the simple and to some a rather unappealing idea of the rule of law. This is not an exciting rallying or battle cry but good ideas rarely are. Respect for the law is what we base our society on; it is on this basis alone that we can hope for a just and a fair society. But we also need to change our way of thinking and how we relate to things. In any event, I hope that we will. A lot of Icelanders maintain that a small number of people got us into the problems we are facing. I disagree if this means blaming my materialism, or my neighbour's materialism, on others. We have consumed too much, enjoyed too little. Our culture has become wasteful, inconsiderate and self-deceived. We Icelanders have excellent treatment centres for alcoholism. It is unfortunate that we cannot send our culture to a rehab centre; to teach it to be honest and forthright about its wastefulness, its restlessness, its lack of spirit, and its self-deceptions. But who knows, maybe this depression will turn out to be our rehab.

STEFÁN PÁLSSON, HISTORIAN, ACTIVIST

2008:

I never wanted to kill / I am not naturally evil / Such things I do / Just to make myself / More attractive to you / Have I failed?

Morrissey – The Last of the Famous International Playboys

2009:

"How I Dearly Wish I Was Not Here" / In the seaside town ...that they forgot to bomb / Come, Come, Come – nuclear bomb

Morrissey – Every day is like Sunday

PORVALDUR GYLFASSON, ECONOMICS PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

2008 – What We Had

In 2008, we had more of the same: an insufficient awareness among bankers, businessmen, and politicians that things had gone wrong. One simple thing should have opened their eyes – the impression from official statistics that, almost overnight, Icelanders had by 2007 become fifty percent richer than North Americans as measured by national income per person. This was clearly not the case, however: it was an illusion stemming from an overvaluation of the króna which, accordingly, was bound to depreciate regardless of the dire straits of world financial markets. The Icelandic crash was an accident waiting to happen.

It did not help that much of the business elite and the banks danced in lockstep as witnessed by the glowing reports put out by the Chamber of Commerce in 2006 and 2008 claiming that everything was fine, including the banks. Many politicians towed the line, partly, perhaps, motivated by the need not to be perceived as publicly undermining the banks. Grave mistakes were made before, during, and after the onset of the crisis, not least by the Central Bank. It is essential to have an impartial study of what went wrong. The best way to accomplish that is to have an independent international Commission of Enquiry study all aspects of the breakdown and deliver a report to the Icelandic people as soon as possible.

2009 – What We Can Expect

In 2009, we will see further change. At first, the crisis will

2008 Music in 18 minutes

WHERE

Kaffi Hressó, day before Christmas

THE MOOD

Glowing

PHOTOS BY Jói Kjartans

PANEL



ANNA HILDUR HILDIBRANDSDÓTTIR
Anna Hildur Hildibrandsdóttir is managing director of the Iceland Music Export office, IMX, founded in 2006. On a shoestring budget, Hildibrandsdóttir has managed to create a vibrant and effective export agency that is an increasingly positive force in the promotion of Icelandic music abroad.



ELDAR ÁSTÞÓRSSON
Eldar Ástþórsson has much experience in promoting Icelandic music. As manager of Iceland Airwaves in the mid 00's, Ástþórsson put together some of the fantastic line-ups that gained the festival its rock-solid reputation as a music lover's haven. Now he manages the Kraumur fund that supports fledgling musicians, and is part of exciting start-up Gogoyoko's team, a company that plans to revolutionize the way music is sold on-line.



ARNAR EGGERT THORODDSEN
Arnar Eggert Thoroddsen is an authority on Icelandic music. He is a veteran music scribe for local newspaper Morgunblaðið, where he has published many learned essays on the subject of Icelandic music and its various scenes, as well as reporting on shows by local bands and reviewing albums.

Making a top ten list for the year would be very hard, Sin Fang Bous, Emiliana Torrini, Lay Low, all the others... it wouldn't fit!

Eldar Ástþórsson

ARNAR EGGERT THORODDSEN: It's been a rather uneventful year for Icelandic music, or at least it hasn't been a year for big phenomena like when Icelandic hip hop topped the charts in 2002, *Mugison* hit it big in 2004 or *Sprengjuhöllin* last year. The big news and common denominator for this year is probably the *Páll Óskar* box set. 2008 has been a year of chillin', and I don't mean that as a bad thing. There are lots of things happening, but there are fewer peaks on the landscape. It's more even. Icelandic hip-hop is full of activity right now, even though no one seems to notice, not to mention the hardcore and metal scenes. A lot of great records are being put out, but there hasn't been a standout one.

ANNA HILDUR HILDIBRANDSDÓTTIR: From my point of view, this has been a great year for Icelandic music. I live in the UK and get to follow the bands that have an active and organised international touring regime going. I was very pleasantly surprised by *Celestine*; they managed to book a two-week tour and a major festival appearance before I even caught a whiff of them. The younger breed of musicians seem more active and able in promoting themselves abroad, organising longer and more effective tours than we have seen before.

And it has also been a pleasure to watch the institution that is *Sigur Rós* operate. This year they took four Icelandic bands with them on 2-3 week tours, and it has been very exciting to observe the results. The biggest news this year for me, however, was probably *Ólafur Arnalds* and his career. His concert at the Barbican in June was definitely one of my highlights for the year. To witness this self-managed 21 year old getting discovered and scoring a record deal after making an intro for a German metal album, then eighteen months later packing the Barbican. I've never observed as speedy a progress as with *Ólafur*; it is a pleasure to see such a focused young man promote himself. And there are plenty more albums released in 2007 that have been making splashes this year. The possibilities seem limitless.

ELDAR ÁSTÞÓRSSON: I don't know if I can vouch for this being an uneventful year. I think we'll wind up seeing a lot of the scenes, bands and musicians that have been brewing and coming out in 2008

harvesting in 2009 and beyond. And I must concur with Anna; you had to be very observant to notice all the musicians' success abroad. The new breed of artists seems to take a different route, where they take longer, more extensive touring over playing a couple of shows in London and sending out a press release. They are doing things themselves and approaching the global industry from a different angle than those that came before them. Like *Celestine*, that just went for it – a great band that believed in themselves, booked a tour and released two albums this year. They don't wait for success or recognition; it's like they've caught on to the fact that being a successful musician is hard work.

AHH: This is a point, the bands have also been more active locally. Like the Kraumur and Rás 2 tours, artists seem to be realising that they need to get out there and play their music for an audience that builds up slowly. A lot of these bands, like *Mugison* and *Sign*, are playing 50–100 gigs annually.

AET: This is the new mentality, as indicated by *Celestine* and *Ólafur Arnalds*. Fifteen years ago, you had to have a hit with your first song or else... now people are in it for the long haul. Two great examples are *Jóhann Jóhannsson* and *Gusgus*. Jóhann steadily works his career, and *Gusgus* have built a great base throughout the years that they utilise.

AHH: People are realising that this is a marathon. *Mugison* has been at it since 2004, *Sign* have been doing it for years and are getting very organised at touring over and over. *Helgi Jónsson* is another example.

EÁ: And as we said, a lot of this great activity is happening internationally. Like the *Borko/Seabear* tour this fall...

AHH: *Seabear* have sold something around 20,000 records through Morr Music: a great success and Sindri is a great musician.

EÁ: It's not easy to spot from over here. *Seabear* released a great record in 2007 and have a whole lot going on for them, but they don't play a lot of local shows...

AHH: I think this evolution is great news for Icelandic music in general. Bands get better from touring, and those who get the opportunity to play dozens of shows each year undergo a certain experience that definitely shows in the output that follows. *Páll*

Óskar, for instance, is a great example of a musician who has been touring and promoting endlessly, always at it, always playing. A great role model, as are *Bubbi* and *KK* and others.

EÁ: Another interesting thing is that the independent and DIY artists seem more adept at promoting themselves over here. They have been doing great things these past few months with record sales; bands like *FM Belfast*, *Mugison* are outselling the ones that opt for major release and distribution deals. And there are a lot of great records being released every week. Making a top ten list for the year would be very hard, *Sin Fang Bous*, *Emiliana Torrini*, *Lay Low*, all the others... it wouldn't fit!

AET: Before naming my top three records of the year, I'd like to mention how Kimi Records and its manager, Baldvin Esra, have been doing an admirable and great job this year. Baldvin runs the label from Akureyri and has released a lot of really strong records, just plain good music, that has been promoted in a refreshing way and with a passion you don't often see in the music industry. But to name just three records, I want to mention *Celestine's* At the Borders of Arcadia, truly comparable with every great extreme metal band I've heard thus far. *Sin Fang Bous* is the greatest album I've heard this year and *Emiliana Torrini* is doing some of her best work on her new album, a great clash of accessibility and experimentation. Dark and catchy.

AHH: If we're naming three albums, I'd like to mention *Celestine* as a big and pleasant surprise. *Dísa* released a great album that shows great promise for the young artist. *Emiliana* was great, of course. And then I have a personal favourite, the album *Villi Valli* released this year, produced by his grandson Viddi [of Trabant fame]. It was such a beautiful little project, from the design to the participating musicians. It's somehow gorgeously Icelandic to bridge the generation gap this way. And of course there is the *Mógil* album, which I loved. I guess that makes more than three? 🍀

deepen, with more firms closing down, more workers losing their jobs, and possibly political turmoil. Then, we will before the year is out, if all goes according to plan, begin to see the rudiments of a reversal and ultimate recovery as a result of the government's economic program already in place with IMF support. The program is fine as far as it goes, and cannot be reasonably criticized on the same grounds as IMF-supported programs in Asia were criticized a decade ago. The program will hurt, true, but that is not the IMF's fault. It is imperative for the government – the current one if it continues to refuse to step aside or any new government that would take its place – to stay the course charted by the IMF-supported program, to embrace the program as its own because that is what it is, and to explain it to the public rather than give the impression that it would have preferred to do something completely different. The Central Bank's sullen mood is particularly unhelpful, and poses a risk to the government's ability to fulfil its part of the agreement with the IMF.

If the program is successfully completed, with appropriate adjustments along the way if necessary, the recovery at the end of the road can be quite swift and robust. For this to occur, the government needs to implement growth-friendly reforms that go beyond the program and find ways to restore shaken confidence at home and abroad. An application for EU and EMU membership would help signal that Iceland does not want to be viewed as a free rider, let alone an international outlaw. Less hubris, more humility would also help. The financial crisis that engulfed Finland, Norway, and Sweden almost 20 years ago was not as grave as the one confronting Iceland now, but it is still worth recalling that even without help from the IMF, Iceland's Nordic neighbours emerged from their crises stronger than ever. Iceland can do the same.

DAVIÐ ÞÓR JÓNSSON, TRANSLATOR, WRITER, THEOLOGY STUDENT, ETC.
My Dysfunctional People

You cannot answer the question "What happened in 2008?" in any brief terms. That question will not only be the subject of historians for untold years, but also police and other investigative authorities. Among what happened were cuts in the health sector, mental help for children outside of Reykjavík was eliminated and care for the elderly was downgraded.

It is a lot easier to answer the question: "What to expect?" I know this nation well enough, and have been a part of it long enough, to be able to foretell exactly what to expect. In one word. Nothing.

Countless times, the nation's ruling class has offended its people by pure, unbridled corruption. The nation has always responded with a hearty dose of indignation and displayed a righteous anger that's completely forgotten about in two weeks time.

If my friend grew ludicrously wealthy without sending a penny my way, I would be happy for him. If he then went bankrupt and it became apparent that he'd put my name as collateral for all of his shady business dealings, and that it was my responsibility to pay his creditors back, then I would no longer have a taste for his friendship. That our government would treat us exactly this way doesn't seem to warrant even an apology. We thought the banks had been privatized. That was a misunderstanding. Their profits were privatized; their losses were still our responsibility.

We can already see signs of how this nation can be saved from facing that it has been taken advantage of, abused and defiled by the very people that were supposed to be looking out for it. "No one could foresee this," they say. That is a lie. Plenty of people gave warning, but the government called them out for treason. "We all partook in the party", they say. That is also a lie. The sick, disadvantaged children whose services have now been cut took no part. "We shouldn't personify the problem," they say. That is a lie. Persons got us into this mess, and not one of them has accepted responsibility. Not a single individual has resigned from his position, no one has been let go, and nobody has apologized for anything or so much as admitted a mistake.

If anything similar had happened in a civilized country, their entire government would have resigned immediately. If this had happened in Japan, only a mass hara-kiri would have been enough for those in power to regain their dignity. Vikings, however, do not know how to commit hara-kiri. For that, you have to know how to feel shame.

BERGUR EBBI BENEDIKTSSON, MUSICIAN

2008, the year that every single Icelander became an armchair economist. And maybe for a reason, since the real economists failed us. Even people who had thought of nothing but hamburgers and TV's popular "Friends" for a decade started to discuss GDP's and foreign debt. 2008 was the year that reminded us that we should not treat news as entertainment.

The first eight months of the year were a typical example of news as entertainment. The "mad" doctor in City Hall and the furious Elmer-Fudd-like truck drivers were just as entertaining as the Gilmore Girls or Dexter. The last months were just the opposite, when every single news broadcast revealed something terrible and important. It was like a non-stop intervention for an alcoholic nation.

History books will hold 2009 as a great year. The year will see the publication of great literature and music. The people of Iceland will have to cut a little bit down on buying premade arugula salads, but chances are they will touch it out. Furthermore Iceland will be an important destination for foreign artists who will seek inspiration in the gothic-like half-finished structures of 101 Skuggahverfi and comfort in the relatively low price of rent and beer. A wise man might have said that at the very moment that reasons for pessimism have completely blocked out all hope is the time to be optimistic. History will prove that to be accurate.

HALLDÓR ARNAR ÚLFARSSON, ARTIST

The Pissoir of Absolution

I came to Iceland the day after the emergency laws were put in effect in October, and things pretty much went downhill from there. During the week I was at home, people stopped joking about the "depression", and started uttering the word seriously. On the third day, my father forbid me to wish people a "merry depression" when leaving stores and such – it just wasn't funny anymore! But it's hard to turn off your sense of humour in such circumstances, so the next joke with friends and family was imagining a monument to commemorate the beginning of the end of capitalism. People picked it up and among the suggestions for a fitting monument were several variations of Davíð Oddsson busts, an oversized tombstone in downtown Reykjavík inscribed "Capitalism, RIP, 2008" and a variety of ideas likening the Icelandic Central Bank to Ground Zero. In hindsight, when we've become the poster-child for the global economic crisis, some kind of monument in Iceland may not be a bad idea. The following image came to me as a continuation of the jokes and thoughts thrown back and forth during that first week.

There's an urban legend about the practice of Bukkake as an abolished Japanese tradition of social punishment for women who dishonour themselves in one way or another. The

2008 Tourism and Travel in 20 minutes

WHERE

Kaffi Hressó, December 22

THE MOOD

Rather cheerful

PHOTOS BY Jói Kjartans

PANEL



HALLDÓRA MOGENSEN

Halldóra Mogensen directs the Icelandic Travel Market tourist information centre in downtown Reykjavík. At her station, she doles out expert advice to tourists and visitors to Iceland on how to best conduct their stay for an optimally satisfying experience.



PÁLL ÁSGEIR ÁSGEIRSSON

Páll Ásgeir Ásgeirsson is a journalist and respected travel writer. He has written many popular guidebooks on travel in Iceland, often featuring an emphasis on "the roads less travelled".



SVANHILDUR KONRÁÐSDÓTTIR

Svanhildur Konráðsdóttir is director of cultural affairs and tourism for the city of Reykjavík and chairman of the Icelandic Tourist Board. She has been active in promoting tourism in Iceland for several years and has overseen a plethora of successful projects to that end.

This is a beautiful country and the nature is magnificent, but it would have been nice to meet some locals...

Páll Ásgeir Ásgeirsson

PÁLL ÁSGEIR ÁSGEIRSSON [Continuing an unrecorded discussion about the travel books he's written, all of which are in Icelandic]: The fact of the matter is that the only guidebook on Iceland that is actually written by an Icelander is the road reference guide. You can find dozens or hundreds of foreign language books about Iceland, but none of them are written locally. The locals have their own books, in Icelandic, that more often than not feature vastly different information than the ones written by visitors.

SVANHILDUR KONRÁÐSDÓTTIR: This is definitely true. Local-made magazine's and web sites pass on some good information, but unfortunately many of the international guidebooks on Iceland just promote the same clichés, and maintain them by constant repetition.

HALLDÓRA MOGENSEN: I have found this to be a problem when directing people around. There seems to be a lack of books and brochures about, say, specific walking routes that people can travel on their own over the summer. I get a lot of backpackers over the summer that just want to take a bus somewhere and wander off on walks without a guide, we can't really refer them to anything.

PÁÁ: They are often so generally written, as they want to tell you "everything about Iceland" in a few pages, so they don't get into necessary specifics. Lonely Planet covers all of Iceland in 2250 pages, give or take. In any case, the majority of the tourists we get are lured here by nature.

SK: Yes, nature, but many of them also wish to have cultural or entertainment based experiences. These are the three factors that people seek out here, again and again. And it is true that more informational materials are being published lately, to serve that crowd, but I still feel we need a better selection of directions about a lot of the hidden – or not so obvious – parts of the city and the country. Reykjavík isn't confined to Laugavegur and Austurstræti, for instance. There is a lot more to experience here.

PÁÁ: The Reykjavík Ghost Walk is a good one... you know, there is an idea out there, just waiting for some entrepreneur to execute it: "The prosperity tour of Reykjavík", a sort of little shop of horrors where people see and learn about the major players in the financial collapse. I'd buy that if I were a tourist here.

HM: A lot of Brits lately at the information centre saying they came here by chance, they stumbled

upon Reykjavík when they were looking for a cheap place to travel to.

SK: Most of the people that visit the Reykjavík Information Centre say that they've always wanted to visit but could never afford to until now. But I think Iceland becoming a mass tourist spur of the moment destination is still thankfully a far cry away.

PÁÁ: They say one of the positive effects of the collapse is that Iceland will be more affordable for tourists, due to a "better" exchange rate. But this is a fallacy, as this is a temporary condition, and our tourist markets are also being hurt by recession. There is nothing in these people's immediate futures that suggests they will afford taking trips abroad over us.

SK: The outlook for global tourism is rather bleak. The tourism industry has been growing for years, and for the first time in a long time they are now projecting a downturn. All over, nations and cities are reacting to these forecasts by increasing their marketing, building infrastructure and making themselves more attractive as destinations. It is a misconception that the Icelandic tourism industry can sit back and enjoy an influx of wealthy travelers.

PÁÁ: I believe one of the effects of the global recession will be that down-to-earth travel will once more become fashionable. Lonely Planet made that mode of travel in back in the day; they were originally called "On a shoestring". But the publisher is now an institution in itself and is an overtly large force in today's tourism. Developing countries are ripe with "Lonely Planet recommends" stickers, and everyone is once more going to the same places. At the same time, the group that doesn't wish to use guides is growing. People all over the world are looking for a personal experience on their travels; they want an authentic experience that's closer to the grassroots than traditional tourism will ever be. The buses are being depopulated, while hitchhiking is becoming more popular.

Most of the foreigners I meet while travelling Iceland during summer, on mountaintops, say the same thing: "this is a beautiful country and the nature is magnificent, but it would have been nice to meet some locals." I think a lot of people leave here feeling they never got to know Icelanders. In the rare occasion that I am able to bring visitors to someone's farm or home, they are unbelievably grateful.

SK: This is a huge growth industry. People are

turning on to local things, to authentic grassroots things. Not a showcase, but the real thing. To meet the farmer, dine his produce at his table or meet the artist in his or her studio.

HM: Still, almost every tourist we meet at the information centre has three objectives: Gullfoss, Geysir and the Blue Lagoon – that's it. And then they ask us what more there is to do. Most of the people we meet don't have a clue on what they want to do.

SK: The big issue in Icelandic tourism and travel at the moment is quality control. Increasing the quality of our locations and services, and preserving what's already there. We may need to control the number of people visiting certain attractions, for them to maintain their attractiveness and unspoiled reputation. A steady stream of people will inevitably affect these attractions; we might see our most popular destinations lose their charm if we don't show foresight and care. We also need to develop new attractions.

HM: And that's what Iceland is supposed to be about. Wilderness. Where you're one with nature, alone with it. With twelve buses a day and six jeeps, the experience is definitely less private.

PÁÁ: Maintaining these destinations with a proper care should definitely be a priority for those responsible. We have almost reached the limits of what the land can take.

SK: We need to keep this in mind, all of us involved with tourism and travel in Iceland, even the tourists themselves. However, I believe the fastest growing attraction in Icelandic tourism right now is based on our culinary and cultural life. Music, food and culture play an increased role in tourism here; people visit Reykjavík for concerts, for the latest design, for Yoko Ono's Imagine Peace Tower, to dine at our best restaurants. We measured Iceland Airwaves three years ago and learned that even though its audience is for the most part young and low on disposable income, they still contributed 300 million ISK plus change directly to the downtown economy. Even though our economy might be in a dramatic downturn, our cultural life is extremely healthy and attracting more attention, and thus visitors, by the month. This is why we need to put an emphasis on finishing the concert and convention hall. 🐱

legend goes that a woman was put to her knees in public and subjected to the collective ejaculum of the male population in her environment. This bodily-fluid based humiliation was, according to the legend, supposed to work as an ultimate social deterrent to dishonourable acts.

I propose a urinal! A relief in bronze depicting a grotesque collage of the faces of the guiltiest idiots – mouths gaping, idiotic grins, etc. An on-line poll could determine exactly who gets the honour of being included. This could be a circular structure, maybe two meters in diameter, encircled by a low wall and placed somewhere near the downtown. About ten men (and brave women) could, at any given time, urinate on the countenance of those that fucked us.

Installing this artwork/urinal would accomplish three things:

Prevention: be honest or we will piss in your face so long as Iceland is an inhabited island.

A form of absolution for the offending parties: as anyone can use it to vent their frustration as often as they want this could quite possibly save some of the "útrásarvíkingar" from being killed out of pent-up collective anger.

And public cleanliness: no one would ever piss in Reykjavík's downtown back-alleys ever again.

EIRÍKUR ÖRN NORÐDAHL, POET, WRITER

Everything about 2008 is going to sound like bankruptcy from now on – and right now it's the only relevant thing to have happened. We only had a fourth left of the year when the economy turned bleedingly diarrheic, after years of bad dietary choices, and now we're permanently screwed. Yet it's only three months of the year. The crisis takes turns filling me with hope and hopelessness – this situation brings an opportunity for change, and yet while there is obviously a common longing among the people for change to take place, the politicians supposedly representing those people don't seem willing to perform any changes – or step down and let others do the changing.

2009 starts with a cold war between the people and the institutions we've built in the last 200 years. Nearly all of Iceland's societal infrastructure has proved to be untrustworthy and riddled with corruption and incompetency. The media has no credibility – and has to rebuild trust, but seems incapable of the task. Government has turned autocratic. The legal institutions – police and courts – have failed to serve the people, favouring the rich and the politically mighty. The people themselves are still dizzy, and nobody knows what will happen next (though there are many theories, and some will undoubtedly be "right").

Our world was built by the people, our parents and grandparents, built on the toil of generations: hospitals, banks, fisheries, social service, education, and a single self-serving generation of liberalist assholes has turned it into a juggernaut designed to ruin us and enrich them – no matter how we turn – and which is a pretty bleak outlook, but it also means there's a window for throwing out the old and building something new; there's an opportunity to learn. But it's only an opportunity.

BEN FROST, MUSICIAN

Iceland, I am perpetually amazed by your apathy. I don't blame your government for this mess – the pigs who did this are YOUR pigs and they have been allowed to do it for years, by you. As I said in this very magazine earlier this year, before everything went to hell... the best government is the one that FEARS its people... but this government has nothing to fear from you – you are all more interested in Christmas shopping than protesting. So you deserve everything you get. I trust that when you all wake up in January with a Visa bill for your RIDICULOUS Christmas consumerism but no longer a cushy bank job to back it up anymore, that in your fear and desperation you will finally grow a pair and actually do something.

I walked into Yggdrasil last week to buy some organic broccoli (call me old fashioned, but I like my fruit and vegetables to actually taste like fruit and vegetables) and was informed that there wasn't any, because our organic broccoli supply comes from the US and is now too expensive to import. At first shocked, and a little bit annoyed, I walked out into the snow and a grin came over my face as the girl behind the counter shouted to me that there is now someone in Grímsnes starting to grow it locally. That very day, I read that a new flea market started in Hafnarfjörður, where people were selling their old things instead of throwing them out. WELCOME TO REAL LIFE ICELAND. Necessity has always been the mother of invention and this is the glimmer of hope I hold for this country. 2009 – the year of desperate measures... You might just be OK.

ATLI GÍSLASON, MP, LEFT-GREENS

What we had: For Iceland, the 20th century was an era of constant progress in all fields, especially post-World War II. After the fall of the privatised banks in October, 2008, the EU, Britain and other European nations faced the Icelandic nation with the illegal claim of taking responsibility for the Icesave accounts and other accounts of the bankrupt private banks that we as a nation did not and do not have any duty to guarantee, whether by international law, EU ordinances or Icelandic law. The British terrorist action, dishied out by our NATO allies, against the Icelandic people, will be an eternal disgrace to them. The Icelandic nation and economy will never be able to pay 20-25% of the state's income for the next ten to fifteen years because of these forced negotiations.

What we can expect: If the EU, the British and other European nations are steadfast on their ultimatums for Icesave and other debts of the bankrupt private banks, treaties that are invalid according to international and Icelandic courts, and if the International Monetary Fund upholds its terms for economic help, we as a nation face an economic, social and cultural bankruptcy. That may never be. Enter a small nation's battle for independence.

AFTAKA.ORG, ACTIVIST GROUP

2008: After a peephole was made on the cloak of corruption, more and more people are ready and willing to stand up against corrupt cliques and fight for justice.

2009: Radical social change will no longer be confined to "the demand of the people"; it will be out to action by us, the people, both in Iceland as elsewhere on Earth. A necessary demolition and construction is just beginning: NO AUTHORITY – ONLY JUSTICE!

BJÖRN ÞORSTEINSSON, PHILOSOPHER

What we had: The year 2008 was historic, even if we should have seen it coming. The higher you fly, the harder you fall; what goes up must come down; and so forth. Marx pointed out 150 years ago that capitalism equals excess; and that excess inexorably leads to (regular) crises. What we had: the death of laissez-faire liberalism.

What we can expect: The year 2009 will be historic, and we already see it coming. The Icelandic nation has woken from its state of permanent numbness, its neoliberal dogmatic slumber, and its depoliticized paralysis. The wo/man in the street has finally (re)discovered what democracy means. What to

2008 Arts in 25 minutes

WHERE

Grapevine conference room, just before the New Year

THE MOOD

Somewhat strained

PHOTOS BY Jói Kjartans

PANEL



SHAUNA LAUREL JONES

Originally from the US, Shauna Laurel Jones has been living and working in Reykjavík since 2007. She holds a masters degree in art history from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and works independently as an art historian and writer, focusing on contemporary Icelandic art.



ANNA JÚLÍA FRIBJÖRNSDÓTTIR

Anna Júlía Friðbjörnsdóttir is a trained artist and founding editor and co-publisher of the lauded bi-annual, bi-lingual (English and Icelandic) arts magazine *Sjónauki*. She also works for Gallery 18.



SIGURÐUR MAGNÚS FINNSSON

Sigurður Magnús Finnsson is a man about town and has been a mainstay in the 101 Reykjavík arts and culture scene for over a decade. Sigurður is a founding member of the Rafskinnna DVD arts and culture magazine team, and also managed the *Útúrdúr* art book and artist bookshop.

SHAUNA LAUREL JONES: There are some big things on the horizon for 2009 that have been coming together this year: Aside from the major art history project – a five-volume comprehensive encyclopaedia of Icelandic art history due for publication next December – another anthology about fifty contemporary Icelandic artists, called *Icelandic Art Today*, is also coming out this spring. It's a collaborative effort by the Center for Icelandic Art and Listasafn Íslands. Neither of these types of work has been done before and both are much needed, but they've both also been stirring some controversy.

ANNA JÚLÍA FRIBJÖRNSDÓTTIR: There's been a lot of arguing and discussion about that in the art world here.

SLJ: For instance who's in it and who's not, and why. But I would generally say that this past year has seen a big increase in publication about Icelandic art in general, there was also *Project Iceland* by Charlie Strand...

AJF: The book on Guðrún Einarsdóttir, which is first in a series of books on contemporary artists, by the publisher Crymogeia is worth mentioning. It is a really professional and well-done publication. They are planning further instalments to the series, so that will be exciting to follow. Hopefully none of this increase in publication will get affected too badly by the economic troubles.

SIGURÐUR MAGNÚS FINNSSON: We at *Útúrdúr* are in the next year going to publish at least four or five titles. Everything we do is on such a minor grassroots scale that it can't really be affected by the situation.

SLJ: I see both the grassroots and more commercial publications as filling a gap that has needed filling for a long time. Icelandic art as a whole is in a period of adolescence, as some people say, a period of maturation and growth. More people here are realising that there is a need for arts writing and critical discourse on the arts, and more people abroad are recognising that there is something going on here that deserves attention. This is a progression that will continue regardless of the state of the economy.

SLJ: In terms of memorable exhibitions, I personally enjoyed *Art Against Architecture* at Listasafn Íslands. It featured works by Steina Vasulka, Elín Hansdóttir, Finnogi Pétursson and a couple of foreign artists. With Finnogi's piece as well as Elín's, there was a sort of formalistic simplicity and elegance. Finnogi placed a candle on a pedestal in the centre of a room, with four convex lenses on each side, and the lenses cast an upside-down image of the lit candle on the walls. It was very meditative, and there was also something subtly and personally spiritual about it. Elín made a labyrinth in one of the upstairs galleries, and once you went in you followed its long, angular path through this narrow corridor. The lighting was such that you couldn't always tell the walls from the passageways; it played tricks with your senses. There was a sort of simplicity of being there by yourself in this dim space, this kind of meditative, contemplative aspect. Maybe that was what I needed this year, some quiet.

SMF: My memory doesn't go far back, but I do remember seeing Hlynur Hallson's exhibit at Listasafn Reykjavíkur and really liking it. For some reason I hadn't heard about it, so I was surprised when I started seeing pieces of art in various places around town. Like Eggert Pétursson's piece on the

roof of 10-11 and Ragnar Kjartansson in the window of Hársaga. I was pleasantly surprised when I realised what was going on – that Hlynur had placed artwork from the Listasafn's collection in various shops and institutions around town, in exchange for their own items and decorations that he exhibited in Listasafn. He really played on this idea of "art for the masses", which can be very banal and obvious, but he managed to go behind you and surprise you a bit. So I liked that.

Another exhibition comes to mind, even if it's only on some stupid nationalistic level, the Icelandic show in the Augustine Gallery in Chelsea, New York, that featured a lot of really interesting works from contemporary Icelandic artists. The context of finding myself in this Chelsea gallery viewing the works of people I'd been watching for a very long time appealed to my stupid nationalistic instincts. But the pieces spoke for themselves, of course.

AJF: There was some fantastic work in that exhibition. I want to mention the Magnús Sigurðsson piece, a chamber of salt that was reminiscent of snow, with fans blowing it around. That was a really good one. Sólveig Aðalsteinssdóttir's show was also moving. The archival work being done at Nýlistasafnið is admirable and refreshing, especially since the project was inaugurated at the height of the prosperity-years. The shows they put on in conjunction have been very interesting as well. But probably the one I felt stood out for me this year was Egill Sæbjörnsson's private show at 18. It was somehow spot on. Another good thing this year is the "new" 101 Projects the old 101 Gallery now under curatorial direction. The shows there have been a good input into the local scene, for example, the last one by Mathilde ter Heijne.

SLJ: Rúrí's work at Hafnarhúsið is also worthy of mention. She was the honorary artist of Sequences Real-Time Arts Festival and put on a multimedia installation and performance in collaboration with composer Jóhann Jóhannsson. It was really epic, I would say.

AJF: Sequences has become a good sort of fixed point in the calendar.

SMF: I like how it has evolved and conceptualized over the years. It's grown more independent and strong since its inception as an annexe to Iceland Airwaves.

AJF: It was also more focused this year. A more concentrated, territorial display.

SLJ: Which has had positive effects. I felt the quality of the pieces at Sequences overall this year was significantly higher.

-Speaking of quality, what are your feelings on the state of local art criticism?

SLJ: Since I've come to Iceland, I've heard plenty of talk about the need for fresh perspectives on Icelandic art. That the scene here needs outside eyes and more critical discourse to evaluate itself. At the same time, I haven't felt like many people are truly open to or ready for that. Part of it stems, obviously, from the fact that this is a very small community of artists and art professionals, where everything you say has repercussions. But there is also this aspect of Icelandic art being in this transitional period, and sometimes it seems that we haven't necessarily defined in our minds standards or ideas of what makes art "good" or "bad". These standards are always subjective, but it seems like we don't always give enough thought to this, or aren't vocal enough about it.

AJF: I think there should definitely be room for a more critical discussion. Unfortunately the media is cutting down on arts criticism, writing and broadcasting and this wasn't much in the first place.

-Swerving back to the economic situation, do you believe that we will see an increase in political art now that artists aren't being sponsored by banks and businessmen? Do you feel the last decade saw self-censorship from the artists so as not to scare away the money, as some critics have been claiming?

AJF: I am sure there are going to be some different things coming out of this new situation. I hope so. People aren't going to be answering to their sponsors, and I think it's going to affect the situation.

SMF: In my experience, the people around me making art were so relieved when it all went down. Of course they were worried in one sense, but the sense of relief is greater. It's like so many artists and art related people are coming out of a spell that's not there anymore and entering a new situation. It's not necessarily that these people were controlled by money, but the situation and the atmosphere was just related to money and banks and finance in such a way that it was almost tainted.

AJF: The atmosphere has definitely changed, and will likely change more. Perhaps people will become more relaxed and maybe artists are going to have more time and space to contemplate their work.

SLJ: ...but no studio space. Earlier this year, before the *kreppa*, the Center for Icelandic Art, the Iceland Academy of the Arts and the Nordic House sponsored a conference called *Reinventing Harbour Cities*, on urban planning and art in public space. We tried to raise questions and awareness about the issue of sustainability in Reykjavík in terms of urban development and planning, which Reykjavík has really lacked. There has been so much growth, but it has been in the form of a sprawl: none of it has been focused.

But we didn't so much touch on the subject of artistic sustainability. There has been all this growth in the arts, but no one saw the need to think about it in terms of sustainability, per se. That's something we have to think about now. I am not necessarily saying artists should be more political in their art, but maybe more conscious of how their work fits into the context of sustainability in Iceland. And since the foundations of an artistic sustainability weren't laid, we are now faced with all these questions about certain festivals, awards, and publications that are all up in the air next year due to the sudden lack in funding. And without the sense of a long-term platform for exhibitions and for acknowledgment of who's doing what, if all these new platforms for discourse die out, then we have to question what was gained by them.

AJF: One thing we have to mention, talking about the *kreppa*: the ironic thing about it and one very positive development is that all the art collections of the banks are suddenly back in public hands. All these amazing artworks that had been accumulated over past decades while the banks were public – art went as bonus to their buyers a few years ago – is back in the hands of Listasafn Íslands. And that in turn raises the profile for the dire lack of housing that the museum faces. 🇮🇸

expect: activism, clashes, painful transition, and, finally, a re-born Icelandic state, fit to finally become a truly autonomous member of the global community.

JÓHANN HAUSSON, JOURNALIST

Where did our double-weight depression come from?

The world depression tightens its grips the world round before letting off any signs of recovery. Iceland was among the first victims of this credit crunch. Unlike what is happening in other countries, the crunch ignited a thread of currency shortage in Iceland that made the problem more widespread and serious for running businesses and homes in the country. The IMF was sought out in a hurry, and the IMF immediately put forth measures to save the króna, which had fallen by fifty to eighty percent during a short period in early October.

A large portion of Iceland's taxpayers wants the Icelandic government to answer immediately and honestly why the depression hit Iceland's homes and businesses twice as hard and fast as it hit other countries. A large portion of Iceland's taxpayers believes that a decade-long tradition of political misuse of power, nepotism and corrupt governance has little by little rendered our governmental system weak and the state's watchdog agencies co-dependent. Those agencies employed only certified and proven party affiliates to work for those in power. They were more committed to making decisions in line with their party-mates in power, over being professional and following proper guidelines. There, of course, the Independence Party is to blame, the party that has been in power 80% of the time since we gained independence in 1944; they claimed the justice and judicial departments and built bridges between civilian political powers and the largest corporations by political appointments.

An unprofessional clique society

Sooner or later the nation will realise that respectable people with a good overview, foreign as well as local, had for months or even years warned the growing imbalance between the financial management of Iceland and the enormous growth of the Icelandic banks, especially on foreign ground. The Central Bank failed to add to the currency reserves and could not – if only for but one or two of the banks – serve as a lender of last resort.

The Icelandic nation will realise that behind the double depression of the Icelandic financial and currency troubles lies the third one. It is a political and moral one: an exaggerated offspring of the neo-liberalism that we have adhered to since 1991 under the leadership of Davíð Oddsson, accompanied by the usual privatisation and strengthening of ownership laws. Governance in the interest of the taxpayers became potentially lucrative for the ministers themselves as never before. The illusion that Iceland has a low level of corruption have always had a negative impact on alertness with regard to possible corruption.

Next Christmas will not be as luxurious as the one that just passed. Our next New Year's fireworks display will not be a sight to behold. Our forest of building cranes, that has stood throughout Reykjavík as a sign of formerly prosperous times, will cease to impress.

HAUKUR VIDAR ALFREÐSSON, MUSICIAN

What we had: We had way too much to drink and ended up unable to pick up the tab. What we can expect: Turmoil. And a red-headed Prime Minister.

SIGRÍÐUR ÞORGEIRSDÓTTIR, PHILOSOPHER, UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

What we had: There was bad and good news in 2008. The neo-liberal ideology that had become totalitarian in important respects had its first national crash in Iceland, allowing us to add "kreppa" (economic depression) as a new word to the international vocabulary. The country is financially in shambles, with present and future generations burdened with debt to pay for the raids and sprees of 50-100 so called bank-vikings. The grave injustice is that ordinary citizens have to pay for the excesses of the few. The debts of the rich are given to the non-rich. So far neither any of the business oligarchs nor politicians have assumed responsibility or apologized, making the financial *kreppa* a political one as well.

The financial world is a man's world. There are plenty of women collaborators, but they are powerless and without means as compared with the men. Globally, women own 2% of the wealth of the world, 1% of the land of the world, and earn 11% of the world's wages while doing 2/3 of all jobs that need to be done. These statistics should be a wake-up call as to the global context of the worldwide economic situation, and they are perhaps one of the main reasons for the financial meltdown. A narrow neo-liberal idea of masculinity in the image of Wall Street's Gordon Gecco and immoral corporate power has led to a system collapse. The other big issue of the year was the presidential elections in the US. Sarah Palin, the Republican candidate for Vice-President was neo-liberal ideology's dream woman. Palin is a power politician who favours rifles and the death penalty, but she is at the same time a soccer mom, spokesperson for conservative, Christian family values, and anti-abortion. The good news of the year: Neo-liberal masculinity crashed and its dream of the feminine lost. What we can expect

The neo-liberal ideology may have lost, but it may resurface in a new guise. Three months after the crash no Icelandic politicians have resigned. The Landsbanki is still on the UK's ministry of finance list of terrorists, but as yet no "banksters" have been arrested. There was not one applicant for the recently announced position of prosecutor for the investigation of the bank crash. The mere fact that no one wants the job makes one worried about the moral and psychological state of Iceland. These are desperate times and these are hopeful times. Hitting financial rock bottom has restored a sense of reality. In the last decade Iceland became a divided society of the super rich and the rest. Now, the rich do not show off, and the new vulnerability everybody experiences makes communications in a way warmer and more humane. At least among ordinary people. The politicians in power do not take part in this *kreppa*-sentiment. They are remote and alienated from it expressing a "habitus" that belongs to an outdated arsenal of tools and ideas. Globally, the financial crisis has yet to hit rock bottom. Perhaps we here in Iceland will have to wait for that to happen to gain momentum for new ideas for a post-crisis politics. We all know what kind of politics that has to be.

Locally, we have to restore trust, fairness and cooperation. Globally we have to strive for justice and to counter, in the name of human rights, political and religious fundamentalist ideologies. The ecological challenges of the 21st century are a global issue that calls for local solutions. In Iceland, feminists, grassroots organizations and a movement led by the singer Björk advocate new visions of a green, sustainable future which opposes the mindless aluminium smelting at the cost of our precious nature. Such a future is based on new ideas about gender equality, a pluralist society and anti-totalitarian politics. RIP Gordon Gecco. Welcome the aspirations that made the election of someone like Obama possible. Time will

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Urban Warfare

ARTICLE BY SIGURÐUR KJARTAN KRISTINSSON
PHOTOS BY GÚNDI

In the dark and murky city centre on this Tuesday morning in late October, the streets were empty. Even if you tried your very best you couldn't spot a single soul, save for a small grouping of masked vigilantes who had gathered around a statue, one that once symbolised the people's independence and valour but now only serves as a reminder of the nation's long lost dignity. Joined in their disgust for the current government, they had decided it was now time to take some radical action.

While those idealists muttered suspiciously in each other's ears, unmarked vans prowled all around the area. The masked gathering soon realised these were in fact members of the riot police that had been considerably visible over the last few weeks. Thus, the vigilantes soon scattered, waiting for their next chance to contemplate direct action against the powers that be. This might seem absurd, but I am not describing any enslaved former Soviet republic with a coup d'état waiting around the corner, but our very own Reykjavík in late 2008. This turn of events aroused my interest, so I decided to join the ranks of the activists. The following is my account of what I've witnessed thus far, both as an active participant and casual observer.

WHO ARE THEY?

This secretive meeting was the first sign that an organisation was being established, hitherto the only sanctioned protest venue was the weekly political gathering in Austurvöllur on Saturday afternoons. Although meetings fulfilled the fiery longings of the bulk of angry and confused Icelanders, there were some who found the meetings simply a poke in dire need of a punchline, even likening them to social gatherings rather than effective political demonstrations. And these few formed an alliance.

This assembly of vindictive vigilantes was immediately depicted in the local media as a group of naïve youngsters in need of an adrenalin kick, hiding their identities with masks so they wouldn't get into trouble. To anyone who observed them in action, however, the actual participants were greatly varied in age and came from assorted backgrounds. These made-up media facts didn't bother them at all though; in fact, they claim to enjoy feeding the media whoppers, something that explains the cooked up monikers they've gone by, such as "Action, Action" and "The Secret Organisation of the Street", none of which are factual. What you learn once you start studying the group is that it is by no means a synchronised one, with a unified end-goal. They share a longing for direct action that cannot be brushed off or easily ignored like so many protests are on this island.

This could for instance mean that instead of standing outside Alþingi, yelling clever slogans, the need for actually rushing inside the house and creating barricades, either verbal or material, thereby thwarting the MPs from doing their work. And, a few days after their original rendezvous, this is just what the group accomplished.

When the raving mad crowd rushed into Alþingi and nested in the audience platforms, with no intention of behaving in an acceptable, orderly manner, they were met by a stupefied crowd of MPs and security guards. The latter, few in numbers, could barely count all the protestors, let alone stop them. The MPs themselves were flabbergasted, some applauded to cheer on this new power, but others frowned so intensely upon the flock that their eyebrows almost burst. But as was expected, reinforcements from the local police soon arrived and started beating on the masked protestors immediately. While the bulk of the demonstrators put up their hands and calmly walked out, there were a few who liked baffling a bit more with the police, causing a greater stir.

It was in the aftermath of this first strike that Icelanders started talking about the controversial vigilantes, some condemning their input while others, such as Össur Skarphéðinsson, Minister of Industry, Energy and Tourism, reminisced when he himself recited a protest



Top
Gas! Gas! Gas!
Left
More Gas!
Right
Ouch! Ouch! Ouch!



speech on the very same platform a few decades ago and found the event justified in every way.

CONTROVERSIAL MASK-BEARING

One foggy Tuesday morning in November the assembly gathered yet again, this time in front of the ministers' meeting place in Tjarnargata, the place where they have their weekly get-together. The aim of this assembly was to prevent the ministers from entering the premises, thereby thwarting the meeting from taking place.

While I stood on the sideline I contemplated that to any unsuspecting passerby, the activists must have been a fearful sight: a pack of masked, vicious would-be vigilantes holding up scary red flares while shouting obscene slogans as the ministers snuck in from behind, or "through the ass" as they demonstrators dutifully pointed out. The police squad on duty seemed a bit confused when they prohibited the demonstrators from leaving the scene via Tjarnargata, but backed off as soon as the flock's spokesperson explained their peaceful intentions.

The fact that so many of the activists choose protest wearing masks has definitely disturbed the larger public. Many argue that this has in the end shifted public sympathy away from protestors and to the government, which is kind of absurd any way you look at it. The activists tell me that the masks have a logical explanation and aren't meant to be threatening or stir up fear. "It's not that I want to hide my own identity, but as soon as we can be categorised based on who we are and what we look like, grouped into this type or that, we do not stand for as strong a union as we intend," stated one demonstrator when I enquired about the masks. Another illustrated that he himself never wears a mask, but understands the mask-wearing part of the group, and it doesn't bother him at all.

THE LAST STRIKE OF 2008


On the last day of the year it is a tradition in Iceland that the leaders of every political party feast on a grand lunch of herring and Brennivín while lightly discussing the year's events with a reporter. The luncheon is broadcast on the TV station Stöð 2 ("Channel 2") in a program called "Kryddsíld". One demonstrator described the proceedings thusly: "Inside a delicately decorated hall the torsos, who call themselves our leaders, made champagne toasts for their own sins, made fun, enjoyed

themselves and shamelessly praised their own alleged excellence".

Some find it notable that both Saga Film, the company that produces the program, and Stöð 2, operate under the aegis of Jón Ásgeir Jóhannesson, one of the main culprits in the nation's economic crisis.

On December 31st, 2008, while this event was happening inside the shadily decorated dining room of Hótel Borg by Austurvöllur, demonstrators gathered woutside the government offices in Lækjargata and lit red flares, "to represent the flame of justice". They marched to the hotel with the intention of interrupting the broadcast. They proceeded to force open the locked gates and doors of the hotel, resulting in scuffles breaking out between them, conscientious hotel staff and the police. In the resulting chaos, some TV cords were mangled and the broadcast ultimately tapered out. A lot of the rebels were exposed to heavy doses of pepper spray from the police, strewn across the lawns of Austurvöllur, crying in pain and screaming accusations of fascism.

As the staff of Saga Film mourned their expensive cables, the crowd got to witness a new breed of activist take the stage. These recent adherents to their own interpretation of direct action weren't masked demonstrators, but a respected anaesthesiologist and his elderly brother, an economist with a long career in the Icelandic Central Bank. Together they menacingly marched between demonstrators, raising their fists in thinly veiled threats of violence, even going so far as pushing some demonstrators to the ground. To emphasize the flock's peaceful agenda, the original demonstrators stood still and didn't reply in any physical way. But if this anti-activist strain becomes a force, we might start seeing increasingly violent clashes between the two factions.

Now it is apparent that an unacceptable situation has been declared, and there is a lot to come from the masked vigilantes standing guard for our nation's democracy. Although the group offer no brilliant solution, as the media keeps hammering on, it is not their duty to find one. When things have gone down the drain there is no point in pretending they haven't. The government really has fucked up, yet there have been no signs of any repentance or even accepting responsibility for the clusterfuck of trouble they got their employers, the Icelandic people, in. Thank God, somebody is sticking it to them. 

tell how reality measures up to this desire. In previous times wars have been used as a means of getting out of economic depressions. May the hard-won lessons of the past and a sense of modesty and resourcefulness that kreppa can teach hinder that.

PAUL NIKOLOV, ALTERNATE MP, LEFT-GREENS

2008 was easily the year protest culture in Iceland reached its strongest point yet, whether you're talking about the truck drivers in the spring or the general public in the fall. I find it very encouraging that more and more people are taking advantage of the potential for direct democracy in this country and holding elected officials accountable. It has also proven itself effective; I believe it was public pressure that helped get Paul Ramses back in Iceland. Many politicians here don't seem to be used to this, as the conservative majority seem either blithely unaware or very nervous. Even some columnists continue to contend that there are "few" people that upset with the government, and that it's some sort of fashion statement to protest. Such columnists represent an obsolete and frankly out-of-touch ivory tower mentality that talks down to the same readers they hope to convince. Why should protests be on the rise? I think it's a combination of factors. We've got some new faces in parliament now, which I think encourages a sense of and a longing for change in people, but most importantly, the Icelandic people have had enough of the status quo.

I believe there will probably be early elections. I don't believe we'll join the EU. The leaders of this country will need to present new ways of thinking about what our resources are and how we can best utilize them. 2009 is going to be a year of tremendous change for Iceland. If 2008 was the year of democracy, 2009 will be the year of evolution. Politicians unwilling or unable to help out will find themselves left behind.

BJÖRN ÞÓR BJÖRNSSON, DESIGNER, BLOGGER / WWW.BREIDHOLT.COM

It would've been fine if those polar bears washing ashore had been the biggest event of the year. They weren't, and now we're walking around wearing barrels and have moths coming out of our coin purses.

But I, for one, welcome this shitty turn of economic events. We should all embrace our inner poor person and go with it. Money has never been important nor should it ever be. As long as we have our health and a few pals and loved ones, we should totally grow long beards (for knitting into sweaters), put all our stuff in a bundle and ride the trains (preferably on the roof). We have no trains you say? Well there's always the buses. Swapping stories by the fire, using hobo-markings to communicate, stealing pies from a windowsill, playing the harmonica and doing a jig. Sounds like fun to me.

Happy Two thousand-and-fine!

KRISTÍN BJÖRK KRISTJÁNSDÓTTIR, MUSICIAN

Moving on to the next bingo season: I'm game for unexpectedness –the kind no imagination can map out. 2008 is over and now is a golden time for a mental state of metamorphosis. Yet, it's a pretty widespread thing to want to bathe in the highlights of the old year while looking into potential triumphs of the future. So this moment of truth that is the New Year becomes a twilight zone where a helluva lot of gun powder is spent on times other than the present. What a blessing it always is when people finally cross over all that dwelling on the old and lazing into the unknown, to the good old now.

So, I thought it was a bit tough to look back and do an honest list of favourites for 08. But after careful marinating, I made it and lived to write home about it.

I think Sing Fang Bous, Jóhann Jóhannsson and Klive are Iceland's champions in music in 2008, but otherwise it's Kimya Dawson, Meshuggah, Caribou and Death Vessel – as far as new music I experienced last year goes – stuff that still stays with me. The song Man Dan Dink as performed by Death Vessel gets the title of "best tour bus song". The most sensational exhibitions I saw last year were Finnboogi Pétursson's reversed candles in Listasafn Íslands and two shows Halldór Arnar Úlfarsson with Tea Mäkipää and threw it in the Reykjavík pond, shortly before making a piece that set itself on fire in the window of Útúrdúr bookshop.

I saw one concert this year that threw me into a state of delirious dizziness, erased my knees and changed my life. That was Finnish violin smurf Pekka Kuusisto's unbelievable performance at Kom Ravintola in Helsinki this fall. His show was unlike anything I've ever experienced.

The craziest thing I did myself this year was a thirty-hour plane ride to China, followed by a co-operation with the Shanghai Kite Society, making Kite Symphony no. 2, which we performed outside the Shanghai Museum of Science and Technology in October. That is without doubt high on my list of the most memorable moments of 2008.

UNNSTEINN MANÚEL STEFÁNSSON, MUSICIAN, STUDENT


What we had: Elton John and Dom Pérignon.
What we can expect: Litli-Jón and Dom nequam.

HOPE KNÚTSSON, PSYCHIATRIC OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST, PRESIDENT OF THE ICELANDIC ETHICAL HUMANIST ASSOCIATION, SIÐMENNT

My feelings and thoughts about what has happened to Iceland in the last months of 2008 are fairly chaotic. I think that we haven't gotten most of the story yet and probably never will. Until we do, I am not ready to draw many specific conclusions other than that I don't trust any of the clowns who have been running the show for the past 17 years or so. The phrase banana republic keeps coming to mind. I am not optimistic about the ability of any politicians here to solve the complex, long running problems this nation faces. Solutions to the massive screw-ups in Iceland require that people be very well organized and disciplined, have excellent communication skills, and work in an open and transparent manner. Unfortunately, none of these skills are common in Icelanders.

PAUL RAMSES, POLITICAL REFUGEE

The year 2008 was about courage and politics, politics furnished the situation, and courage provided its theme.

Courage as the universal virtue.
It was courage such that someone would throw a shoe at the US president George W. Bush, who in turn gave Kenyan democracy a strange meaning by encouraging the loser in the general election to share power with the winner. It was a dubious election but by his actions, GWB is only creating a dictator for Kenya while he condemns another in Zimbabwe. But it's all good news that the next person on the White House, Barack Obama, is the son of a Kenyan herdsman. His election is an inspiration the world over. With the economy in Iceland in Intensive Care, Obama's election sends only one message to the world, and to Iceland, the same one the Bible says in Jeremiah: 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." This is the message for Iceland in 2009, surely Iceland will rise again. 

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Opening Hours

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Shops: Mon-Fri 10-18, Sat 10-16, Sun closed. The shopping centres Kringlan and Smáralind as well as most supermarkets and tourist shops have longer opening hours.

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

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

Tourist Information

Icelandic Travel Market
Bankastræti 2, Tel: 522 4979,

Tourist Information Centre
Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 590 1550,
www.visitreykjavik.is

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

Getting Around

Public Transport

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

Taxi

Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir,
Tel: 553 3500 or 588 5522

BSR, Tel: 561 0000

For disabled travellers:
Reykjavík Group Travel Service,
Brunastaðir 3, Tel: 587 8030,
www.randburg.com/is/reykjavik_group_travel_service/

Airlines

Air Iceland, Reykjavíkflugvöllur,
Tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is

Air Vestmannaeyjar,
Tel: 481 3255, www.eyjaflug.is

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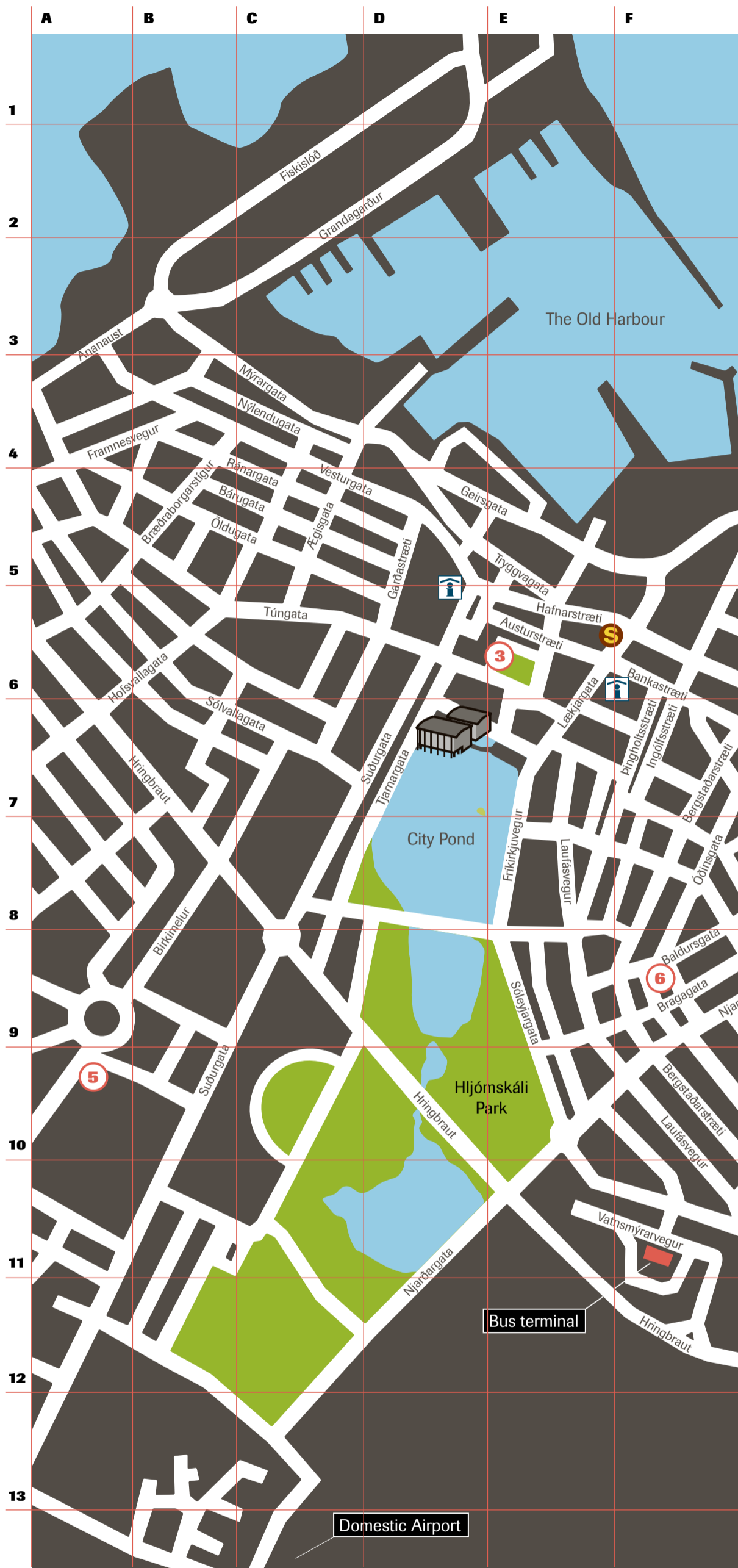
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thing?**



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Icelandic plate

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Food

THE SCANDINAVIAN

Reviewed by **Richard Foley** – Photo by Jói Kjartans

The Scandinavian and its modern interpretation of traditional Nordic recipes are bound to become a small tourist haven, not to exclude the locals, who will appreciate the cuisine served with a bit of heritage.

The decor is quite similar to its sister company Sólun, with a contemporary interior, although if one looks closely subtle, decorative memorabilia from Scandinavia can be seen throughout, such as the small black and white pictures of famous monuments – a quaint little nicety.

The restaurant's menu is based around the concept of the smørrebrød, a Danish culinary dish simply translated into English as "butter and bread". This well-known meal is steeped in history and a favourite amongst many Icelanders. The basic ingredients to the dish were originally dependent on the seasonal foods grown, but mostly comprised of fish or meat, butter and rye bread. The bistro has tried to keep to many of the same principles, by

changing the daily specials around the seasons and highlighting the local fish as an integral part of the menu.

As a general rule, one should think of the open sandwich as a starter or light lunch, and the closed sandwich more for an evening main course. For an authentic Nordic experience, Scandinavian recommends Nordic beer and shot of schnapps, such as the Danish Ákavíti or Icelandic Brennivín, which are given in generous portions, to go along with the meal.

One house specialty is the H.C.Andersen. Named after the famous Danish writer, Hans Christian Andersen, it is pork crackling and liver pâté served on rye bread with port aspic and horseradish.

The convenient quality about the Scandinavian is its location in a prime spot on Laugavegur, with easy access from the hotels and the town centre. From this, the atmosphere of the restaurant has versatility and seems to adjust throughout the

week. From the family friendly environment during weekdays, with a children's menu to encourage families to visit, then developing a vibrant, nightlife mood at the weekends by staying open late and featuring a unique range of Nordic alcohols.

Where:
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What we think:
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Food & Drink | Venue finder

3 Frakkar Baldursgata 14 | **F9**
A seriously Icelandic atmosphere and traditional Icelandic dishes prepared in the good old-fashioned way. RSVP and keep your ears pricked for wild whaling tales!

Af lífi og sál Restaurant Laugavegi 55b | **H7**
A healthy and tasty restaurant where the menu changes every night, so who knows what's for dinner? But serving such dishes as grilled dolphin, baccalao and kangaroo, you can't go wrong by dropping by for lunch or dinner.

Aktu Taktu Skúlagata 15 | **K8**
This drive-in destination in 101 Reykjavík is busy day and night and the burgers are especially tasty. The caramel shakes are a local favorite.

American Style Tryggvagata 26 | **E5**
With a soft bun and lots of veggies, you can settle into a booth and eat for hours. Big portions for authentic American dining.

Argentína Steak-house Barónstígur | **I8**
True to its name with tender steaks and flamingly vibrant South American décor. Generous portions, fine wine, liqueurs and cigars make an excellent choice in fine dining.

Austurlanda-hraðestín Hverfisgata 64A | **H7**

Though a bit expensive for take-away, it is well worth it for a spicy bite of this Indian cuisine. A few tables to the side for those who choose to dine in.

Á Næstu Grösúm Laugavegur 20B | **G7**
Regarded by many to be the best vegetarian place in town, "First Vegetarian" offers a healthy and tasty menu of vegetarian and vegan dishes. Indian theme on Fridays a hit.

B5 Bankastræti 5 | **F6**
By day a chic little bistro with good food and a prime location for Laugavegur people watching-by night a stylish bar with a "whiskey room" and Manhattanesque clientele.

Babalú Skólavörðustígur 22A | **G8**
It's tough to miss café Babalú walking up Skólavörðustígur. A cozy place for coffee and cake, the well-worn, homey ambience makes it difficult to leave.

Bæjarins Beztu Tryggvagata | **E6**
The oldest fast-food in Iceland, it is feasibly the best hot dog stand in Europe. Don't be intimidated by the perpetual line in front – an absolute must and worth the wait.

Brons Pósthússtræti 9 | **E6**
Called a bistro, but more a restaurant in quality, Brons is

settled in the place of former popular Café Kaffibrennslan. Brons focuses on Mediterranean cuisine and is famous for serving dishes that are as large as they are delicious.

Café Cultura Hverfisgata 18 | **G6**
Cultura is a café/bar with a party feel. The menu features all sorts of international dishes, alongside the staple salad and sandwich.

Café Loki Lokastígur 28 | **G9**
With a splendid view of Hallgrímskirkja, Café Loki is the perfect place to take a load off your feet and enjoy some solid homemade Icelandic food.

Café Paris Austurstræti 14 | **E6**
With an outdoor terrace, this café gets busy on sunny days. With a cosy interior, fine menu and attentive service, it makes a fine spot for evening dining as well.

Café Roma Rauðarárstígur 8 | **J9**
Roma, an Italian deli and café, offers a variety of breads, soups as well as tempting desserts. For a good bargain, come at lunchtime for the specials.

Café Victor Hafnarstræti 1-3 | **D6/E6**
A hangout for older foreigners, Victor attracts a diverse crowd, both in age and origin, a rule that extends to the musicians that play there.

Domo Þinghóltsstræti 5 | **F7**
The elegantly decorated Domo serves delicious French-Asian cuisine, excellent sushi and has a great wine list. A sure choice.

Eldsmíðjan Bragagata 38A | **G9**
Totally satisfying oven-baked pizza with a wide choice of toppings-snails an unusual specialty. Well worth the cost. Order, take away or eat comfortably among the paintings.

Fiskmarkaðurinn Aðalstræti 12 | **D6**
Run and co-owned by the national team of chefs, this establishment specializing in Japanese cuisine has everything planned to the last detail, ensuring a relaxing evening.

Geysir Bar/Bistro Aðalstræti 2 | **D6**
Situated in the dignified Geysir Building at the corner of Vesturgata and Aðalstræti, this stylish bistro is always a good place to grab a tasty bite for a reasonable price.

Garðurinn Klappastígur 37 | **G7**
"Ecstasy's Heart" is a simple, friendly, family-run vegetarian restaurant on Klappastígur. Offers an ever-changing menu of specials and soup du jours, alongside a basic menu.

Grái Kötturinn Hverfisgata 16A | **G7**
Legendary for its early opening ours, the Gray Cat serves amazing

breakfasts and coffee that packs a wallop. A splendid way to start you off on your day.

Grillhúsið Tryggvagata 20 | **E5/E6**
With a menu of reasonably priced home-style food, Grillhúsið has satiated hungry regulars since 1994 with juicy burgers, sandwiches, steaks and fish dishes.

Habibi Hafnarstræti 20 | **D5**
A reliable source of high quality shawarma and falafel. Important ingredient for successful living.

Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar ("Bullán") Geirsgata 1 | **D5**
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.

Hlöllla Batar Ingólfstorg | **D6**
The first sub sandwich shop in Iceland, Hlöllla Batar has a large selection of creatively named sandwiches with equally imaginative contents. Good for an adventurous bite.

Horníð Hafnarstræti 15 | **E6**
Since 1979, this Italian restaurant has been a longtime Reykjavík staple. Famous for its pizza and stuffed calzones, it proudly offers an affordable menu of high-quality dishes.

Hótel Holt Bergstaðarstræti 37 | **F7**
Housing Iceland's most renowned restaurant, The Gallery, an evening here is an unforgettable experience. Delicious French-inspired cuisine and fine wines await.

Humarhúsið Ammmanstígur 1 | **E7**
One of the oldest restaurants in the country, the Lobster House is known of course for its lobster and also its impressive cognac lounge. Fine intimate dining.

Hressó Austurstræti 20 | **E6**
With a spacious neutral interior and a varied lunch menu, Hressó attracts no specific type of crowd. Tap beer and music makes a fair hangout on weekends.

Icelandic Fish & Chips Tryggvagata 8 | **E5**
Not your average fish'n'chips joint, but a healthy restaurant using only organic vegetables and quality fish products. The spiced skyr side a special treat.

Indian Mango Frakkarstígur 12 | **H8**
Specializing in delicious dishes from the Goa region of India, honed to perfection in the owner's period as head chef at the Four Seasons. Incredible service as well as food.

Food BASIL & LIME

Reviewed by **Sigtryggur Ari Jóhannsson** – Photo by SAJ

From what the name implies, Basil & Lime could well have a menu of Italian meets SE Asian fusion. In spite of that, we were greeted with a simple and well layed-out menu of authentic Italian dishes. This is in tune with Basil & Lime occupying the same quarters as the late Pasta Basta. In fact, restaurateur and chef Óli Gísli Sveinbjörnsson also prepared food there. Four of Pasta Basta's most popular dishes have even survived the revamp, including the ever popular Tagliatelli Langoustine and Chicken Fusilli, both served in mild, creamy sauces. Basil & Lime, much like its predecessor, takes pride in its pasta, made on location and always served at its freshest. Along with the menus we were served fresh bread along with pesto, tapenade, hummus and olives as antipasti. The pesto, in particular, was fresh and delicious with tangy citrus flavour and refreshing raw garlic. Other items were up to standard. This was followed by Parma-ham with

rocket leaves and cooked vegetables starters. The ham was fantastic, salty and thick. The vegetables had a mild and delicate, nut-tinged celery flavour. Next we enjoyed seafood soup and a risotto. The soup was creamy, obviously made from proper stock, and tasted of both white-wine and brandy; certain to be a crowd-pleaser, even if such lavish use of cream is almost "too-easy". The risotto was completely authentic and commendable. Main courses consisted of Pasta Basta's all time favourites, the Langoustine Tagliatelli and the Chicken Fusilli. Both were nice, but the fusilli was a clear winner. The meal was complete with a crème brûlée and a tiramisu at the end. The crème brûlée had a taste of lemon, which I disliked, and was straight from the fridge. The tiramisu, however, was marvellous. The surroundings inside Basil & Lime aren't strikingly interesting and the food certainly rose above the next to completely dark dining room. The un-

usually moderate pricing compensates for this. You actually get a lot for your money: well made, unpretentious Italian food, with main courses as cheap as ISK 1.850, and the most popular ones for ISK 2.450. And if your income is in dollars or Euros, this place is downright cheap. Just enjoy the food.

Where:
Klapparstígur 38,
101 Reykjavík

2 G7

How much:
2000-4000 ISK

What we think:
Great Italian food.



Jómfrúin
Lækjargata 4 | **E6**
These days, good Smörrebröd can be an elusive delicacy. Lucky for us out in the colonies, it's alive and well at Jómfrúin with fresh eel imported specially from Denmark.

Kaffi Hjómáland
Laugavegur 21 | **G7**
This organic, free-trade café prides itself not only on great lunches and food but being a strong cultural center, hosting live music as well as lectures and poetry nights.

Kaffitár
Bankastræti 8 | **F6**
Kaffitár celebrates good coffee, and serves it in abundance, along with sweet treats and tasty if pricy special blends. Eat in or to go, a great way to enjoy your morning boost.

Kaffivagninn
Grandagarður 10 | **D1**
By the harbor, this lunch and coffee place is a gathering place for all sorts of tough folks. If you want traditional Icelandic food, a great place to see another side of Reykjavík.

Kebabhúsið
Austurstræti 2 | **E6**
The name says it all, really.

Kofi Tómasar Frændu
Laugavegur 2 | **F7**
Nestled in a basement location, Uncle Tom's Cabin has the feeling of a back-alley London Café. On weekends it becomes a happening and diverse bar.

Krua Thai
Tryggvagata 14 | **D5**
We dare you to find a better meal for the same price anywhere else. Every dish is delicious. Just eat what looks best to you on their colorful menu.

La Primavera
Austurstræti 9 | **E6**
Though it sounds strange, La Primavera serves delicious traditional North Italian cuisine using only local produce. A startlingly tasty combination and a local favorite.

Lystin
Laugavegur 73 | **H7**
Specialising in Icelandic ingredients, cooked in a fusion of Asian and French cuisine.

Mokka
Skólavörðustígur 3A | **F7**
Operating since 1958, Mokka is the city center's oldest coffee joint and founder of Icelandic coffee culture. Regular art exhibits are always worth a look.

Nonnabiti
Hafnarstræti 9 | **E6**
"Nonni" is one of the more popular junk-food places in town, renowned for its greasy sandwiches and its unique Nonni-sauce. Open late for midnight cravings.

O Sushi
Lækjargata 2A | **E6**
Also called "The Train", O Sushi's most intriguing feature is a conveyor belt that runs around the entire restaurant delivering a buffet of authentic sushi straight to your table.

Pizza King
Hafnarstræti 18 | **E6**
This little place serves not only the cheapest but largest slices downtown. A local favorite, and open until 6 on Friday and Saturday nights.

Pizza Pronto
Vallarstræti 4 | **D6**
With a convenient location and late hours, a good place to snack in between bars. Three sizes of pizza with a good selection of toppings. A cheap, if unhealthy, choice.

Pizzaverksmiðjan
Lækjargötu 8 | **E6**
Some say, these guys are making the best pizza in town. You will have to find out yourself. However they have the most original menu written on the wall and the Pesto Pizza is outstanding!

Prikið
Bankastræti 12 | **F6**
Part of the Reykjavík bar scene for decades, this café/bar has a fairly cheap menu and attracts a mix of students and old regulars. Mostly R&B and Hip-Hop on weekends.

Raðhúskaffi | **D7**
Tjarnargata 11
Located in the City Hall with a great view of the pond, this café has a good selection of pastries and a good place to relax. Regular art exhibits add to the aesthetic.

Santa Maria
Laugavegur 22A, | **F7**
Authentic Mexican food, directly from the stove of the owner's mother, who is an authentic Mexican.

Served with a healthy distaste for anything TexMex. Also the best quality/price ratio in town with every dish under 1000 ISK.

Segafredo
Lækjartorg | **E6**
The Italian coffee chain makes its way to Lækjartorg Square, bringing strong espresso and Italian lunch snacks to grab on the way to work or just to enjoy on the spot.

Shalimar
Austurstræti 4 | **E6**
Shalimar sports the conceit of being the northernmost Indian restaurant in the world and has fine daily specials. We recommend the quite addictive chicken tikka masala.

Silfur
Pósthússtræti 11 | **E6**
Extravagant upscale restaurant situated in the Hotel Borg. The new French style cuisine is brought with professional and friendly service, you get a selection of fine wines and you can choose from an exotic and excellent menu – assuming that you can afford the not less extravagant prices.

Sjávarkjallarinn
Aðalstræti 2 | **D6**
Elegant Seafood Cellar focuses on gourmet seafood and tantalizing Asian-fusion dishes. Share the exotic menu, courses selected by the chef, with a friend for the most fun.

Sólun
Bankastræti 7a | **F6**
Truly a jack-of-all trades establishment.

By night a decent restaurant, by day a café/bistro and on Friday and Saturday nights a nightclub. Art exhibitions on the walls to top it off.

Sushibarinn
Laugavegur 2 | **F7**
Deceptively ordinary Sushibarinn has recently become the talk of the town among Reykjavík sushi lovers, serving, in our opinion, the very best rolls in city.

Svarta Kaffi
Laugavegur 54 | **H8**
A cosy second floor café, their fame lies partly in their tasty Súpa í Brauði (Soup in Bread) and also in their romantic atmosphere. Good for a few early evening drinks.

Sægreifinn
Verbuð 8, Geirsgata | **D5**
Right next to the harbor, Sægreifinn fish shop is like none other in the country. With a diverse fish selection, exquisite lobster soup and good service, an absolute must-try.

Tapas
Vesturgata 3B | **D5**
For those with a bit of money and time to spare, Tapas serves course after course of delightful miniature dishes. Also serves tasty and unusually affordable lobster.

Thorvaldsen
Austurstræti 8 | **E6**
Dress formally for this fancy spot, and come before 12 to avoid a long line. DJs play Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

Tíu Dropar
Laugavegur 27 | **G7**
An old-fashioned café with warm atmosphere and generous coffee refills. A thoroughly pleasant establishment.

Tívoli
Laugavegur 3 | **F7**
A stylish bistro with a wide variety of selections and positively charming atmosphere.

Tjarnarbakkinn
Vonarstræti 3 | **D7**
Right above the löno theater, an ideal place to go before shows. Nice views of the pond and outdoor dining in the summertime. The lamb comes especially recommended.

Vegamót
Vegamótastígur 4 | **G7**
Vegamót's kitchen is open until 22.00 daily and sports an appealing lunch menu. Come for a tasty brunch on weekends. If you like Óliver, try Vegamót and vice versa.

Við Tjörmina
Templarásund 3 | **E7**
A Reykjavík classic with menu exclusively of traditional cuisine, as frequented by tourists as it is by locals. A perfect opportunity to try Icelandic delicacies.

Vitabar
Bergþórugata 21 | **H9**
Really a bar, but best known for its hamburgers. Burger and fries for 500 one of the best deals in town, but Forget-Me-Not blue cheese and Garlic Extravaganza are also winners.

Now open
on Sundays!

sushibarinn

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The Reykjavík Grapevine seeks writers of all ages, shapes, sizes, income brackets, abilities and nationalities who wish to voice their views, opinions, thoughts, ideas, rants and ravings on pretty much anything.

That includes you, and your friends. And that guy you know.

Drop us a line when you have the time:

editor@grapevine.is



Music FAMILJEN

One of the most popular acts at last year's Iceland Airwaves festival was without a doubt Swedish electro act Familjen, AKA Johann Karlsson. With his super catchy hit "Det Snurrar i min Skalle" Johann was probably one of the most played artists of last year as well. His debut album, "Det Snurrar i min Skalle" came out in 2007 and was showered with praise and awards,

amongst other things receiving a Swedish Grammy for the video to the hit title track. He and his stage partner Andreas Tiliander have now begun extensive touring and are on their way to Iceland to give us a chance to dance our socks off. So those of us who wish to jumpstart the New Year and see Johann and Andreas do their thing on stage should definitely be at NASA on February 6th.

What:
Familjen
Where:
**NASA, Thorvaldsenstræti 4,
101 Reykjavík**
When:
February 6 at 23:00

3 E6



Music LAY LOW

Iceland's puppy eyed blues singer Lay Low has proved to be one of the most interesting acts to spring out of the Icelandic music scene in the past years. Her 2006 debut album "Please Dont Hate Me" topped the Icelandic charts and sprang Lay Low to the top of the Icelandic scene. Her new one, "Farewell Good Night's Sleep", was released at the tail end of last year and has served to wedge her in place as one of the more popular artists of today. She has been playing concerts all over Iceland and was one of the major acts at last year's Iceland Airwaves festival. Her performances are intimate and the close atmosphere of Café Rósenberg should make this an interesting show.

What:
Lay Low
Where:
**Café Rósenberg
Klappartígur 25-27
101 Reykjavík**
When:
January 27 at 22:00

4 G7



Art FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL

Græna Ljósið, Alliance Francaise and the French Embassy are putting on a French movie festival that will be starting on the 16th of January and will last until the 29th. The festival will center around French cinema and will be premiering ten French films. The opening film for the festival will be "The Class" directed by Laurent Cantet, who won the Golden Palm at Cannes last year. There will also be a wide variety of other French films such as Luc Jacquet's "The Fox and the girl" who also directed "March of the Penguins". This is certainly a treat for lovers of French cinema, and of good cinema in general.

Where:
**Háskólabíó, Hagatorg,
107 Reykjavík**
When:
January 16 - 29

5 A10

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

Music & Entertainment

FRIDAY JAN 9

- B5**
23:00 DJ Einar.
- Café Amsterdam**
01:30 DJ Sesar after 4am 500ISK.
- Café Cultura**
23:00 DJ Kári
- Café Paris**
22:00 Cocktail Night.
- Grand Rokk**
21:00 Bob, Coral and Sudden Weather Change play live
- Háskólabíó**
19:30 Vienna special III. The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra will be playing Vienna classics.
- Hressó**
22:00 Troubadours Jógvan & Vignir followed by DJ Stjáni.
- Kaffibarinn**
23:00 DJ Gísli Galdur
- Prikið**
22:00 Prikið house band returns followed by Danni Deluxe.
- Q-Bar**
23:00 Sexual Chocolate & Tryllti Hjötur.
- Sólon**
00:00 DJ Áki Pain.

SATURDAY JAN 10

- Apótek**
DJ Áki Pain
- Café Amsterdam**
23:00 Amelia Ray in concert followed by DJ Sesar Admission 500ISK.
- B5**
23:00 DJ Simon GorillaFunk.
- Café Cultura**
23:00 DJ's Karius & Baktus
- Café Paris**
22:00 DJ Lurkur.
- Grand Rokk**
Kuroi release concert & Retro Stefsson
- Háskólabíó**
19:30 Vienna special IV. The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra

- will be playing Vienna classics.
- Hellirinn**
19:00 Gone Postal release concert Admission 500ISK.
- Hressó**
22:00 Band Ímynd playing, afterwards DJ Stjáni.
- Prikið**
22:00 Prikið house band plays followed by DJ B-ruff.
- Q-Bar**
23:00 DJ Shaft with special guests Georg and Jason on saxophone and drums.
- Rósenberg**
22:00 Mood, blues band play
- Sólon**
23:00 Ground floor-DJ Rikki G Upstairs: DJ Áki Pain.

SUNDAY JAN 11

- Prikið**
Hangover cinema with popcorn and Coke.

MONDAY JAN 12

- Q-Bar**
21:00 Q bar first pubquiz night.
- Rósenberg**
22:00 Arnjótur in concert

TUESDAY JAN 13

- Q-Bar**
23:00 Open mic night with Elín Ey & Myrra

WEDNESDAY JAN 14

- Kaffibarinn**
23:00 Moviemusic & DJ Úlfaldi
- Prikið**
Milknight with staff as DJ, large beer for 490ISK.
- Rósenberg**
22:00 Stefán Örn of Buff fame in concert.

THURSDAY JAN 15

- B5**
22:00 DJ Simon GorillaFunk.
- Café Cultura**
22:00 University Party with DJ Mads (DK)
- Grand Rokk**
22:00 Black Dalia band in concert
- Hressó**

- 22:00 Troubadours Böddi & Dabbi.
- Prikið**
22:00 Milknight with DJ Moonshine, large beer for 490ISK.
- Q-Bar**
22:00 Yamaha & Frosti.
- Rósenberg**
22:00 Jazz trio Slydda play.
- Sólon**
Upstairs: Live music with Ingó & Veðurguðirnir
Ground floor: DJ Andrés with 110 Sparkling.

FRIDAY JAN 16

- Apótek**
23:00 DJ fly (SWE) & DJ Jonast
- B5**
23:00 DJ Símon Gorillafunk.
- Café Paris**
22:00 Cocktail Night.
- Café Cultura**
Balkan Music with Haukur Gröndal followed by DJ Nuno Lx
- Grand Rokk**
22:00 Grapevine Grand Rock! Mki Performances by: Nico Muhly, Reykjavík!, Agent Fresco, Sudden Weather Change & DJ Sveppi P. Admission fee 1000ISK
- Háskólabíó**
19:30 Young solo artists will be playing classical music
- Hressó**
22:00 Maria Mamas Bag in concert, followed by DJ Maggi.
- Kaffibarinn**
23:00 DJ Casanova.
- Prikið**
Max and the Crackers playing reageg followed by Addi Intro.
- Q-Bar**
22:00 DJ Funky Fleivur.
- Rósenberg**
22:00 Gauji Rúdolf in concert.
- Sólon**
23:00. DJ Áki Pain.

SATURDAY JAN 17

- B5**
23:00 DJ Jay Oh!.
- Café Cultura**
23:00 Live Bands: Motion Boys and DJ Gísli Galdur
- Celtic Cross**
01:00 Live Music.
- Café Paris**
22:00 DJ Solid.
- Hressó**
22:00 Troubadours Gotti and Eisi playing.

Music & Entertainment | Venue finder

22 Laugavegur 22 | **G7**
A popular place among the city's party scenesters, this three storied bar makes for a great night out with chatting upstairs and dancing downstairs with regular DJs.

Amsterdam Hafnarstræti 5 | **E6**
Kaffi Amsterdam seems to have been around forever, though recently it's been reinvented as a live venue. Good music, cheap beer, and colorful characters to be found.

Apótek Austurstræti 16 | **E5**
Sporting a chic and pristine interior with a healthy club atmosphere.

B5 Bankastræti 5 | **F6**
By day a chic little bistro with good food and a prime location for Laugavegur people watching | by night a stylish bar with a "whiskey room" and manhattanesque clientele.

Bar 11 Laugavegur 11 | **G6**
The sweetest Rock joint on the northern hemisphere. Mötley Crüe would have played this bar 25 years ago and still be talking about it.

Belly's Hafnarstræti 18a | **E5**
Belly's deserves praise for having the cheapest bar prices around.

Good for anyone looking for a deal, there are enough tables for everyone and TVs for sport | watching.

Bjarni Fel Austurstræti 20 | **E5**
Named after the Iceland's most legendary sports commentator, this is the place for the three Bs: ball, burger and beer.

Boston Laugavegur 28b | **H6**
A fresh addition to the Reykjavík bar scene. Roomy bar floor, nice sofas and stylish interior make this a comfy café as well as a tavern with good, unintrusive music.

Café Cultura Hverfisgata 18 | **G6**
Cultura is a café/bar with a party feel. The menu features all sorts of international dishes, alongside the staple salad and sandwich.

Café Paris Austurstræti 14 | **E5**
With an outdoor terrace, this café gets busy on sunny days. With a cosy interior, fine menu and attentive service, it makes a fine spot for evening dining as well.

Café Victor Hafnarstræti 1-3 | **D4**
Victor attracts a diverse crowd, both in age and origin, a role that extends to the musicians that play there.

Celtic Cross Hverfisgata 26 | **H6**
Arguably the most authentic Irish pub outside Ireland, a very lively space where you'll often find live music, sometimes two bands playing at once.

Dillon Laugavegur 30 | **H7**
The quintessential rock pub Dillon serves moderately priced drinks, and has pretty good music, too. The mix of students and tattooed tough guys always creates a fun atmosphere.

Dubliner Hafnarstræti 4 | **E5**
The city's main Irish pub attracts quite a lot of foreigners, though there's an influx of locals on weekends. Good if you're looking for the darker stuff on tap.

Glaumbar Tryggvagata 20 | **E4**
The premier sports bar in town, though after the final whistle, DJs take the floor and begin a night of feverish dancing.

Grand Rokk Smiðjustígur | **G6**
As its Viking theme accurately displays, this hardcore chess hangout is no place for the lily livered. Take the pub quiz on Fridays at 17:30, the winner gets a free case of beer!

Highlander Lækjargata 10 | **E7**
If you prefer Scottish to Irish, this might be the place for a single malt.

Hressó Austurstræti 20 | **E5**
With a spacious neutral interior, pleasant courtyard and a varied lunch menu, Hressó attracts no specific type of crowd. Tap beer and music makes a fair hangout on weekends.

Hverfisbarinn Hverfisgata 20 | **G6**
After a long line, you'll get in and wonder what all the fuss was about. You may end up here if you're still going at 4 on a Sunday morning, in which case it's just as good as any.

Kaffi Hjómáland Laugavegur 23 | **G6**
This organic, free-trade café prides itself not only on great food and coffee but being a strong cultural center, hosting live music as well as lectures and poetry nights.

Kaffibarinn Bergstráðastræti 1 | **F6**
A popular place to grab a drink after work, this daytime coffee joint rolls with night-time activity on weekends with live DJs. Parties often pound until dawn.

NASA Þorvaldsenstræti 2 | **E6**
The main live venue in town. If you are look-

ing for a decent band, chances are you'll find it at NASA.

Næsti Bar Ingólfstræti 1A | **F6**
On nights where queues snake down Laugavegur, Næsti Bar can be great place to sneak off to and chat with friends over a beer. Frequentated also by the literary and acting elite.

Óliver Laugavegur 20A | **H7**
This nightclub attracts a crowd of crazy dancers that may not be for everyone. In which case, air conditioning and fine food make Óliver a good lunch spot.

Ólstofan Vegamótastígur | **G6**
No tricks here. You'll want just simple beer in this simple pub. Also the hangout for Reykjavík intellectual circles

Prikið Bankastræti | **F5**
Part of the Reykjavík bar scene for decades, this café/bar has a fairly cheap menu and attracts a mix of students and old regulars. R&B and Hip-Hop plays on weekends.

Q-Bar Ingólfstræti 3 | **F6**
A roomy gay/straight bar. Some of the best DJs in town play regularly, making it an especially lively space on weekends.

Rex Austurstræti | **E5**
Rex is quite fancy and you may feel out of place if you don't dress up a bit. One of the more posh spots in town.

Rósenberg Klappartígur 25 | **G7**
Live music venue that has something to offer every single night, ranging from rock to jazz to poetry. You name it, they got it.

Sólon Bankastræti 7A | **F5**
Truly a jack of all trades establishment. By night a decent restaurant, by day a café/bistro and on Friday and Saturday nights a nightclub. Art exhibitions on the walls to top it off.

Thorvaldsen Austurstræti 8 | **E5**
Dress formally for this fancy spot, and come before 12 to avoid a long line. DJs play Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

Vegamót Vegamótastígur 4 | **G6**
Vegamót's kitchen is open until 22:00 daily and sports an appealing lunch menu. Come for a tasty brunch on weekends. If you like Óliver, try Vegamót and vice versa. The party goes on late.



UPCOMING CONCERTS

VIENNA SPECIAL

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7TH @ 7.30 pm
THURSDAY, JANUARY 8TH @ 7.30 pm
FRIDAY, JANUARY 9TH @ 7.30 pm
SATURDAY, JANUARY 10TH @ 5 pm
Conductor | Markus Poschner
Soloist | Disella Lárusdóttir

A selection of popular waltzes and operetta arias by Strauss, Lehár and Bernstein.

YOUNG SOLOISTS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15TH @ 7.30 pm
Conductor | Bernhardur Wilkinson
Soloists | Hulda Jónsdóttir, violin
Bjarni Frímánn Bjarnason, viola
Natalía Druzhin Halldórsdóttir, mezzo-soprano
Johannes Brahms | Violin Concerto
Béla Bartók | Viola Concerto
Arias by Verdi, Tchaikovsky etc.

DRUMS AND DANCING

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22TH @ 7.30 PM
Conductor | Rumon Gamba
Soloists | Colin Currie and Pedro Carneiro
Áskell Másson | Crossings, Concerto for two percussionists
Francis Poulenc | Les biches
Igor Stravinsky | Petrushka



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ДЕСЯТЬ ПОЛЕЗНЫХ ЖИЗНЕННЫХ СОВЕТОВ

1. Настраивайся всегда на положительные эмоции – это облегчает жизнь
2. Береги то, что тебе дорого
3. Век живи – век учись
4. Извлекай уроки из своих ошибок
5. Ежедневно занимайся физическими упражнениями: это повышает настроение
6. Не усложняй свою жизнь без надобности
7. Старайся понять и поддержать тех, кто тебя окружает
8. Не сдавайся: успех в жизни – это бег на длинную дистанцию
9. Раскрой и развивай свои способности
10. Поставь себе цель и добивайся ее осуществления

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Listings

- **Prikið**
HappyHour, large beer 500ISK and shots for 350 ISK with DJ Danni Deluxe
- **Q-Bar**
23:00 DJ KGB.
- **Sólon**
23:00 Ground floor: DJ Rikki G
Upstairs: DJ Áki Pain.

SUNDAY JAN 18

- **Prikið**
Hangover Cinema.

TUESDAY JAN 20

- **Café Cultura**
Bush is gonna party, guest DJ's

WEDNESDAY JAN 21

- **Café Cultura**
23:00 University Party with DJ Mads (DK).
- **Hlégarður (Mosfellsbær)**
20:30 Bubbi Mortens.
- **Prikið**
Milknight with DJ Kári.
- **Rósenberg**
22:00 Rockers Dikta in concert.

THURSDAY JAN 22

- **B5**
DJ Einar.
- **Café Cultura**
DJ Benni B-ruff.
- **Hressó**
22:00 Troubadours Böddi & Dabbi play.
- **Háskólabíó**
19:30 Drums and dancing. An intimate show conducted by Rumon Gamba
- **Nasa**
23:00 TBA.
- **Prikið**
Milknight with DJ Cocoon, large beer for 490ISK.
- **Q-Bar**
22:00 Dica De La Rosa.
- **Rósenberg**
Jazz concert, Matti Sax plays.
- **Sólon**
21:00 Live Music with Ingó Idol. DJ Andres playing.

FRIDAY JAN 23

- **Apótek**
DJ Atli Már
- **B5**
DJ Simon.
- **Café Cultura**
DJ Natalie.
- **Hressó**
22:00 Troubadours Heiður in concert, followed by DJ Maggi.
- **Café Paris**
22:00 Cocktail Night.
- **Prikið**
DJ Moonshine
- **Q-Bar**
23:00 Kári & Ýr.
- **Rósenberg**
Hraun in concert.
- **Sólon**
23:00 DJ Aki Pain.

SATURDAY JAN 24

- **Apótek**
DJ Atli Már
- **B5**
DJ Funky Fleivur.
- **Prikið**
DJ Danni Deluxe.
- **Café Cultura**
Rolling Stones cover band concert followed by DJ KGB
- **Café Paris**
22:00 DJ Solid.
- **Culture House**
17:00 A string ensemble from the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra will perform music by composers from Bohemia and Moravia. 1700ISK
- **Hressó**
22:00 Napoleon in Concert, followed by DJ Maggi.
- **Grand Rokk**
Deep Jimi and the Zepp Creams in concert
- **Q-Bar**
23:00 DJ Yamaho.
- **Rósenberg**
16:00 Svavar Knútur & Melodica. About 20 troubadours play
- **Sólon**
23:00 Hraun in Concert
- **Sólon**
23:00 DJ Rikki G from Radio 95.7. DJ Aki Pain.

SUNDAY JAN 25

- **Prikið**
Hangover Cinema.

- **Rósenberg**
16:00 Svavar Knútur & Melodica. About 20 troubadours play

MONDAY JAN 26

- **Q Bar**
22:00 Pub quiz night.

TUESDAY JAN 27

- **Hressó**
22:00 Troubadours Jogvan and Vignir
- **Rósenberg**
22:00 Lay Low in concert

WEDNESDAY JAN 28

- **Rósenberg**
22:00 Fánar in concert.
- **Prikið**
Milknight, large beer 490ISK, prikshot 350ISK.

THURSDAY JAN 29

- **B5**
DJ Jay Oh!
- **Café Cultura**
23:00 DJ Einar Sonic.
- **Café Paris**
22:00 Cocktail Night.
- **Glaubar**
23:00 DJ Arnór.
- **Háskólabíó**
19:30 Czech musical magic. The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra will play czech classics.
- **Hressó**
22:00 Troubadours Jógvan and Vignir play.
- **Nasa**
23:00 FM Belfast, Hjaltalín and Sprengjuhöllin.
- **Prikið**
Milknight, large beer 490ISK, prikshot 350ISK
- **Q-Bar**
21:00 DJ Ási
- **Rósenberg**
22:00 Einar Scheving & Þórir Baldursson trio.
- **Sólon**
23:00 DJ Aki Pain.



albums of the year!?



Sin Fang Bous | Clangour
★★★★★ / Morgunblaðið



Agent Fresco | Lightbulb Universe
★★★★★ / Morgunblaðið



Reykjavík! | The Blood
★★★★★ / Morgunblaðið



Retro Stefson | Montaña
★★★★★ / Fréttablaðið

Art | Venue finder

101 Gallery
Hverfisgata 18A | **F6**
Thu-Sat 14-17 and by appointment
www.101hotel.is/101gallery/
Located in the 101 Hotel, features a broad selection of international and local contemporary art.

Artótek
Tryggvagata 15 | **D5**
Mon 10-21, Tue-Thu 10-19, Fri 11-19, Sat and Sun 13-17
www.sim.is/Index/Islenzka/Artotek
An Icelandic art exhibition space and art dealer. Pieces are available for purchase or lease.

ASÍ Art Museum
Frugugata 41 | **G10**
Tue-Sun 13-17
www.thjodmenning.is
Run by the ASÍ labour union, features mostly contemporary Icelandic art. Free entry.

Árbæjarsafn
Kistuhylur 4
An open-air museum featuring arts-and-crafts fairs and exhibitions in the summer.

The Culture House
Hverfisgata 15 | **F6**
Open daily 11-17
www.thjodmenning.is
A Museum of Icelandic cultural history, with an ongoing exhibition of the original manuscripts of the sagas and eddas.

Dwarf Gallery
Grundarstígur 21 | **H8**
Opening Hours: Fri and Sat 18-20
www.this.is/birta
An independently run basement Gallery,

Gallery Dwarf hosts exhibitions which speak straight to the hearts of the "cute" generation.

The Einar Jónsson Museum
Eiríksgata | **G9**
Tue-Sun 14-17
www.skulptur.is
Features a permanent exhibition on the sculptor Einar Jónsson as well as temporary exhibits.

Fótógrafi
Skólavörðustígur 4a | **F7**
www.fotografi.is
Features photographic exhibitions by local photographers.

Gallery 100*
Bæjarháls 1
www.or.is/Forsida/Gallery100/
Open weekdays from 08:30-16:00
An art museum run by the Orkuveita Reykjavíkur energy corporation. Features contemporary art by Icelandic and foreign artists.

Gallery Auga fyrir Auga
Hverfisgata 35 | **G7**
Independently run art museum featuring Icelandic art.

Gallery StartArt
Laugavegur 12B | **G7**
Tue-Sat 1-17
www.startart.is
Contemporary Icelandic and foreign art. Admission is free and the gallery is run without any government funding.

Gallery Ágúst
Baldursgata 12 | **F9**

Wed-Sat 12-17
www.galleriagust.is
Galleri Ágúst is a contemporary art gallery in the centre of Reykjavík. With an ambitious programme of exhibitions, it also presents and sells art-work of Icelandic and international artists.

Gallery Fold
Rauðarástígur 14-16 | **J9**
Mon-Fri 10-18 / Sat 11-16 / Sun 14-16
www.myndlist.is
More of an art auction than just a gallery, Fold also evaluates and exhibits art.

Gallery Kling & Bang
Hverfisgata 42 | **G7**
Thurs-Sun from 14-18
this.is/klingogbang/
Exhibits upcoming and established contemporary artists as well as hosting screenings, lectures and performances.

Gallery Turpentine
Ingólfstræti 5 | **F7**
Tue-Fri 12-18 / Sat 11-16
www.turpentine.is
Houses a collection of Icelandic contemporary artwork as well as works from old Icelandic masters both for display and sale.

Gerðuberg Cultural Centre
Gerðuberg 3-5
Mon-Thu 11-17 / Wed 11-21 / Thu-Fri 11-17 / Sat-Sun 13-16
www.gerduberg.is
Located in Breiðholt, the Gerðuberg cultural centre hosts both exhibitions and events.

Hitt Húsið - Gallery Tukt
Pósthússtræti 3-5 | **E6**
www.hitthusid.is
Initially thought of as a hobby centre to keep the youth from drinking, Hitt húsið is still operational and organises events as well as hosting art exhibitions in their Gallery - Gallery Tukt.

i8 Gallery
Klapparstígur 33 | **G7**
Tue-Fri 11-17 / Sat 13-17 and by appointment.
www.i8.is
Represents work by an eclectic mix of Icelandic and international contemporary artists.

Living Art Museum
Vatnsstígur 3 - **G7**
Wed, Fri-Sun 13-17 / Thu 13-22.
www.nylo.is
A non-profit gallery that organises 8-10 larger exhibitions every year as well as other cultural events.

Lost Horse Gallery
Skólastræti 1 | **F6**
Weekends from 13-19 and by appointment on weekdays.
Located in a renovated stable off Laugavegur, features work by local artists.

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

The National Gallery of Iceland
Frikirkjuvegur 7 | **E8**
Tue-Sun 11-17
www listasafn.is
Houses the national art collection and is the centre of research and documentation of Icelandic art.

The National Museum
Suðurgata 41 | **C9**
Open daily 10-17
natmus.is/
Established in 1863, this museum features exhibits on Icelandic cultural heritage.

The Nordic House
Sturlugata 5 | **C11**
Tue-Sun 12-17
www.nordice.is/
Explores and promotes Scandinavian culture with regular lectures, films and exhibitions.

The Numismatic Museum
Einholt 4 | **K9**
Open Mon-Fri 13:30-15:30.
Presents a cultural history of Iceland through analysis of collected coins, medals and books.

Reykjavík 871+/-2
Aðalstræti 17 | **D6**
Open daily 10-17
Museum on the founding of Reykjavík. Located in the oldest house in the city. Tours in English on Mondays and Saturdays at 14.00

Reykjavík Art Gallery
Skólugata 28 | **H6**
Tuesday through Sunday 14-18
The city's public art gallery features works by Icelandic artists.

Reykjavík Art Museum
Open daily 10-16
www listasafnreykjavikur.is
Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum Sigtún Hafnarhús Tryggvagata 17 | **E5**

Kjarvalsstaðir
Flókagata | **K11**
Specialising in contemporary art by local and international artists. Free entrance.

Reykjavík City Theatre
Listabraut 3
Presenting Icelandic music and dance performances as well as dramatic theatre, produces six new shows each year.

Reykjavík Maritime Museum
Grandagarður 8 | **C3**
With a fishing trawler-turned-exhibit space, educates on the maritime and fishing traditions of Iceland.

Reykjavík Museum of Photography
Tryggvagata 16 | **D5**
Weekdays 12-19 / Sat-Sun 13-17
www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is
Features work by local and international photographers, as well as an archive on the history of photography.

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum
Laugarnestangi 70
Features a permanent exhibition of sculptor Sigurjón Ólafsson's works.

Art

WARM STREAM & COLD BEACHES

Warm stream and cold beaches opens on the 17th of January at 17:00 at the Slaughterhouse in Egilsstaðir. The Slaughterhouse is a well-known venue for artists to exhibit and usually puts on fascinating shows. The current exhibition is the second instalment of an ongoing series of shows between northern Norwegians and eastern Icelanders. The first exchange between the two countries happened several years ago and reflected the artist scenes of the era. Interestingly, the artist's chosen today demonstrate a growth in national

diversity within these populations. The 12 visual artists from Norway, Iceland, Holland, Denmark, Finland and Poland, all living in these regions, will be displaying work based around the themes, warm stream and cold beaches. The stated intent of the exhibition is to depict and reflect the two landscape characteristics of both countries, which they define in the titles. The Finnish artist, Olli Puolitaival, who uses a mixture of techniques to create work from wood, will be just one of the artists showing their work on the 17th

Where:
The Slaughterhouse in Egilsstaðir

When:
January 17- February 7

For more info:
mmf.egilsstadir.is



Art

THE SKETCHES OF STEINGRÍMUR EYFJÖRÐ



A series of sketches by artist, Steingrímur Eyfjörð who represented Iceland at the 2007 Venice Biennale with his exhibition, The Golden Plover, has arrived. In January he will open a private exhibition at Gallery Ágúst with drawings as the main element in the show. The drawings and sketches collected for the exhibition are from many different chapters in Eyfjörð's working career. They will be presented in archival boxes and framed giving an insight into the artist's method and progress of work for many bigger pieces in his repertoire. The artist displays work as a continuous anecdotal documentation of his daily life, exploring the boundaries of the personal. The exhibition opens Saturday 24th of January at 16:00 and will be a unique insight into the artist creative world.

Where:
Gallery Ágúst
Baldursgötu 12
101 Reykjavík
When:
January 24- March 7
open Wednesdays - Saturdays
from 12 - 5 pm and by appointment.

6 F9

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17 JANUARY - 10 MAY 2009

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AND NOT INTO THE SHADOW OVER THERE

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Read about Icelandic contemporary literature on www.literature.is

Icelandic Literature

Reykjavik City Library. Tel: 563 1717. www.borgarbokasafn.is

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for listings, info
and entertainment

What to do and when:

www.grapevine.is

Art UPLIFT EXHIBITION

Gallery i8 is one of few galleries representing and promoting contemporary Icelandic artists – apparently it is so full that they only take on a new artist if one of their current ones passes away. Their Uplift exhibition is an exciting new solo show by Hrafnkell Sigurðsson, who tends to create digitally manipulated photographs and site-specific sculpture in his artwork. In this one, Hrafnkell appears to be commenting on the ever-changing ideology and identity of his nation. It is reminiscent of how people picture Iceland either through stereotyping or personal experience, possibly with the desire to create an affiliation between the image and his Icelandic nationality. What occurs repeatedly in his recent work is his concern for the Icelandic environment. It focuses on preserving the landscape and preventing its abuse, like his 2004 photographic series with titles such as Mountain, for an image of garbage, or the large industrial sculpture from wasted plastic bags, made from Icelandic supermarket brands. Visually, it displays a moral obligation to respect our surroundings and become more conscious to the environment. The exhibition previews on the 15th of January and should be another intriguing insight into the artist's concerns for the future of Iceland.

Where:
i8 Gallery
Klapparstígur 33
101 Reykjavík

When:
January 15 - February 22

7 G7



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holt@holt.is www.holt.is

FRIDAY JAN 30

- **Apótek**
23:00 DJ Fly
- **B5**
23:00 DJ Funky Fleivur
- **Café Cultura**
23:00 DJ Hjalti AKA Casanova
- **Hressó**
22:00 Band Dalton in Concert, followed by DJ Stjáni.
- **Prikið**
22:00 Retro Stefsson in concert followed by DJ Danni Deluxe.
- **Q-Bar**
23:00 DJ Glimmer.
- **Rósenberg**
22:00 South River Band.
- **Sólon**
23:00 DJ Rikki G from Radio 95.7. DJ Aki Pain.

SATURDAY JAN 31

- **Apótek**
23:00 DJ Fly
- **Hressó**
22:00 Troubadours Gotti & Eisi play, followed by DJ Stjáni.
- **Café Paris**
22:00 DJ Solid.
- **Grand Rokk**
Shogun plays live.
- **Prikið**
A djamm session with Gísli Galdur, Addi drummer and Guðni Bass.
- **Q-Bar**
22:00 Spice girls drag show! followed by DJ Manny
- **Rósenberg**
South River Band.

SUNDAY FEB 1

- **B5**
21:00 DJ Einar.
- **Prikið**
Hangover Cinema.

MONDAY FEB 2

- **B5**
21:00 DJ playing.
- **Sólon**
20:00 Salsa with salsa Iceland.

TUESDAY FEB 3

- **Sólon**
21:00 Live music with Ingó Idol. Dj Andres playing.

WEDNESDAY FEB 4

- **Kaffibarinn**
Bedroom Community

THURSDAY FEB 5

- **Glaumbar**
23:00 DJ Valdi.
- **Hressó**
22:00 Band Dalton playing.
- **Sólon**
23:00 DJ Aki Pain.
- **Rósenberg**
22:00 The Blues Project in concert
- **Q-Bar**
21:00 DJ Ási

FRIDAY FEB 6

- **Rósenberg**
22:00 B. Sig. in concert.
- **Q-Bar**
21:00 DJ Sexual Chocolate with Svenni

Art

- **ASÍ Art Museum**
Jan 29- Feb 01
Paintings, drawings and photographs by Kristján Steingrímur. His subject matter is the degradation of nature in public parks in many cities around the globe
- **The Culture House**
Permanent exhibitions:
Medieval Manuscripts;
The Library Room.
Current exhibitions:
Surtsey – Genesis
The exhibition traces the emergence and evolution of the island Surtsey until the present day and predicts its geographical and ecological development over the next 120 years.
The Late View – Halldór Laxness' Photographs
Nobel Laureate and cosmopolitan Halldór Laxness was better known for his writing but also proved to be a good photographer. This is an exhibition of his works.
Exhibition Series
Weird and Wonderful Beasts from Icelandic Folklore by Jón Baldur Hlíðberg is an exhibition of illustrations from his book on the magical creatures of Icelandic folklore

Hressingarskálinn

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

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



Listings

- **The Einar Jónsson Museum**
Permanent exhibition:
The work of sculptor Einar Jónsson.
- **Gallery Ágúst**
Jan 1-Dec 31 (2009)
Works of Hiroyuki Nakamura.
- **Gallery Kling & Bang**
Dec 12 - Jan 18
Baldur Geir Bragason:
Yfirborðskennd - Superficiality.
- **Gallery StartArt**
Gunnar Árnason -Kraninnkraminn
Bubbi - Guðbjörn Gunnarsson
Sigríður Ágústsdóttir - Línur
Fríðrika G. Geirsdóttir - Mana
Guðbjörg Ringsted - Finleg
Ása Ólafsdóttir - Þórdís Alda
Sigurðardóttir.
Jan 8 - Feb 4
Árni Bartels, exhibition of
paintings
Sveinbjörg Jónsdóttir, solo
exhibition
START ART artists
Sigrún Sigvaldadóttir
- **Gallery Turpentine**
9 Jan -25 Jan
Halldór Ásgeirsson, Soul Ship
exhibition
- **Gerðuberg Cultural Centre**
Nov 15 - Jan 11
Boginn Gallery: Memories Folk
-artist Halldór Víðar Garðarsson's
exhibition of oil paintings.
- **Gljúfrasteinn Laxness Museum**
Gljúfrasteinn was the home and
workplace of Halldór Laxness
(winner of the Nobel Prize for
Literature in 1955) and his family
for more than half a century. It
has now been opened to the
public as a museum, unchanged
from when Laxness lived there.
- **i8 Gallery**
Jan 15 - Feb 22
Uplift Exhibition by Hrafnkell
Sigurdsson
a series of sculptures and images
incorporating various waste
materials
- **Living Art Museum**
Dec 6 - Jan 17
A bookwork exhibition overseen
by Þorvaldur Þorsteinsson.
- **The National Gallery of Iceland**
Oct 11 - Jan 18
Love at First Sight: Modern and
temporary art from the Würth
collection
The private collection of the
German industrialist Reinhold
Würth has grown enormously
during the last decades. It is
now considered one of the
largest private collections in
Europe in terms of modern and
contemporary art. The exhibition
displays the recent acquisitions
from this important private
collections, where Impressionist
works to contemporary German
and international art will be on
display.
- **The National Museum**
Permanent exhibition:
The Making of a Nation
June 6 - Jan 31
Back Home Across the Sea:
Icelandic 19 century artefacts
from Sweden.
- **The Numismatic Museum**
Permanent exhibition:
The Central Bank of Iceland and
the National Museum of Iceland
jointly operate a numismatic
collection consisting of Icelandic
notes and coins.
- **Reykjavík 871 +/- 2**
Permanent exhibition:
The Settlement Exhibition
- **Reykjavík Art Gallery**
Current exhibition:
Magnús Tómasson, Pétur Már
Pétursson and Tólli
- **Reykjavík Art Museum**
- **Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture
Museum**
Permanent Exhibition
The Shape of Line
A new retrospective of works
by Ásmundur Sveinsson. The
exhibition focuses on abstract
works from 1945 onwards.
- **Reykjavík Art Museum**
- **Hafnarhús**
Nov 20 - Jan 11
D10 Andrea Maack
Sept 18 - Jan 11
Parallel Universes
A private Exhibition by Ingibjörg
Jónsdóttir
Sept 27 - Jan 11

ID LAB
Nov 6 - Jan 11
Inside / Out - Hlynur Hallsson
Jan 5- May 17
Erró - Point to the east, point to
the west
Jan 17 -May 17
The Erró Game- aninteractive
exhibition, kids can reconstruct
paintings by Erró.
Jan 22 - Mar 8
Ásmundur Ásmundsson
individual artist is invited to create
an exhibition that underlines
connection with life that is
happening outside the walls of
the museum.

○ **Reykjavík Art Museum**
- **Kjarvalsstaðir**
Jan 10 - Apr 13
Kjarval Complete
A salon style exhibition displaying
the whole collection of Iceland's
most beloved painters Jóhannes
S. Kjarval
Jan 24 - Apr 13
The Art of Chess
Fifteen unique chess sets and
boards made by internationally
renowned artists. each chess set
has its own concept reflecting the
artists' vivid imagination. Artist
including Damien Hirst, Maurizio
Cattelan, the Chapman brothers,
and Rachel Whiteread exhibit.
Jan 24 - Jan Apr 13
Creative Move
An on going workshop for the
whole family where they can
create chess sets out of unusual
materials.

○ **Ásmundarsafn**
Aug 22 - Dec 31
Water Carrier Exhibition
Events and Education at Reykjavík
Art Museum
Hafnarhús
Jan 4
3pm ID-LAB - Artist's talk by Jón
Sæmundur Auðarson
Jan 8
Hafnarhús
OUT/IN - a guided tour of the
exhibition throughout the city.
Jan 10
Kjarvalsstaðir
2pm- guests are invited to explore
different approaches to the
presentation of paintings with
an art critic.
Jan 11
Hafnarhús
3pm OUT/IN- Curator Ólaf k.
Sigurðardóttir leads a tour of the
exhibition.
Jan 15
Hafnarhús
8pm- A lecture organized by the
Icelandic Design Centre

○ **Reykjavík Maritime Museum**
Current Exhibitions:
Living Museum by the Sea;
Arterial for Country and City;
From Poverty to Abundance; The
Shark - Light and Life Energy;
Hidden Craftsman.

○ **The Reykjavík Museum of
Photography**
Sept 13 - Jan 11
Home/Away Photography
Exhibition: An exhibition
documenting over 50 years
of asylum seekers in Iceland,
charting back to 1956.
Jan 9
Home/Away talk with artist Katrín
Elvarsdóttir Ljósmyndari, Sigrún
Sigurðardóttir and Anh Dao Tran

○ **Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum**
Permanent exhibition:
Works of sculptor Sigurjón
Ólafsson.

○ **101 Projects**
Jan 9 - Feb 8
Sentimental nature and a Dragon:
Davíð Örn Halldórsson exhibition

OUTSIDE REYKJAVÍK

○ **Café Karólína: Akureyri**
Jan 3 - 6 Feb
Rok: Herdís Björk Þórðardóttir,
Exhibition

○ **Slaughter house: Egilsstaðir**
Jan 17 - 7Feb
Warm Stream/ Cold Beaches: A
collective of Artist from Northern
Norway and Eastern Iceland
exhibit.

**For more information about art
outside Reykjavík visit grapevine.is**

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CD REVIEWS



THE VERDICT

Convincing mixture of gentle melodies and rough blues.

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BOB JUSTMAN

Happiness and Woe



REVIEWED BY FLORIAN ZÜHLKE

The two faces of Bob Justman: in one moment "Happiness and Woe" is a shy and subtle, scarcely orchestrated singer-songwriter record, but in the next, Justman leads you into a musical southern-blues-swamp with all the excess and decadence you would connect to that genre. This switching of genres brings Mugison to mind, also because Justman performs both poles of his music equally professional and exciting. The album itself profits in the end because it is so diversified: "Happiness and Woe" never gets boring because the mixture of beautiful, laid-back tracks like "Don't move", rough blues such as "Like so many before" and a few abstract instrumentals, is so well-balanced. After Jóhann Kristinsson's very good record "Jimmy", this is the second Icelandic singer-songwriter album within a short time that is really convincing. Recommendation!

CONCERT REVIEW BY SINDRI ELTON — PHOTO BY JÓI KJARTANS



NOT METALLICA.

Oops.



Ratatat fucked up.

Well, it wasn't their fault entirely. There were other fuck-ups involved. And maybe theirs wasn't even the biggest fuck-up. But somebody fucked up, and I have a strong feeling Ratatat were one of the involved parties.

The fuck-up they are most likely to be blamed for is how late they started. I know it's fashionable and completely understandable for bands to start late. You want to wait until there's a crowd there. No sense in playing a show somewhere as remote as Iceland unless there are people there.

But waiting until 4 a.m. was probably a bad idea. There were already tons of people there, and they were way past the point of no return. A drunken mishmash of dazed, yawning indie kids mixed with the usual array of casual concert-goers that flock to big foreign names were heaving and undulating like the usual rugby scrum that is the Broadway floor. What little energy they still had at 2 a.m. was pummelled out of them by FM Belfast's fad-driven 4/4 stomp and smug onstage in-jokes.

Broadway is a terrible venue, unless you've come to see what it would be like for your favourite band to perform in a hotel lobby or a shabby Reno movie theatre – it pretty much ruins everything it touches. It's a crying shame that Iceland can't offer better mid-level venues than this. If Jeanine Pettibone were to book a venue in Iceland, Broadway would be it.

And the sound is usually terrible, which it certainly was for Ratatat. With barely audible guitar playback and a bass-heavy EQ, they sounded like

someone playing guitar to music coming out of a sub-woofer on a car stereo. Ratatat performed admirably under the circumstances. The crowd was a bit too partied out to pay complete attention, but 'Lex' and 'Wildcat' got big cheers, as did the predictable enough encore of 'Seventeen Years'.

It must be hard relying so heavily on crowd energy. When you're confined to playing along to pre-programmed beats and lack a vocalist to connect with the masses, I can imagine playing with bad sound for an inebriated crowd at 4:30 in the morning would be more than a little intimidating.

The coloured moving lights behind them helped. The massive projection screen behind them provided excellent and minimal visuals, which did enhance the atmosphere. The cut-up of 'Predator' that accompanied 'Mirando' was particularly amusing. I have it from reliable sources that Mike Stroud can quote the entire film verbatim, and from the love and attention that backdrop projection had received, I can see the rumour must have at least some ring of truth to it.

But all in all it was a failure. Someone, or rather several someones, fucked up, and the only people who had any fun there were the ones who were just having another night out, and even a good deal of those found something better to do; the crowd started to trickle out long before Ratatat finished, no doubt off to hit the bars before they closed. I refuse to hold any single individual accountable, but someone fucked up. Which is a shame, really; I rather like Ratatat. Oh well. 🐼

WHO

Ratatat
FM Belfast

WHERE

Broadway

WHEN

Saturday, December 20

THE VERDICT

Ratatat fucked up.



THE VERDICT

Political pop that is danceable but also misses hooks.

LISTEN

www.myspace.com/
internationalnoiseconspiracy

THE (INTERNATIONAL) NOISE CONSPIRACY

The Cross Of My Calling



REVIEWED BY FLORIAN ZÜHLKE


The (International) Noise Conspiracy today have been around much longer than their preceding hardcore-punk band Refused ever were. However, it is still interesting that this band also brought lead-singer Dennis Lyxzén's outspoken political lyrics to a much bigger audience than Refused could ever expect with their aggressive songs. Legendary LP *The Shape Of Punk To Come* was a pop-rock band with a political message. Noise Conspiracy's fifth album, "The cross of my calling", now sounds even cleaner, not only because it has been produced by the legendary Rick Rubin again. This is more poppy seventies-style rock, with minute-long guitar solos ("Dustbins of history") and "Riders on the storm"-style-organs ("Child of God"). "The Cross of my Calling" on the one hand is diversified and danceable, but on the other hand it unfortunately misses hooks. There is almost nothing left of the rousing energy of TINC's earlier stuff, what cannot be made up by radical statements. Maybe this is the price of making music for the masses.

Shopping | Venue finder

- 12 Tónar** Skólavörðust. 15 | **G8**
A record label as well as a store, all the best new Icelandic music on CDs or live on Fridays at 5 PM.
- 66°North** Bankastræti 5 | **F6**
High quality Icelandic outdoors clothing, designed for life at 66° North
- Aftur** Laugavegur 23 | **G7**
Aftur's internationally acclaimed label is proudly displayed here in their shop/studio.
- Álafoss** Laugavegur 1 | **F7**
The downtown outlet for famous makers of traditional Icelandic woolens.
- Belleville** Laugavegur 25 | **G7**
Stuffed with trendy streetwear designs as well as funky magazines and media.
- Blue Lagoon Store** Laugavegur 15 | **G7**
All the natural skincare products from the famous geothermal spa at their outlet here.
- Brim** Laugurvegur 71 | **H7**
Big surf wear, skate wear, and snowboard shop.
- Börn Náttúrunnar** Skólavörðustígur 17a | **G8**
The basement children's toy store sells clothes and toys only made of organic products as well as books about childcare and parenthood.
- Cintamani** Laugavegur 11 | **F7**
Featuring quality Icelandic outdoor gear, you can even book an excursion on the spot.
- Dead** Laugavegur 29 | **G7**
Artist Jón Sæmundur Auðarson's own hand-printed Rock and Roll label, Dead, plus others.
- Dogma** Laugavegur 32 | **H7**
Dogma offers street clothing with interesting prints. Hooded sweaters and T-shirts made by both Icelandic and foreign designers can be found.
- Einvera** Laugavegur 35 | **H7**
A cosy little shop with a great selection of hand-picked second hand clothing for girls who like to dress differently. Also available is the Icelandic designer label Kalda.
- Fígúra** Skólavörðustígur | **G8**
This shop features Icelandic designer wear, everything from street clothes to party dresses.
- Friða Frænka** Vesturgata 3 | **D5**
A real treasure chest of antique furniture and vintage accoutrements to perk up your apartment.
- G-Star Raw** Laugavegur 86 | **I8**
A store for the Dutch jeans brand, an edgy collection with innovative details and washes.
- Galleri Sautján** Laugavegur 91 | **I8**
Stocking many hip labels, a unisex store offering casual business wear to evening dress wear.
- Gilbert** Laugavegur 62 | **H8**
Watchmaker Gilbert Guðjónsson has sold watches and clocks on Laugavegur for over 40 years. Recently, Gilbert designed his own line of wristwatches.
- Glamúr** Laugavegur 41 | **H7**
A flashy vintage clothing shop with everything from necklaces to fur coats to kimonos.
- Green Apple** Laugavegur 20 | **G7**
The tiny shop combines massage and other relaxation products with organic products.
- Gyllti Kötturinn** Austurstræti 8 | **E6**
One of a few second hand shops that have popped up in recent years. Gyllti Kötturinn also offers some pieces by locals.
- Handþrjóna-sambandið** Skólavörðustígur 19A | **G7**
All sorts of hand knit woollen clothing as well as fine yarns and knitting supplies.
- Iða** Lækjargata 2A | **E6**
This hip new shop stocks the latest trends in everything from socks to sweaters.
- KVK** Laugavegur 27 | **G7**
Small yet stuffed designer shop KVK, which stocks a nice selection of local designs.
- Liborius** Laugavegur 7 | **F7**
One of a kind, very high-end shop featuring the latest, crispest designs for both sexes.
- Marimekko** Laugavegur 56 | **H8**
Finnish designer brand Marimekko has found its spot on Laugavegur. The Marimekko concept store stocks a wide selection of the colourfully printed designer products.
- Mál og Menning** Laugavegur 18 | **G7**
A multi-level store with games, books, souvenirs and a bustling café on the top floor.
- Moods of Norway** Laugavegur 51 | **H8**
The new clothing shop on Laugavegur closes the gap between the clothes you wear on Saturday for your night off and those you wear the following Sunday at church. From casual shirts and pants to the eye-catching tux: they have it.
- Nakti Apinn** Bankastræti 14 | **F7**
Offers an amazing array of colourful designer wear as well as contemporary media.
- Nexus** Hverfisgata 103 | **I8**
The biggest comic book and gaming store in Reykjavík has something for everyone.
- Noland** Laugavegur 32 | **H7**
A new skate shop offering fresh tees and sneakers from Krew, Supra and more.
- Rokk og Rósir** Laugavegur 17 | **G7**
Second-hand clothing for the fairer sex at a reasonable price.
- Skarthúsið** Laugavegur 12 | **F7**
Glittery accessory shop stuffed with cheap jewellery, bags or other small items.
- Skífan** Laugavegur 26 | **G7**
Selection of CDs, DVDs and computer games as well as some Icelandic films with English subtitles.
- Spúitnik** Laugavegur 32 | **G7**
One of the best second-hand shops in the country, with recycled clothes at a range of prices.
- Systur** Laugavegur 70 | **H7**
For whatever women's lingerie needs you might have, this is the store to satisfy them.
- Trilogia** Laugavegur 7 | **F7**
A collection of trendy designer wear fills the shop, summery dresses, sweaters and skirts.
- The Viking** Hafnarstræti 3 | **E5**
This large tourist shop sells all sorts of smart souvenirs to bring back home.
- Dorsteinn Bergmann** Skólavörðustígur 36 | **G8**
Since the 1940s this small store has offered a huge selection of household supplies for a laughable low price.
- Anatomic** Skólavörðustígur | **G8**
A great little shop with an excellent selection of sportswear.
- Hanna Design Shop** Laugavegur 20B | **G7**
Hanna Design Shop provides elegant Icelandic design, made exclusively out of Icelandic wool.

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DESTINATION

Pingvellir on 38 Inch Tyres

BY FLORIAN ZÜHLKE

One thing that hits you once you get acquainted with Reykjavík's cityscape is the abundance of big-wheeled, so-called called "Super Jeeps". You ponder their usefulness and purpose in an urban environment. Locals will tell you about the gravel mountain roads that still constitute the majority of roads in Iceland's wide rural regions, roads where you need huge tyres and navigation systems to tread. Super Jeeps have become very popular in Iceland, and so have tours where tourists can go on off-road as passengers in one of these tuned-up monsters.

Lately, there has been a new trend in the tourist business: you can drive the Super Jeep yourself with guidance from touring company Arctic Adventures experienced guides. The concept works out quite well as the demand for the 'U-drive'-tours has been constantly increasing since they were introduced, according to Torfi Ingvason, owner of Arctic Adventures. As you can imagine, driving around with a car that almost packs the horsepower of an industrial crane is not very eco-friendly. The company is aware of this, and tries to balance the negative effects. They are donating to the environmental organisations Icelandic New Energy and the Icelandic Carbon Fund for every kilometre driven. The trips include more adventure than just the experience of driving and navigating a monstrous vehicle. There are activities like caving, river-rafting or glacier-hiking, depending on the tour you pick. For example, the Golden Circle one includes a fascinating passing of Gjábkahellirinn, a 350m long lava cave under Pingvellir, before you drive the big-wheeled car on the bumpy mountain road to Geysir and Gullfoss.

Unfortunately the venture is all in all very dependent on the road conditions. As safety is always first, you cannot go into the highlands all year round. "We went into a mountain river yesterday, and nearly got stuck in it", says Torfi about the dangers of mountain rides in winter conditions. Therefore it is up to the weather how much "off-road" you will go. However, in a package with the other activities and seeing some of Iceland's most beautiful spots, these tours are an exciting alternative to the conventional bus trips. 

Trip provided by: Arctic Adventures
www.adventures.is



Air Iceland destinations



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ILLUSTRATION BY HUGLEIKUR DAGSSON

The Hidden People

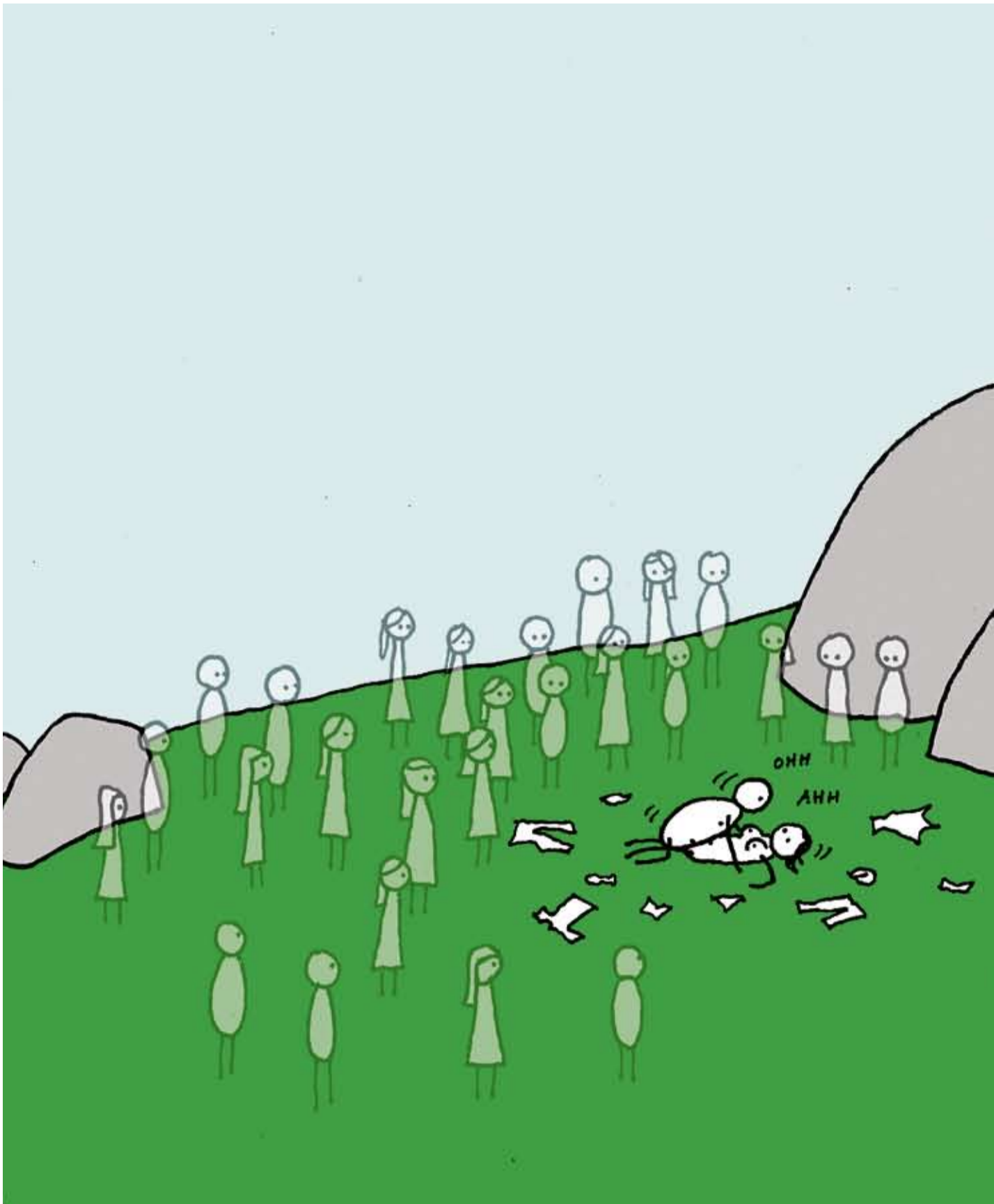
BY HAUKUR S MAGNÚSSON

This tenth instalment in our illustrated series of Iceland's monsters and mythical beings revolves around the Huldufólk, Hidden people. Actually, the majority of Icelanders will refute claims that Huldufólk are a mythical construct, calmly proclaiming belief in the species. Icelandic construction projects and roadwork are often altered to prevent damaging areas where they are thought to reside. If they do indeed exist, and any Huldufólk happen to read this, please contact us at grapevine@grapevine.is - we would love interviewing you guys.

Huldufólk often get lumped in with – what most sources claim to be – an altogether different species: the Álfar (or “Elves”). Those in the know say that Huldufólk share most of their traits with us humans; looks, language and culinary tradition, while Álfar are an altogether different bunch — smaller and quirrier, humanoid but not properly human.

Huldufólk set themselves apart from *Homo sapiens* by being invisible (unless they want you to notice them) and by inhabiting cliffs and rocks rather than apartments or condos. The origins of Huldufólk are hitherto undetermined, although there are claims that their existence can be traced back to Adam and Eve, that they are in fact the offspring of Eve's unwashed children. The story goes that God wanted to pay the lovely couple a visit and Eve, worried that He might judge her, ordered some of the dirtier ones out of sight. God gave the first crop of new humans He met a vigorous thumbs-up, but when He asked Eve if she had any more laying around she lied she didn't. The all-knowing deity was angered by her deceit, so He declared “What man hides from God, God will hide from man.”

Huldufólk are said to have co-existed with human Icelanders for as long as they've populated the rocky island. Icelandic folklore is ripe with tales of humans interacting with Huldufólk. They are as varied as they are many, with most of them depicting Huldufólk as kind and helpful folk that are often curious about humans and are even prone to seek out their companionship. There are anecdotes from this very century of Huldufólk assisting people in danger, there are tales of Huldufólk men seeking help from humans when their wives have trouble giving birth. Hell, there are even graphic descriptions of inter-species Huldufólk-on-human intercourse out there (those fortunate enough to have participated in such shenanigans describe them as “mind blowing”).



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CD REVIEWS

**THE VERDICT**

It sucks.

LISTEN

www.ingitunes.com

INGI

Human Oddities



REVIEWED BY SINDRI ELDON

The title should have tipped me off. Call it folksy, call it country, call it whatever you want, it's still gonna suck. Maybe I'm just not mature enough or not 'in touch with my feelings' enough to recognise the brilliance in this, but it's just so incredibly unbelievably lame. It's like someone decided to gut glam rock of all its pomp and irreverence and replaced it with cocksure insolence and very unrealistic faux world-weariness, leaving just the self-absorbed whiny lameness which made everyone sick of glam in the first place. And as for the lyrics, well, when a decision is made to let the lyrics carry the weight of the music, the lyrics should at least be good.

So what does this all amount to? Predictable shallow songwriting that seems to be about proving how many albums Ingi's listened to, along with presumptuous lyrics that seem to be all about proving how many books Ingi's read. It's terrible.

**THE VERDICT**

Nothing new going on here, but its chock full of goodness.

LISTEN

www.myspace.com/weaponsweapons

WEAPONS

A Ditch in Time



REVIEWED BY SINDRI ELDON

It's amazing how many singers Eddie Vedder has subliminally inspired to suck. Hreinn of Weapons probably wasn't going for Vedder's signature stuck-on-the-toilet nasal growl. In fact, he may not even listen to Pearl Jam – but somehow, it snuck in there.

As for Weapons' music, they have a sloppy, affable charm, and a knack for writing songs so cheesy, limburger seems to waft out of the speakers as they play. It's all so innocent and childish – everything from the slightly off-target lead guitars to the mind-blowingly insipid photography on and inside the cover – that it's impossible to truly dislike this album, that is if you let go of all expectations that it will be fashionable or relevant.

But in the end, Weapons probably don't care. No-one making guitar pop this basic could have any idea what's going on in the rest of the world, never mind what's cool or in fashion; they're just committed to what they know they're capable of. And that's the great thing about Weapons: they stick to their guns.

**THE VERDICT**

Disco-Rock that sometimes overdoes it.

LISTEN

www.myspace.com/jeffwhoband

JEFF WHO?

Jeff Who?



REVIEWED BY FLORIAN ZÜHLKE

Quite self confidently, Jeff Who? published their sophomore album self-titled. Again, it provides everything the band got famous for with the debut "Death before Disco". There are tons of catchy hooklines and pleasant melodies. Disco seldom seems as alive, especially when it comes to the use of synthesizers and backing vocal arrangements. Jeff Who? manage an exciting balancing act between modern Brit-pop bands like Franz Ferdinand, poppier Queen and 80s disco-rock in the vein of Bonnie Tyler. That sounds cheesy and here is the bad news: it sometimes is. When the backing choir beeps "She's got the touch" in the song of the same name, that is really too much of the disco. However, the band successfully serves very good songs like "Alain" or the rocking "You and Me". This is how "Jeff Who?" remains a good album in the end; you just have to skip some of the tracks.

**THE VERDICT**

Satisfying and tasteful, if predictable; a bit like sex with your spouse, I'd imagine.

LISTEN

www.myspace.com/agentfresco

AGENT FRESCO

Lightbulb Universe



REVIEWED BY SINDRI ELDON

This musically flat but well-performed EP sounds a bit too much like twenty other bands I could name to make an impact, but it plays well enough to be memorable. I've heard it said that a cliché is only a cliché because it's full of truth, so I'm going to spit this cliché out and hope you can forgive me for it: this band sounds like they might be able to produce something unique in the future, but they aren't quite there yet. A bit more inventiveness and variety, and they could easily become something more than the sum of their parts.

**THE VERDICT**

Weird and funny, but you wouldn't want to have sex with it.

LISTEN

www.myspace.com/skorpulifur

SKORPULIFUR

Heimabugg



REVIEWED BY SINDRI ELDON

So this is interesting. It's carefully machinated party rock, seemingly designed to have the impact of an incredibly fat man jumping onto a dinner table full of food and smashing it, showering everything with bacon and soda. It is, all at once, very Icelandic – homegrown, uncertain and self-taught in nature; and also very American – unwholesome, trashy, over-the-top, distasteful and disgusting; and at the same time, very European – obscure, inaccessible and repetitive. I don't know what the fuck this is, but it's very interesting, fairly enjoyable, almost unbearable and absolutely nonsensical.

**THE VERDICT**

Excellent fidgety aggro-pop.

LISTEN

www.myspace.com/reykjaviktheband

REYKJAVÍK!

THE BLOOD



REVIEWED BY FLORIAN ZÜHLKE

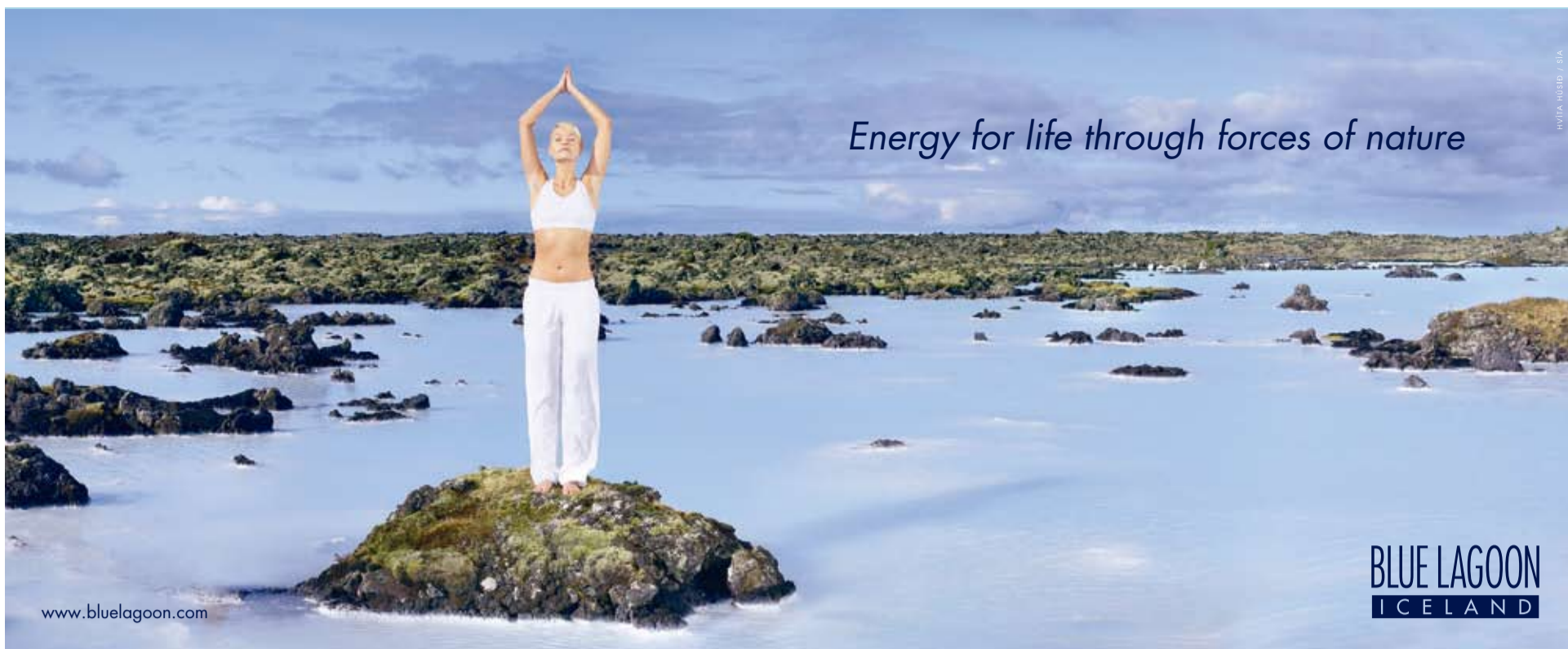
There are very few live bands around Iceland that are celebrated at their shows like Reykjavík! The second album of this furious five-piece gives the proof again why. "The Blood" catches you quite conventionally with the first beats of the title track, but then explodes in a 40 minute long energetic outburst that barely leaves time to catch a breath in between. It is amazing how well the band combines elements from punk, metal, rock and sometimes maybe even a dose of funk. Not to forget the great dual singing and the countless drum-breaks or guitar-licks that show up with every pass. "The Blood" is reminiscent of the hectic rush of The Blood Brothers, but in the end its raw power makes it a very unique piece of music. Therefore the catchy tunes like "Repticon" or "Acid Rain" are almost part of the free programme – just like Reykjavík!'s very own Christmas song "Talking Tree".



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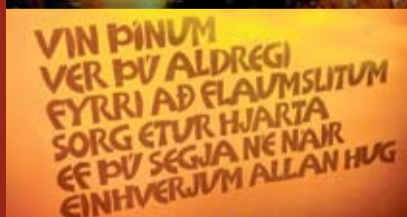


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SIGTÚNI / www.GRAND.IS

*Someone, or rather several
someones, fucked up.*

While reviewing a Ratatat gig,
Sindri Eldon inadvertently sums up
what everyone is thinking lately.

PAGE 26

*We are witnessing the collapse
of a lot of things we believed
to be good and true, and at the
same time the end of a certain
prevalent ideology in
Icelandic society.*

Egill Helgason is a knight of
our round table.

PAGE 7

*As you can imagine, driving
around with a car that almost
packs the horsepower of
an industrial crane is not
very eco-friendly*

It's still way fun, says Florian Zühlke.

PAGE 28

*I had a dream that I was
a lizard training with other
lizards to fit through a hole
in the wall. I had a dream
that I was a lizard training
in the air force.*

"Dan" has his say in our
Letter of the Month.

PAGE 4

*If my friend grew ludicrously
wealthy without sending a
penny my way, I would be
happy for him. If he then went
bankrupt and it became ap-
parent that he'd put my name
as collateral for all of his shady
business dealings, and that
it was my responsibility to
pay his creditors back, then I
would no longer have a taste
for his friendship.*

Daði Þór Jónsson explains
some fundamentals.

PAGE 8

*Happy Two
thousand-and-fine!*

Björn Þór Björnsson is snappy
and optimistic.

PAGE 12

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