



# The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE



Issue 17 × 2013

November 8 - December 5

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**THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL & ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND**

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The myth of the Icelandic banana...

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Áfram Ísland!  
Áfram Ísland!

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Editorial | Anna Andersen

# WELCOME TO OUR HANGOVER ISSUE

Anna's 33rd Editorial



Welcome to The Reykjavík Grapevine's first and maybe last "Hangover Issue."

This issue unfortunately had to go to the printers directly after the Iceland Airwaves festival. As usual, we reviewed every official show at the five-day festival and that's something like 200 shows right there (go to [www.airwaves.grapevine.is](http://www.airwaves.grapevine.is) to read those reviews and more). And, as usual, we partook in some of the partying that inevitably accompanies such a music festival. Judging by all of the broken glass and puddles of puke that we had to dodge, a lot of Airwaves-goers partied harder than we did, but we are still pretty beat after it all.

The truth is, though, the post-Airwaves streets of Reykjavík looked like they do after every weekend. The way Icelanders binge drink, smash bottles, urinate and puke all over the place, you might think we were all raging alcoholics (if you haven't witnessed it, just go read the stories on page 30-31).

It's so out of control that you might even be tempted to think that alcohol consumption and alcoholism are among Iceland's per capita world records. That's actually not the case, but Iceland does have the per capita record for the most people seeking drug and alcohol rehabilitation.

In fact, more than 10% of Iceland's living population has been to 10-day inpatient treatment for drug and alcohol addiction. And that remarkable statistic is what this issue's feature story, "Rehab Nation," is about (page 16).

Finally, if you don't think rehab is the answer to your hangover, turn to page 33 to read about our hunt for the best Bloody Mary. It turns out these are few and far between in this town and some of the strange concoctions we received hardly fit the bill.

You can thank us later for the time and energy we just saved you.

## TOURIST OF THE YEAR

As all of you surely know by now, we're running a pretty amazing contest to find the TOURIST OF THE YEAR where one lucky person will win a trip to Iceland courtesy of Icelandair. Inspired by Iceland and yours truly! Now that the year is almost out, we've gotten some really cool submissions in from readers who may be our contest winners.



**Clint Keller from the United States:**

"I should be the tourist of the year because I thrive on making sure everyone I interact with has a great time. Iceland is full of fun, witty people that enjoy a laugh and the environment created between myself, tourists and locals was side splitting funny. Dressed as the Pope; I hugged, forgave, blessed, baptized people at the Blue Lagoon and posed for photos as seen in the attached gem taken by photographer Rúnar Sigurður Sigurjónsson at Harpa during Airwaves."

But don't panic, the contest is far from over! If you think you should be our lucky winner, head on over to [touristoftheyear.is](http://touristoftheyear.is) and submit your travel tale! Good Luck!

## TRACK OF THE ISSUE

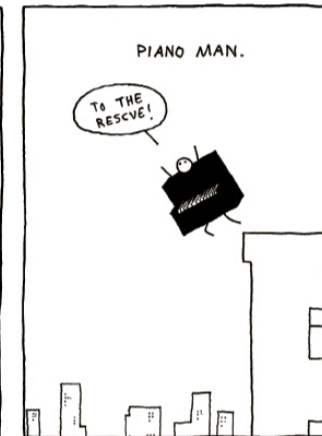


**CELL 7: "To Tha Rim"**

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

Ragna, also known as CELL 7, just put out a new album called 'CELLF,' and word on the street is that it's pretty dope! The wicked mind of Icelandic female hip-hopper Ragna is no stranger to slick beats, having been formerly associated with the band Subterranean. Before breaking out into your usual thug-poses, give her free song a listen—it features all those rap elements you'd expect from a good song, like dungeons and dragons and having 10 boyfriends.

### POPULAR HITS



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



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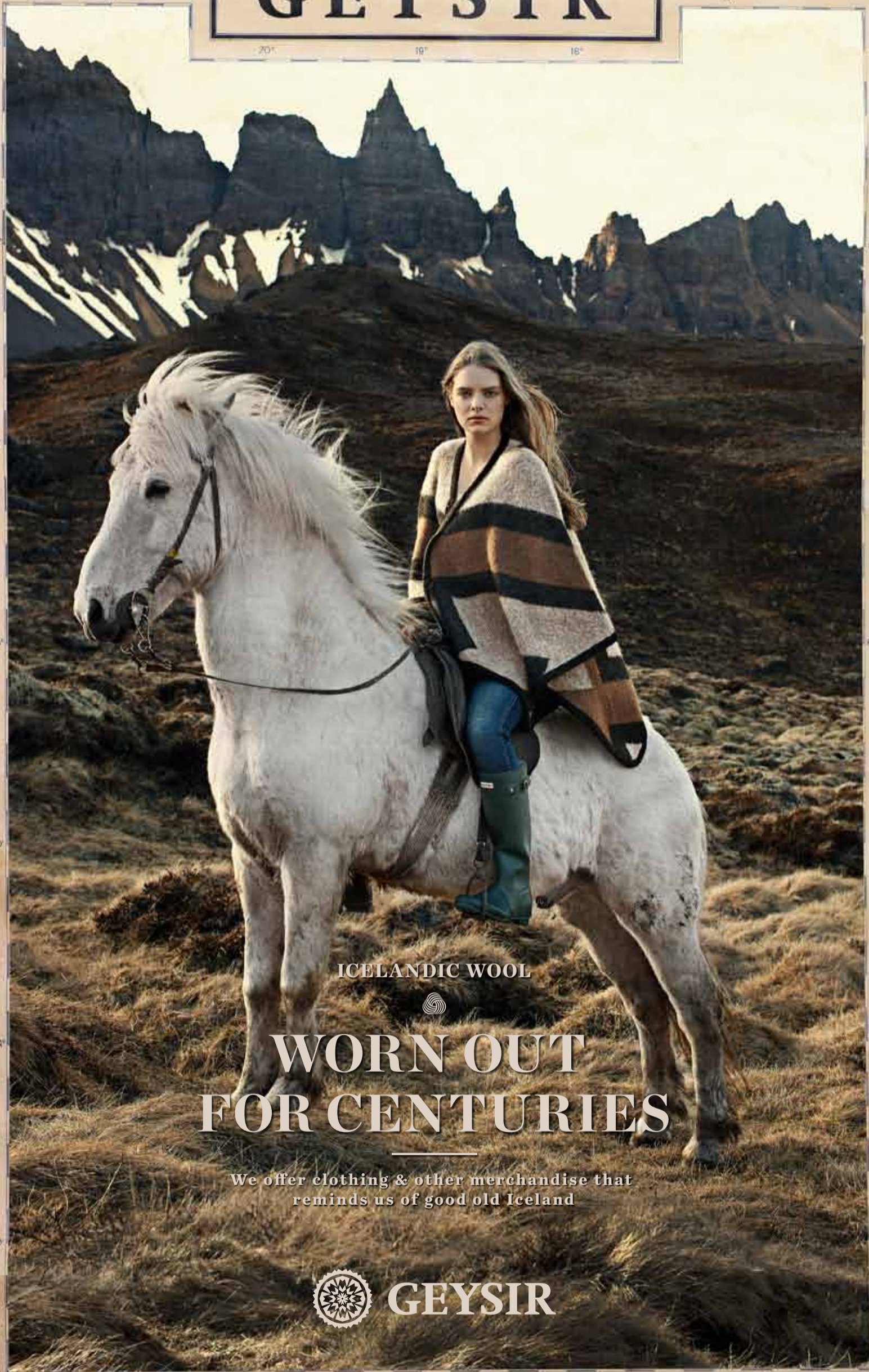
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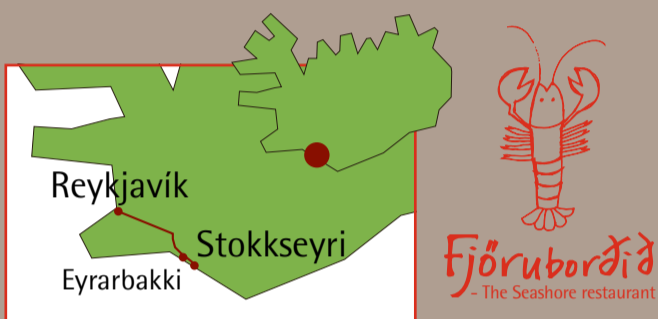


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# Sour grapes & stuff

## MOST AWESOME LETTER

Hej!

I was in Reykjavik on the 5th of october and I saw a band playing out on the streets in the middle of the day. At first I thought they were playing for tips, but they didn't seem to be. I saw them later on down in the harbor and stopped to listen, there were two women singing and playing instruments and one guy just playing. I stopped to listen to one song and I really got goosebumps, not only from the cold wind :) I really liked them but I never got the name of the band or any of their songs. I tried googling but I haven't been able to find out anything! I thought you guys might know more!

I remember that the guy was blonde and one of the girls had red hair and a norwegian style sweater. They seemed to be icelandic and also spoke english. There was a girl with a small handheld camera filming them and the crowd and two other guys taking pictures while they were in the harbor.

And if you know who they are or meet them somewhere, tell them they are awesome!

//My from Sweden

Hæ, My!

We at Grapevine are rather proud of our collective musical knowledge, and when we read your letter, we immediately thought of...well, no one. The thing is, there are an awful lot of bands in Reykjavik, many of which feature blonds, women, instruments, and Icelandic/English speakers. However, we really did want to try and help you find your goosebump-inspiring trio, so we put our heads together and came up with a short and not at all comprehensive list of Icelandic bands with three members (or more...maybe they weren't playing as a full band), which fit most, if not all, of the basic requirements:

- Amaba Daba
- amiina (redheaded member)
- Angist
- Boogie Trouble (ginger lead singer)
- Benny Crespo's Gang
- Hjaltalín
- Kjurr
- mammút
- múm
- Oyama
- Pascal Pinon
- Samaris
- Sykur

It is, of course, perfectly likely that you just saw the inaugural show of some as-yet unknown up-and-comers. So if you don't find the band you're looking for in the list above, maybe you'll find something that you'll enjoy just as much. Let us know if you figure it out!

Hi,

I recently arrived home after visiting Reykjavik for Airwaves '13. It was my fourth visit and by far the most eventful. Soon after arriving I was struck down with fever and abdominal pain. Hoping it would pass I tried to recover with rest, but it soon became clear I would need treatment.

Taken by ambulance to hospital I was treated absolutely superbly by everyone involved. The Paramedics were fantastic, the doctors and nurses I came into contact with couldn't do enough to make me comfortable. Not only that but the speed and how I was kept updated about diagnosis was very impressive. I felt totally safe in your hands.

I would like therefore to say a huge thanks to everyone that I met at Landspítali. You are a credit to your profession and a credit to your country.

As for Airwaves 14...when are early bird tickets on sale?

Kind regards

Adam Fielding

Hæ, Adam-

It isn't often that a person forks out a load of money for a pass to an international music festival, flies across an ocean, gets struck down by the kind of pain and suffering that requires a hospital visit, and then feels so positive about the whole thing that he sends complimentary letters to local papers and starts planning a return visit. We are happy that the good people at Landspítali made you happy. Sadly, there are all too many countries in the world (cough—AMERICA—cough) where medical care for \*citizens\* is neither as prompt nor as comprehensive... let alone for visitors.

We hope that you got to see a bit of Airwaves before you were laid low, and are glad you'll be back for another round of music madness next year—minus the ambulance.

Hafðu það gott!

The Grapevine

### YOUR PRIZE FOR THAT MOST AWESOME LETTER OF YOURS IS: AN ICELANDIC LAMB MEAL FOR TWO AT HRESSINGARSKÁLINN (HRESSÓ)

Dear reader. We love you very much, especially those of you that write us letters all the time. In fact we love you so much that we keep trying to reward you somehow for writing us those letters. They entertain us, and they keep us informed of what our readers think. That is a pretty great deal. Now. Whoever wrote this issue's MOST AWESOME LETTER gets a prize. And it's a pretty great one. Like this delicious meal of ICELANDIC LAMB FOR TWO AT HRESSÓ, that our winner can treat themselves and a date to! And may we say that Hressó do a really tasty job cooking up our local mountain-roamers. Lucky, lucky winner! And if you for some reason didn't write this issue's MOST AWESOME LETTER, you can always try again later.



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# The Mythical Banana Kingdom Of Iceland

## Peeling back the truth of the nation's tropical treasure

— Alex Baumhardt



Guðríður Helgadóttir

The temperature outside hovered around 5°C, but inside the greenhouses that dot the South Iceland town of Hveragerði, you can taste the humidity. A hotbed of geothermal activity located on a 5,000-year-old lava field, the town has espoused the title 'hot springs capital of the world.' I had come to Hveragerði to visit one greenhouse in particular, a 1,100-square-metre tropical greenhouse and the largest banana farm in Europe outside of the Canary Islands. I had come to Hveragerði in pursuit of the elusive Icelandic banana.

My first fill of Icelandic banana talk came at a bar. Someone launched into a conversation about Iceland's attempt in the early 2000s to become carbon neutral and begin growing all previously imported produce domestically. We talked about the near-self-sufficiency with which Iceland had been using greenhouses and geothermal energy to produce tomatoes and cucumbers and—bananas? With the self-certainty that follows a few beers, someone posited that Iceland was, in fact, the largest banana producer in Europe.

The next morning I went to Bónus, 10-11 and Krónan to see if I could find an Icelandic banana. I found only the fruit-laden head of Chiquita stuck to every yellow peel. I asked several supermarket employees where I could find the Icelandic bananas. They looked at me with expressions that said the Icelandic banana was right next to the grave of the Icelandic Jimmy Hoffa.

### Banana banter

Before I dove into the topic with Icelanders again, I needed to make sure I wouldn't come off as completely... bananas. I found a June 2010 article in the Christian Science Monitor titled, "Wait, Bananas Grow In Iceland?" in which the author and his Icelandic cohort claimed to have seen piles of bananas being burned outside of Hveragerði. "That's the way it is here," the Icelandic explains in the article. "The price of bananas has collapsed, so the farmers are burning them to create a shortage."

Furthermore, I discovered claims

that circa 2005, the Icelandic government was set to begin implementing large-scale banana production to end the import of some 4.7 million tons of bananas to the country each year. In 2005, Icelanders each ate about 13.5 kilos of the fruit, making them the Western hemisphere's number one per capita banana consumers, according to a report by the UN Food And Agriculture Organization.

More research revealed that, in December 2006, the BBC quiz show QI further perpetuated Iceland's mythical banana kingdom by making it a game-winning question. Host Stephen Fry asked a contestant, "Which is the biggest banana republic in Europe?" to which the correct answer was, seemingly, Iceland. This ignited a wave of speculation in forums and chat rooms related to the show. How could you grow bananas in Iceland? Could you grow a watermelon in the Sahara?

### An appeal for the truth

I tested my banana research on random Icelanders. When I asked if they knew or believed that Iceland was producing hoards of bananas, the response was equal parts rejection of the claim and slight belief that it could be true. "How come I'm still buying Chiquita at the grocery store?" they would ask.

"Maybe they're not allowed to sell the bananas," I would counter. I had no other explanation.

"That's ridiculous," we would laugh together with nervous speculation. But what if this was all some United Fruit

Co. driven, agricultural imperialism? Sixty percent of the world's bananas come from South America. If Iceland could begin producing bananas for large swaths of Europe, what would that do to the South American banana market?

Before I retreated to a dark room to pour over Illuminati theories and re-watch Zeitgeist, I decided to just get in touch with Iceland's foremost banana expert. Her name is Dr. Guðríður Helgadóttir and she is the head of the Faculty of Vocational and Continuing Education at the Agricultural University workstation in Hveragerði.

Within the first ten minutes of our meeting, Guðríður cleared the air on everything.

### Behold, the truth of the Icelandic banana

In 1885, the Icelandic Horticultural Society was founded. By the 1930s, the Society had discovered the ability to heat green houses with geothermal energy and, in the beginning, they thought they had the potential to grow anything this way. "Wherever there was geothermal energy," Guðríður says, "people were building greenhouses."

They were looking to grow crops that would generate the most income per square metre, and one crop they were hopeful for was bananas. By the 1940s, experiments with small-scale banana production were under way and agricultural textbooks began to speculate on the future of Icelandic banana production.

What these textbooks never went on to mention was what Icelandic growers learned several years into their banana experiments that growing bananas would never be commercially viable in Iceland because it takes too long to grow them with the whack sun schedule. It's too dark in the winter even with artificial light and, in Hveragerði, it takes 1.5–2 years to get a crop from each banana plant compared to only a few months in South America or Africa. Large-scale production of bananas for export was abandoned.

**"With the self-certainty that follows a few beers, someone posited that Iceland was, in fact, the largest banana producer in Europe."**

When Guðríður was training at an arboretum in southern England, however, several of the staff there believed Iceland was still cranking out sweet, starchy fruits for the continent. In an effort to learn more about Iceland before her arrival, they had read a book on horticulture written in the 1940s that claimed Iceland would be at the forefront of European banana production in the future. They had no reason to believe this had not become the case.

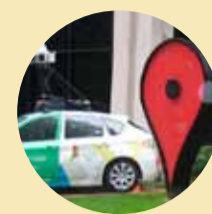
By the late 1940s, however, most Icelanders who had tried to grow bananas on their own simply gave up and donated their plants to the Agricultural College (that became the Agricultural University) and today, the University is still saddled with the plants. They live in a tropical greenhouse with a few orange and fig trees and the nearly one ton of bananas grown there annually are eaten only by students, faculty and visitors. Because the University is government-funded, they are not allowed to sell bananas for profit, but the bananas are definitely eaten, not burned.

Guðríður is used to fielding questions from speculators of the Icelandic banana. Several years ago she got a call from a location scout who was helping to plan a travel show about Iceland. He was interested in visiting one of Iceland's giant banana plantations. "I told him I could show him our banana room," she says. Of the tropical greenhouse's 1,100 square metres, about 600–700 are for the banana plants. To put this into scale, a 'big' banana farm in Guatemala is about 100 square kilometres.

Before I left the tropical greenhouse at Hveragerði, I picked a banana right off the plant, which is what everyone dreams of when they come to Iceland. Unlike me, it hadn't crossed an ocean to be there. It was small and sweet and its peel was tough and in all of these ways, perhaps it was a more fundamentally 'Icelandic banana' than I could have imagined.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

by Larissa Kyzer



With Iceland Airwaves now over, maybe you've just returned home from your first trip to Iceland and you're trying to remember that one place that you saw that one great band, or maybe you're just jonesing for another glimpse of our damp, charming little city. Lucky you! **Iceland has finally been Google Street View mapped**, so now you can vicariously revisit all those hip spots you've been without having to suffer the in-person beer prices.

With all the tourists gone, you might think that Iceland would feel a bit empty, but not so: at 325,010 people and counting, **Iceland's population is on the increase**, with a thousand babies born in the third quarter of 2013 alone. And the capital is adding to its numbers as well—following the annual lighting of her Peace Tower on the island of Viðey, **Yoko Ono was named an honorary citizen of Reykjavík**, only the fifth person to be granted the title since its inception in 1961.



Despite the tourism boom bringing in lots of cash, Icelanders have been seeking more creative—and nefarious—ways to save, and make a little extra cash. Take, for instance, the news that **an unknown member of the men's 2008 Olympic handball team put his silver medal up for sale at a collector's shop in Reykjavík**. Or the story of a rather optimistic fellow in Suðurnes who tried to convince police to help him recover the 5000 ISK he lost in a failed drug deal. Following the incident, **police confirmed that they do not assist with drug deal refunds**.

Meanwhile, **a would-be Jón in Reykjavík sued a teenage girl for taking his money, but not having sex with him**. After posing as a prostitute, the girl took 20,000 ISK from the man and then ran off. Believing himself to have been "defrauded," the man took her to court. The charges against the young woman were dropped, and the man was later charged with solicitation.

There also appears to be an epidemic of employers who don't understand how wages work: **owners of the Bauhaus hardware store are asking employees to pay them**, claiming that salaries have been

Continues over

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			10:00	10:00	10:00					
13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	
			14:00	14:00	14:00					
		17:00*	17:00	17:00	17:00	17:00*				
			20:30**	20:30						

\* From 15 May to 15 September

\*\* From 15 June to 31 July



**Elding**  
adventure at sea

# So Who's This Jón Gnarr I Keep Hearing About?

— Kári Tulinius

The boring answer is that he is the mayor of Reykjavík. He has been in the news lately because he announced that he was not seeking re-election in next spring's municipal elections. The more exciting answer is that he is a Predator-style alien who descended upon planet Icelandic Politics and wreaked havoc.

**Does that mean he's got a shoulder cannon and can go invisible?**

No, but that is how he described himself in an interview shortly after his 2010 electoral victory. While the Predator never ran for political office, Jón Gnarr did come out of nowhere to triumph against seasoned political warriors. Prior to his political career, he was famous as a stand-up comic, radio comedian and actor. He founded his political party, Besti flokkurinn, or The Best Party, pretty much as a joke, but then harnessed the anger that many people felt towards politicians after the financial collapse and rode that anger to victory.

**And behold an angry horse, and he that sat on him had a shoulder cannon and could go invisible at will.**

His party formed a coalition with one of the established parties, Samfylkingin, The Social Democratic Alliance, so he did not operate completely on his own like an alien hunter from outer space. But there were times when Jón Gnarr probably wished he could go invisible or shoot people with a shoulder cannon. The part of the political world that did treat him like a beast out of the Book of Revelations was the right-wing Independence Party.

**Did they dress his likeness up in drag and call it the Whore of Babylon?**

No, but he himself made it a yearly tradition to dress in drag and speak at Gay Pride. It will be interesting to see if future mayors continue that tradition. And while it would not surprise me if the more extreme activists in the Independence Party referred to him as the Whore of Babylon, they never have done so in public. They

have, however, shouted rude words at him in public.

**That doesn't sound terribly extreme. That happens to politicians all over the world.**

That is true, but it is pretty unheard of in Iceland, especially in the context of the most famous incident, which took place at a neighbourhood meeting. In Reykjavík, these meetings are traditionally about as raucous as a dentist's waiting room and cause about the same level of excitement as a yearly prostate exam. The chair of the local Independence Party association used that as a platform to say some quite nasty things to Jón Gnarr's face.

**How did Jón Gnarr and his party manage to gain control in the city and anger their opponents so thoroughly?**

The short answer is instability. Since the financial crash public opinion has swung behind one politician after another, only for that politician to lose favour almost immediately after being embraced. The long answer is also instability. From the end of World War II until the Cold War sputtered to a close, there was a fairly stable system of four parties, the largest being the Independence Party. The other three were Framsóknarflokkurinn, the Progressive Party, a party of farmers and cooperatives; Alþýðuflokkurinn, Social Democrats; and Alþýðubandalagið, Communists. Things have changed a lot now. The Progressive Party still exists, but has travelled far from its agrarian roots. The Social Democrats, the Communists and two other parties joined together to found Samfylkingin in 1998, but then the Left-Greens start-



□ Hörður Sveinsson

ed up as a more left-wing alternative in 1999.

**Wait, hold on... you said that there was a four party system, but then how did four different parties join up to found Samfylkingin?**

The four party system was never very rigid, many other short lived parties flamed across the political firmament. This became even more pronounced as the firm lines of cold war politics started to crack. The feminist Women's List had representation in parliament from 1983 until 1999, when it joined Samfylkingin. The list of other shorter lived parties is long and too boring to get into.

**When things are boring, it's easy for a funny guy to get attention.**

And when ideological lines are muddled and people are angry, it is easy for a smart, charismatic politician to be embraced by the public. Fortunately for all, Jón Gnarr turned out to be a pretty decent administrator whose thirst for power was limited enough that he decided to step down after one term in office. And I suppose we citizens of Reykjavík can also be happy that a charismatic politician who attained executive power during times of financial turmoil and political disillusionment did not turn the city into a private hunting reserve to shoot us with his shoulder cannon, like Thatcher did.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Continued...

inadvertently overpaid. And in the West Fjords village of Bolungarvík, **20 Polish factory employees have accused their foreman of charging them 1000 Euros for the privilege of working there.**



News like this might make you lose a little faith, and so seems to be the case for many Icelanders. Recent data collected by Statistics Iceland shows that about **10,000 Icelanders have de-registered from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland in the last three years.** As a further sign of distances possibly growing between Iceland's church and state, **the Reykjavík City Council may propose that parliament reconsider the government's "anachronistic" Christian Fund,** which requires that municipalities provide free land for the building of Christian churches. An adjustment to this law would likely be welcomed by most, as **71% of Icelanders reported that they do not approve free plots of government land being provided for houses of worship.**



But before you worry that we've gone fully heathen up here, don't forget Iceland's most recent viral sensation: **the vocal group Árstíðir (Seasons) recently gave an impromptu acapella performance of the hymn "Heyr himna smiður" ('Listen, Heavenly Creator') in a train station in Wuppertal, Germany.** The video has gotten over 849,704 views on YouTube as of this writing. Keep your chins up out there!



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# Could Iceland Qualify For The World Cup?

Iceland shocked the world by making it to this month's play-off, but the best is yet to come...

— Mark Asch



The rational answer to this article's titular question is, "Probably not, no." But rational probability has long since ceased to be a factor. Iceland faces Croatia at Laugardalsvöllur on the evening of Friday, November 15, and in Zagreb the following Tuesday, in a playoff for one of the remaining European spots in Brazil next summer. If "our boys" somehow surmount Luka Modric and Mario Mandžukic and company, Iceland would become the smallest country ever to compete at the world's biggest sporting event—and what's one more upset, after coming this far?

Iceland's qualification campaign began in September of 2012 the same way it began for the undistinguished qualification campaigns for the 2012 European Championships and the 2010 World Cup: against Norway. In front of more than 8,000 home fans drinking coffee out of paper cups, eating Domino's by the slice, and chanting "Áfram Ísland!" Iceland won a scrappy encounter with two slightly fluky goals.

After a frustrating one-nil loss in Cyprus four days later, though, it looked like the same old story: Iceland, as one of the bottom seeds in the group, would show flashes of class just frequently enough to disappoint by inevitably fizzling. But Ice-

land kept pace near the lead of the group with dramatic wins in Albania and Slovenia, thanks to late goals from Gylfi Þór Sigurðsson, a regular at top London side Tottenham Hotspurs.

Iceland's style of play lends itself to maddening letdowns and improbable heroics: impetuous attacking covered at the back by a defensive strategy based around wildly improvisatory marking, relieved by hilariously frank fouls. In ten qualifying matches, Iceland scored 17 goals—tied for the most in the group alongside winners Switzerland—and conceded 15—also tied for most in the group alongside last-place finishers Cyprus.

The turning point came this Septem-

ber in Switzerland. Down 4–1 with nearly an hour gone against a notoriously stingy side, Iceland came back to earn a 4–4 tie, left-footed right winger Jóhann Berg Guðmundsson completing a hat-trick with a gorgeous 20-yard curler in injury time. Nervy but efficient home wins against Albania and Cyprus followed, and on October 15, with the pressure on, Iceland drew 1–1 in Norway, ensuring an unprecedented second-place playoff spot in front of an estimated 2,500 travelling Icelandic fans.

The squad that ground out a result in Oslo last month has evolved considerably from the team that sprung a surprise in Reykjavík last fall. Coach Lars Lagerbäck has reintegrated Eiður Smári Guðjohnsen, the most accomplished Icelandic footballer of all time, back from a 2011 broken leg and a winding-down career, and has shown increasing trust in a young core from whom much is expected. The same eleven started the last three qualifiers, and the team is peaking: still going up bravely and brutishly for every header, but also looking patient and incisive in possession, with Eiður tracking back into midfield to play neat triangular passes with teammates a generation younger. Watching Iceland play, the current run seems less and less miraculous. And in a sense, it isn't.

### The beautiful (per capita) game

There was a time when the Icelandic men's national football team consisted of pioneers carving out careers abroad alongside part-timers plying their trade in the comparatively uncompetitive Icelandic domestic league. But Icelandic footballers, like other creative young professionals, have become a notable export in recent decades: the national side currently has its choice of around 70 players active in foreign leagues.

As the rest of the footballing world's eyes turn to this underdog story, with foreign journalists cold-calling local sports-writers to uncover the secret of Iceland's success, the narrative that has emerged is that KSÍ, the Icelandic Football Association, enacted significant changes in 2000, building more artificial-turf pitches for year-round small-side games, and increasing the number of trained coaches. Ice-

land's newest stars came up through the youth set-up here, many moving abroad as teenagers to the academies of bigger clubs elsewhere in Scandinavia before graduating to top-tier European leagues.

**"Iceland's style of play lends itself to maddening letdowns and improbable heroics."**

The captain, Aron Einar Gunnarsson, is also captain of Cardiff City, in the English Premier League, and atop the scoring table for Dutch Eredivisie is the defence-stretching striker Alfred Finnbogason. (Notably, one player who has not followed this path is the goalkeeper, Hannes Þór Halldórsson, who has spent his entire career in Iceland, and just won this summer's Icelandic championship with Vesturbær side KR. Rather than play abroad in the off-season when most other European leagues run, Hannes pursues his other career: as a director for the production company Sagafilm, where he has directed a number of commercials and music videos, including for 'Never Forget,' Iceland's Eurovision entry in 2012.)

And so in the summer of 2011, Gylfi Þór, Aron Einar, Alfreð and Jóhann Berg competed at the European Under-21 Championships, for which Iceland was one of just eight teams to qualify. Lagerbäck, who coached his native Sweden to the 2002 and 2006 World Cups, was brought in to guide the "golden generation" in the fall of 2011, months after it was announced that the field for Euro 2016 would be expanded to 24 teams. This tournament was presumably KSÍ's ultimate goal, and you wouldn't bet against Iceland, with an improved seeding position, a young team still getting better and a solid, progressive infrastructure. Though Iceland has never qualified for a major international tournament, it's surely only a matter of time. But let's not get ahead of ourselves: the biggest games in the nation's history are coming right now.

Áfram Ísland!

KEY PLAYERS

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A Bluffer's Guide to the Icelandic Men's National Football Team

**Gylfi Þór Sigurðsson,**  
midfielder, age 24

Iceland's best player, and one of the better central midfielders in Europe. A dead-ball specialist and clever attacker, he has lately sat deeper in midfield, playing defence-unlocking passes into the box.

**Eiður Smári Guðjohnsen,**  
forward, age 35

Iceland's leading scorer with 24 goals in 76 appearances. Won the English Premier League with Chelsea, and the UEFA Champions League with Barcelona. As a teenager, in 1996, in an international friendly against Estonia, he came on as a substitute for his father Arnór.

**Kolbeinn Sigþórsson,**  
forward, age 23

Strong, prolific striker who has scored 13 goals in 19 international matches, including one in each of the last four World Cup qualifiers as Iceland went unbeaten. One more goal for Iceland will see him tied for third-most all time, right alongside Arnór Guðjohnsen.

**Birkir Bjarnason,**  
midfielder, age 25

A uniquely delightful player, a goal-poaching, ball-winning left-winger. Goes hard into challenges in the air and on the ground—seems, in fact, to spend the entire 90 minutes ricocheting off other players, blonde hair flying behind. To fans of Sampdoria, his club in Italy's Serie A, he is "il vichingo"—the Viking.

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# America Daze

## Hagkaup brings Iceland the best (and worst) of America

— Larissa Kyzer



For the last few years, visitors to the Icelandic grocery chain Hagkaup have been met by a trio of unusually high profile greeters. Surrounded by enough American flags to trick out a NASCAR rally on the 4th of July, Elvis, John Wayne, and Barack Obama—the latter of whom often sports an “employee-in-training” button—invite visitors to help themselves to shimmering pyramids of Twizzlers, cheese puffs, and peanut butter M&Ms. Not to be outdone, Lady Liberty lights the way to overflowing buckets of pretzel sticks, Jello mix, and marshmallow fluff. Welcome to America Days: help yourself to some high fructose corn syrup.

In the United States, autumn brings with it a progression of increasingly gluttonous holidays. We start digging in at Halloween, loosen our belts for Thanksgiving, and end, of course, with Christmas. But while there’s no doubt that Icelanders excel at Christmasing, the dearth of fall-filler is problematic, at least from a retail standpoint. Enter America Days, a particularly successful example of what Managing Director Gunnar Ingi Sigurðsson calls “fun shopping.”

### As American as...Icelandic beef and doughnut burgers

When I met with Gunnar Ingi for a walking tour of America Days in the Smáralind mall Hagkaup, the very first things he wanted to show off were the doughnuts, starting with the be-flagged self-serve ‘doughnut bar,’ which is plonked right

between the produce and meat sections. This bar—more of a tower, really—was such a huge success after America Days last year that it is now a permanent installment. And the close proximity of doughnuts and meat counter was, I suppose, bound to inspire one inevitable creation: the doughnut burger. That is, a hamburger patty sandwiched between two doughnuts instead of buns.

(Let me pause to say that a number of Americans I spoke to were quick to mock the dubious “American-ness” of a doughnut burger. I certainly understand the shame of having such a product associated with our bloated country, and share it, but we must own that we are the nation who brought the world the Double Down: bacon and cheese sandwiched in between two pieces of fried chicken. And the doughnut burger is not just a figment of the Icelandic imagination. ‘Luther

**“I certainly understand the shame of having such a product associated with our bloated country, and share it, but we must own that we are the nation who brought the world the Double Down.”**

Burgers,’ possibly named in honour of R&B singer Luther Vandross, often utilise Krispy Kremes for buns and are sold everywhere from Illinois baseball parks to halal burger joints in Astoria, Queens.

If that isn’t bad enough, “Bacon Cronut Burgers,” or cheeseburgers sandwiched between two bacon-infused croissant-doughnuts, also began sweeping the US this fall. Our bad, world. Our bad.)

At Hagkaup, the standard pre-packaged doughnut burger kit includes four glazed doughnuts and two 120 gram hamburger patties for 999 ISK (8,00 USD). This kit has proven to be a very popular item, and features prominently in store ads with the message “Add Cheddar cheese slices, bacon, and egg, and you can’t get any more American.” Most products sold during America Days are specially imported from the US, but Hagkaup puts these bad boys together themselves. They’re just regular Icelandic beef hamburgers, Gunnar Ingi admits, just as the pre-marinated Buffalo chicken, and the aged “Western” beef are also Icelandic products. But Hagkaup is able to “make it all American” by putting a Stars and Stripes sticker that says ‘US!’ on the front.

### Forbidden sweets

The import process is a difficult one on both sides of customs. On the American side, the problems often come down to high prices and low quantities. “We used to import a brand of organics from Clint Eastwood’s town [Earthbound, from Carmel-by-the-Sea, California],” says Gunnar Ingi, but rising quotas and export fees forced Hagkaup to stop purchasing these products. “They didn’t want to enlarge the cake,” he said. “They just wanted to protect the domestic salad.” Similarly, Hagkaup has often found it difficult to test new American products in their stores because American companies can’t be bothered with small export orders. “We call to order a new item, and they ask us how much we want to buy,” Gunnar Ingi says. “We say, ‘maybe a pallet?’ and then it’s like they stop speaking English.”

While pointing out various American

delicacies on offer—such as his personal favourite, Jack Daniels mustard, which retails at 499 ISK (4 USD) and whole, frozen lobsters from Maine (1,999 ISK, 17 USD)—Gunnar Ingi also explains that many American products cannot be imported because they do not meet the health and nutrition standards imposed by the European Economic Area, whose guidelines Iceland follows. Each foreign product must be stickered with nutritional information in Icelandic, and a health inspector is sent to ensure that nothing being sold contains any forbidden ingredients. Gunnar Ingi sighs when recalling the “special” Cocoa Puffs Hagkaup had to start selling in 2012. These were made with a new recipe for the European market: less sugar, less salt, less fat. He shakes his head at the memory—“they really weren’t as good.” (He’s not alone in this opinion: although the “old” Cocoa Puffs can be sold in Iceland again, you can still find Facebook pages dedicated to “Legalizing Cocoa Puffs” from those dark, marginally less sweetened days.)

We continue on our goodie circuit, passing baskets of Hooter’s brand hot sauce, Cracker Jacks, Kool-Aid mix, canned cranberry sauce, and Tostito’s spinach dip (another employee favourite) before arriving at the holy grail: a Cheese-cake Factory cheesecake sampler which retails at 4,498 ISK, or 37 USD. “It’s...not cheap,” Gunnar Ingi says. “But it isn’t for every day.”

### Finally, Tab!

“There’s an awful lot of junk food,” I say sheepishly as we continue, passing Betty Crocker cake mixes, Pop Tarts, and Red Velvet cakes, which have been specially created by local bakeries for the occasion. I mean it as a self-deprecation about my home country, but Gunnar Ingi bristles a little—he’s obviously heard similar comments before. People complain about kids coming in any buying lots of candy, he says, but better that than going downtown and buying lots of beer. He also points out that Hagkaup has a large, and growing, selection of organic and health food products, and points to boxes of gluten-free quinoa spaghetti (779 ISK, 6 USD) as examples of less junky offerings. And, he says, brightening a little, there are also the Zevia sodas—Stevia-sweetened and calorie-free, straight from the West Coast. “Typical California.”

Indeed there is an astounding variety of American sodas in the case in front of us—at least a dozen varieties of Zevia, “Throwback” Pepsi (made with real sugar), Mello Yello, A&W Root Beer, Canada Dry Ginger Ale, Minute Maid Lemonade and even Tab. (The store ad exhibits the selection with the message, “Finally, Tab!”) The sodas are probably the most popular America Days items, Gunnar Ingi says. At 159 ISK, or just over 1 USD a can, people can try many different kinds without spending a lot of money. Unsurprisingly, these were the America Days items which sold the best during the crash years.

### Fun shopping

Taking in all the flags, and “American-ness” around me, I ask if the promotion is meant to be a tribute, or maybe a parody. Such is the nature of American nationalism and branding, I guess, that ironic patriotism and sincere patriotism appear basically identical. Gunnar Ingi smiles at the question before brushing it off entirely, as though I’m thinking a bit too hard. “No, no,” he says with a laugh. “It’s just fun shopping.”

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BirthDay | We're 10!

# Two Years Ago



Hooray! We turned ten this year. For a humble street rag like Grapevine, turning ten is a pretty big deal—we barely expected to make it to ten issues (and, indeed, all of our contemporaries from the Reykjavík's street rag market have long since bid farewell... miss u, Undirtónar!).

To celebrate our decade of existence, we thought we'd get a little introspective and reprint some choice articles from the past that are for some reason significant, accompanied by commentary and even updates. Call it a "blast from the past" or "a look into the dark cauldron of time" if you want to—we call it fun.

Thus, for ten issues, expect a page dedicated to a year of Grapevine's existence, starting one issue ago, with a look back into magical 2003.

This issue is a look at 2011, Haukur S. Magnússon's third year as editor. Read on from some reflections from the man!



Photo by Ólafur Eliasson Studios

## Remembering 2011

— By Haukur S. Magnússon

fears of their moment, solemn meditations on a future that remains very unclear.

These stories are all online ([www.grapevine.is/Art/ReadArticle/Future-perfect-tense](http://www.grapevine.is/Art/ReadArticle/Future-perfect-tense)), and you would do well to seek them out immediately, before you forget.

---

In many ways, the most pressing question of 2011 seemed to be, "what is the most pressing question of 2011?"

We had a functioning government, most of us had jobs, the SIC Report had provided convincing answers as to why everything went to hell in the first place and our good friend the Special Prosecutor was reportedly hard at work capturing the culprits. We were also working on a new constitution.

Did that mean we should just get on with things? Should we just keep going to work amidst regular sessions of telling representatives from the army of documentary filmmakers that besieged the island stories of Iceland, *The Future Of Hope™*? Or was there further questioning to be done, further restructuring, more aspects of our society that bore examination, deconstruction and criticism?

You can find examples of both in Reykjavík Grapevine's issues from 2011. There is a lot of going to work, of having fun, of business as usual, mixed with a lot of attempts to question and criticize.

---

In February, we were proud to run former intern/former journalist/constant contributor Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir's feature on WikiLeaks and the whole IMMI proposal—some very important topics that could have gone on to define post-collapse Iceland. "**Information Without Borders? - Iceland, WikiLeaks and the electronic frontier**" is the first of our many enquiries into the subject of Ice-

land becoming a media haven. It is sad to note that the most recent one, from this summer, employs the phrase "dying dream" somewhat unironically.

In our March issue, we ran not one but TWO entirely unrelated articles that invoked pop singer Britney Spears in connection to Iceland's finances. Neither before nor since have we printed such an article. We also made waves in the local media when we mocked a few local celebrities in the article "**A FOREIGNER'S GUIDE TO THE CONFUSING WORLD OF ICELANDIC CELEBRITIES.**" Featuring wonderful caricatures from Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir, Ragnar Egilsson's article pokes irreverent fun of Iceland's most vapid famebags. It was the source of quite a few death threats, but we wouldn't really be the Grapevine if we didn't invite for the occasional death threat.

Now, be honest. Is calling someone: "a kind of lobotomized Robin to [a] Down's syndrome Batman" really THAT offensive?

In our fifth issue of the year, constant GV contributor Paul Fontaine managed to capture a lot of immigrants' feelings about Icelandic society in a short, meant-to-be-funny-but-wound-up-ringing-entirely-too-true op column titled "The Tree Stages Of Integration – adapting to Icelandic society." Those three stages are, according to Paul: Wonder, Disgust and Realization (in that order).

We also published a super in-depth interview with artist Ólafur Eliasson about the façade he designed for Harpa, which was about to open at the time. Ólafur had reached out to us asking to be interviewed, as he wanted to set the record straight on a number of things concerning the concert hall, and to express his disappointment that it was to be opened before completion (we also learned that its original financial backer, the banker Björgólfur, had almost entirely shifted focus from Harpa being a music hall by the end of their involvement, making

changes to turn it into some sort of mall).

Issue six was the first appearance of our now annual bar guide. At the time, we had no idea what to feature in the magazine (it was a slow month of a slow year), so we decided the appropriate response was to drink a beer at every bar in 101 Reykjavík. Aside from ruining our livers, this thoughtless endeavour paved the way for our 'Appy Hour' app (and directly caused the wave of happy hours that has swept 101 since) and won us a few more death threats. Turns out Reykjavík's bar owners are just as sensitive as local musicians and minicelebs.

Then we got a new volcanic eruption. This one was a little shorter and sweeter than the Eyjafjallamadoodadialjajöll of the year prior, but it still gave us a cover and some nice on-line photo albums that are GREAT for SEO.

We put a lot of effort into researching what the hell was going on with Reykjavík Energy (many, many shady things), which resulted in Anna Andersen's enlightening feature "Reykjavík Energy In Deep Water." One of many positive aspects of Jón Gnarr's reign as Mayor is the investigation and subsequent cleanup of RE's affairs—the company now seems on the straight track. But for a glimpse into how mindlessly automatically profitable businesses can be run into the ground in Iceland, look no further than this feature.

There was more. It was a long year. We interviewed musicians and artists and actors and politicians, we reviewed restaurants and records and shows and THE ENTIRE AIRWAVES FESTIVAL (again) and probably scored one or two more death threats along the way.

But we're still here.

By 2011 Iceland as a nation had mostly become deeply immersed in the extended shock of 2008's economic collapse and its resulting collapses (of confidence, of faith, of self-image...).

Amidst the rubble, still in a stupor, maybe, definitely in a daze; we were astounded to find that we were still there, that Iceland had against all odds failed to sink into the North Atlantic. It became apparent that our leading emotions, Anger and Confusion, would eventually have to be made way for something else, that we would need to move on and try to remember why we were all here in the first place and what we wanted to make of it in the long run.

For our first issue of 2011, we wanted

to look forward, and we wanted to enlist our best and brightest minds to help us with that task. To that end, we contacted a bunch of our most beloved local authors and asked them to write us short short stories on the topic: 'Iceland and the next decade'. Their mission was to consider: "what's in store for our island?" and then examine their feelings about that imagined future and deliver them in prose form.

We got great stories from some of our favourites—award winning, best-selling writers Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl, Kristín Eiríksdóttir, Guðrún Eva Mínervudóttir, Óttar M. Norðfjörð and Haukur Már Helgason—wonderful prose that offers a window into our collective hopes and

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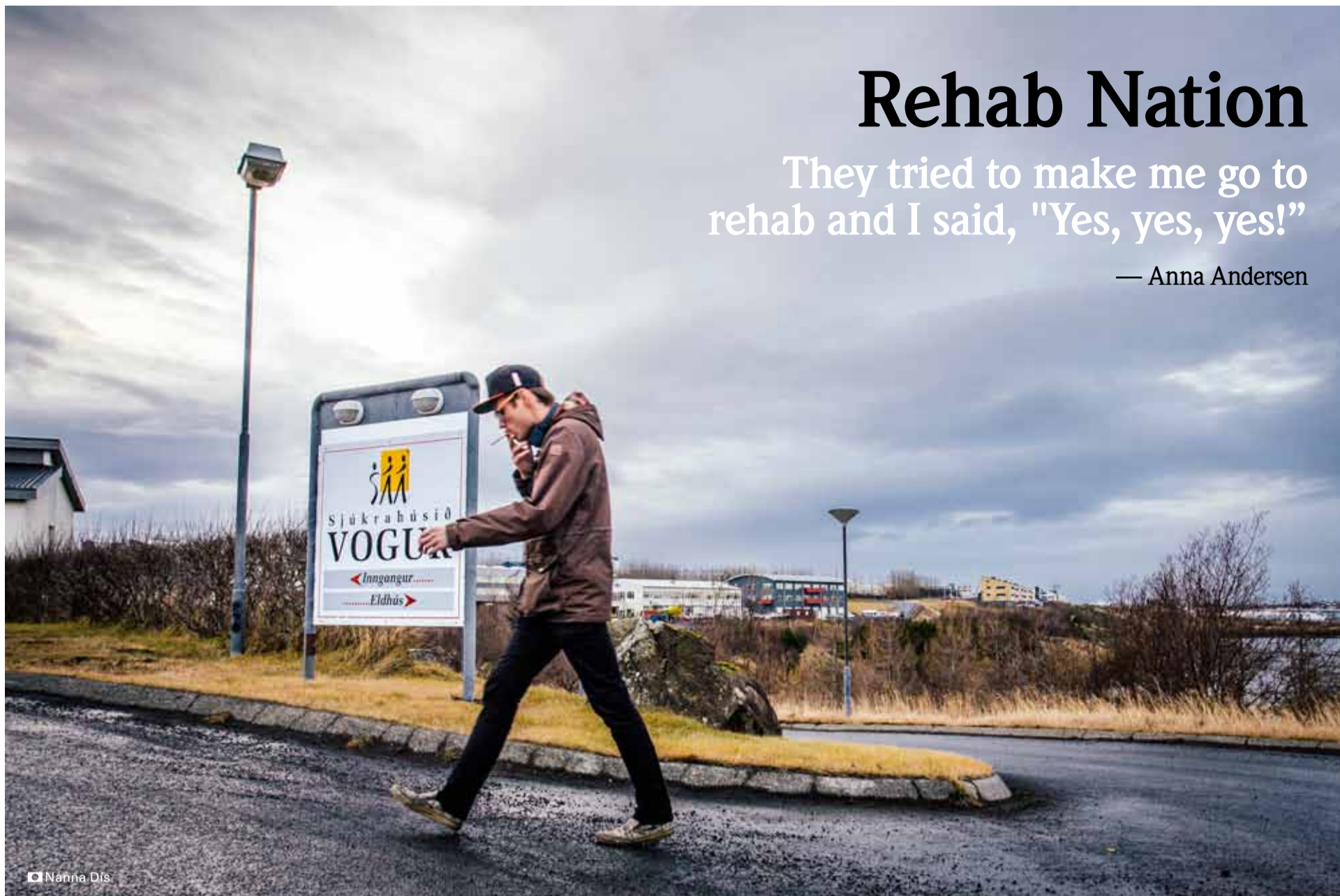
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This year Birgitta Sif Jónsdóttir illustrated the panettone box for us with the theme "The child in ourselves." Her first children's book Óliver was nominated for the Nordic Council's Children and Young People's Literature Award 2013.

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# Rehab Nation

They tried to make me go to rehab and I said, "Yes, yes, yes!"

— Anna Andersen

**Worldwide, drug and alcohol rehab is closely tied to celebrity culture. It's thought to be for people like Amy Winehouse, who died prematurely due to alcohol intoxication just three years after releasing her hit single "Rehab" in 2007, and Lindsay Lohan, who reportedly wants to open a rehab centre in her name, given her extensive experience in such facilities.**

Rehab is not for your average Joe. In fact, only 10% of people in the United States who need treatment for drug and alcohol addiction receive it, compared to 70% for diseases like hypertension, major depression and diabetes, according to a report released by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University.

In Iceland, however, the story could not be more different. Iceland's Centre for Addiction Medicine, SÁÁ, which has been running the nation's drug and alcohol rehab for the last 36 years, diligently advertises that its practices have touched every family in Iceland through the years.

In fact, the number of Icelanders who have sought rehab treatment for alcohol and drug addiction—12.8% of Iceland's living population—is another of Iceland's per capita world records, according to Gunnar Smári Egilsson, who recently stepped down as SÁÁ's director. Of Iceland's alcoholics, he says 70% have sought inpatient treatment at SÁÁ's Vogur Hospital and 60% of those have been sober for one year or longer, which he thinks must be another world record.

With more than 250 people on the waiting list for Vogur's 10-day inpatient rehab programme, SÁÁ can't keep up with the demand. It may be four to six months before those on the waiting list get one of the hospital's 60 beds, with first-timers being given priority.

Meanwhile, as SÁÁ fundraises to expand its Vogur facilities, countless recovered alcoholics have been shar-

ing their personal stories in the media to raise awareness—just like a cancer survivor might do for cancer treatment in the States. In the last two months, for instance, everyone from the director of a successful ad agency to a respected lawyer and former Supreme Court justice have written columns in Iceland's daily newspapers, testifying to their successful treatments and encouraging people to donate money to the cause.

So just how did alcohol rehab, something that is fairly uncommon and which often carries a stigma in countries like the United States, become so common and openly accepted in Icelandic society?

## A Loophole In The System

The story of alcohol rehabilitation in Iceland begins more than 40 years ago, when attitudes towards alcoholics were anything but favourable and daytime drinking was limited to white-collar drunks and homeless people.

"At that time, alcoholics were either arrested and transferred to a prison for alcoholics in the countryside, or referred to psychiatric treatment at a mental hospital where they were given hot and cold baths and electroconvulsive therapy," Gunnar Smári says when I meet him last year at Von ("Hope"), the building that houses SÁÁ's outpatient centre, Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, social events and more. "The idea that

people could recover from alcoholism was a foreign idea."

Then, in 1975, an Icelander went abroad for treatment at Freeport Hospital in New York. At the time, Icelanders had to go abroad for all kinds of medical procedures that were not available in the country so it was not altogether unusual that the Icelandic Social Insurance Administration agreed to pay for the treatment.

"In two years, 300 Icelanders went to Freeport through this loophole in the system," Gunnar Smári says. "The most well known bums in town went and were able to recover. This led to a great awakening, and SÁÁ was really founded on a call from the nation to give more people access to this kind of rehabilitation."

**"Like so many others my age and a bit older, who struggled with alcohol addiction, I drank myself into the field."**

Financially, he says, it also made sense. Treatment was covered by insurance, but patients had to pay their airfare and, although Flugleiðir (now Icelandair) agreed to cut rehab patients a deal, it was not cheap.

## Bringing Rehab To Iceland

Among the first to go to Freeport was Hendrik Berndsen, who goes by Binni and runs a flower shop in downtown Reykjavík called Blómaverkstæði Binna. In an article titled "Enginn trúði á þessa róna" ("Nobody Believed In Those Bums") published in SÁÁ Blaðið, a free fundraising paper delivered to homes, Binni recalls SÁÁ's formative years when a small group of people took it upon themselves to bring rehab to Icelanders.

"Society looked down on alcoholics,

seeing a drinking problem as a weakness rather than a disease. Alcoholics in the mental health system were looked down on, by other patients and not least by themselves," says Binni, who was admitted 20 times to Iceland's main psychiatric hospital, Kleppur, before finally seeking help at Freeport and recovering.

When he came back, people could hardly believe their eyes. "People called and asked, 'what can we do for this one or that one,'" Binni says in the interview, "and so we started shipping people out." For a year and a half, he says he made 60 trips accompanying alcoholics to Freeport—mostly white-collar drunks like directors, CEOs, MPs, undersecretaries and the director of the Social Insurance Administration—clocking more flight hours than a flight attendant.

Binni and a few others then founded the Freeport Club to support those returning from treatment and to get them into AA meetings. This group then founded SÁÁ in 1977 with the purpose of bringing rehab to Iceland and Binni became its first vice-chair.

After bouncing around between temporary facilities, and even transporting robe-clad patients mid-treatment, as Binni recalls, they set out to build a more permanent home and proved themselves to be not only pioneers in addiction treatment, but also in fundraising.

SÁÁ, Binni says, became the first organisation to get companies in Iceland to raise money for their cause. "We got Frjálst Framtak's [the company "Free Enterprise's"] Magnús Hreggviðsson to make calls. We issued bonds that we sent to every home. People could decide how much they wanted to pay and over what time period. Búnaðarbankinn [one of Iceland's main banks] used this as guarantee on SÁÁ's loans," Binni says. "Then the media turned against us. Many journalists were drunks at the time, as you can imagine, and they succeeded in arousing suspicion."

When that fundraising method

failed, SÁÁ came up with another way to sell their bonds. Then director of Sjórnvarpið [Icelandic TV]—who Binni describes as "one of us"—had given SÁÁ a primetime slot for a fundraising programme, so Binni and Magnús flew to Los Angeles to convince the stars of 'Dallas,' a popular show in Iceland at the time, to make an appearance.

With the help of the Icelandic film producer Sigurjón Sighvatsson, who was studying film in LA, they were more than successful in their mission, securing not only actors from 'Dallas,' but also a number of others, including actress Melissa Gilbert who struggled with drinking and played Laura Ingalls in Little House on the Prairie, another popular show in Iceland at the time.

"This led to a change in the atmosphere and fundraising took off again," Binni says. "It was like mudwrestling to establish Vogur."

## Checking In At Vogur Hospital

A little more than a year after Vogur opened, Þórarinn Tyrtingsson became its head doctor and treatment coordinator. "Like so many others my age and a bit older, who struggled with alcohol addiction, I drank myself into the field," he says, chuckling from across his desk at Vogur.

By the time he checked into Vogur, he was working as a general practitioner. Following his treatment, he went on to become an "Icelandic brennivín doctor," as he calls himself, overseeing what he describes as "10-days of detox and motivation that gives patients hope and assurance that they can find a cure for their evils."

He emphasises that SÁÁ views alcoholism as a disease and that the treatment at Vogur is evidence-based and all in the hands of doctors. It's also no accident that the sign greeting people who come for rehab does not just say Vogur, but Sjúkrahúsið Vogur ("Vogur Hospital"), which underlines





■ Þórarinn Tyrfingsson,  
head doctor at Vogur,  
photographed by Nanna Dís

the fact that the patients are ill. This is also the logic behind requiring all patients to wear pyjamas and robes for the duration of their stay.

A big part of his job for the last 30 years has been to remove the stigma of alcoholism, which he says is important to treatment. "I've noticed that it's easier to treat locals than it is to treat people who come from other cultures, or Icelanders who have lived abroad for some time," he says, explaining that the way society views alcoholism plays a role in recovery.

"We've always tried to put a face on the illness. We've gotten highly regarded people, who are celebrities—in the sense that they have recovered and now have a beautiful life—to come forth and talk about their story. That's how we've worked on prejudices against the illness," he says.

"There's no stigma of going to rehab and recovering. Ministers have been elected after going to rehab and talking about it openly in their campaigns," he says. "If you go to rehab and aren't successful, that's when there's a problem."

He laughs at the idea that people might be over-enthusiastically seeking rehab. "That rarely happens. Patients are very bright. Pregnant women know that they are supposed to go to the maternity ward. People who injure their head know where to go. People with this problem know where they are supposed to go," he says. "People who come here who don't have this problem usually have another, more serious problem. I'd be more concerned about them than the alcoholics who come for the right reasons."

### The Addict's Market

Gunnar Smári, who is also a recovered alcoholic and the former editor and founder of Iceland's main daily newspaper *Fréttablaðið*, is equally quick to dismiss the suggestion that SÁÁ, which employs 100 people, is overzealous in any way.

"You have to look at this as a completely divided world. On one side, you

have people who experience alcohol as something that lifts spirits during moments of celebration. On the other side, you have people who experience alcohol as the most damning part of their life," he says. "We want to be recognised as a minority with special needs that are addressed just as the blind get braille and those in wheelchairs get ramps."

**"There's no stigma of going to rehab and recovering. Ministers have been elected after going to rehab and talking about it openly in their campaigns."**

To that end, SÁÁ started a petition called "Betra líf" ("Better Life") on the organisation's 35th birthday last October, asking the State to contribute 10% of alcohol taxes—which amount to roughly 11 billion ISK per year (nearly 1 million USD)—to their cause. If the proposal—which was delivered to the Minister of Finance in June with 31,000 signatures—goes through, patients would receive an additional 1.1 billion ISK from the State, which currently finances two thirds of SÁÁ's annual budget of 1.2 billion ISK.

To Gunnar Smári, this is completely logical. "American research suggests that 20% of the population drinks 88% of the alcohol," he says, extrapolating the data to the Icelandic population. "Of the 20%, 15% are alcoholics who cannot learn to drink and must quit and 5% are heavy drinkers who go out in Reykjavík and drink in a manner that is so crass that it's hard to differentiate it from the drinking done by alcoholics."

Given that patients then pay 80% of the alcohol tax while social drinkers pay for 20%, Gunnar Smári reasons that the alcohol tax is a patient tax. "If

you think about it, the average alcoholic who comes to Vogur has already paid for the equivalent of something like seven treatments," he says.

Treatment at Vogur, which is covered by insurance, costs 22,300 ISK [180 USD] per day. "It's laughable," Gunnar Smári says. "You can't find a hotel for that money." However, more than half of Vogur's patients then go on to do an additional 28-days of inpatient treatment centred on the principles of AA, and they pay 60,000 ISK of the total cost, 400,000 ISK [roughly 3,300 USD] including the stay at Vogur.

### Crusading Onwards

Back at Vogur, Þórarinn tells me the 'Better Life' campaign hasn't been successful in the sense that a government bill doesn't look like it's on its way, but he doesn't seem concerned. "Sometimes you don't achieve your goals and you have to start again, but some good things still came out of it," he says. If nothing else, it certainly raised awareness given the large number of people who publicly endorsed SÁÁ as they collected signatures.

Outside, the sound of construction on Vogur's expansion interrupts the otherwise peaceful surroundings. "A man came the other day and donated 50 million ISK to this expansion project, which costs 200 million with all of the equipment," Þórarinn says. "We're like the Metropolitan Opera. We've received big gifts like this."

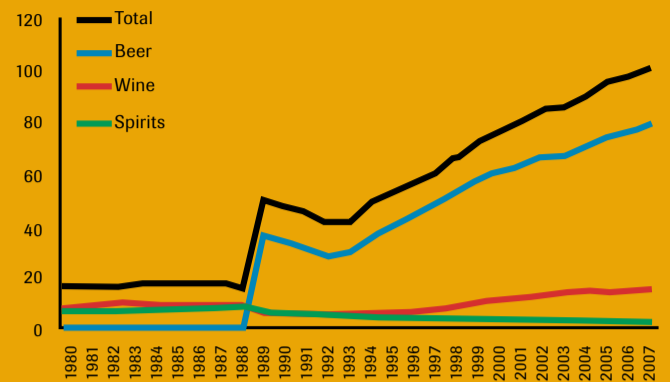
In the thirty years since Binni flew to Los Angeles to get the 'Dallas' stars to help them raise money to build Vogur, it looks like SÁÁ has not lost its knack for fundraising. Last year, it raised 252 million ISK, which is nearly as much as the Icelandic Cancer Society's 292 million ISK.

Their annual "Álfasala" ("Elf Sale") has been one of their most important fundraising campaigns since it started 1990. The white cotton balls with googly eyes that they purchase from China have brought in 430 million ISK over the years. "We don't have to promote it much," he says. "Everyone knows it. Now people are trying to steal the idea. Other organisations have other little guys, like the rescue team guy, but we are best known for this."

And if the media once looked at SÁÁ's campaigns with suspicion, the unremitting media coverage that they get today suggests that attitudes have changed. The Monday after I met Þórarinn, he appeared on the first show in a weekly series that SÁÁ is airing on ÍNN until Christmas, as part of their "Áfram Vogur" ("Let's Go, Vogur!") campaign to fund the expansion of their facilities.

On that show, he continued to drive home the point that all kinds of people come to Vogur for treatment, noting that they recently had three doctors in rehab at the same time. "I'm just waiting for someone from the teenage ward of SÁÁ to become a prime minister," he says, grinning at the thought. And perhaps when that day comes, SÁÁ will have achieved its ultimate goal of completely de-stigmatising alcoholism and its treatment.

## Alcohol Consumption In Iceland



Icelanders don't drink more than any other nation. The United States, the UK and even Iceland's Nordic neighbours, Greenland, Denmark and Finland, all drink more per person over the age of 15, according to data provided by The State Wine, Spirit and Tobacco Authority.

When it comes to drinking, Iceland has what is classified as a dry culture as opposed to a wet culture. "In dry cultures," according to a paper published by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), "alcohol consumption is not as common during everyday activities (e.g., it is less frequently a part of meals) and access to alcohol is more restricted. Abstinence is more common, but when drinking occurs it is more likely to result in intoxication; moreover, wine consumption is less common."

The Icelandic State has a monop-

oly on the sale of alcohol and sells it at 48 stores called *Vínbúð*. *Vínbúðs* around the country sold a total 18,537 litres of alcohol in 2012 with the average patron buying 4.38 litres of alcohol. Of the total alcohol sold, 76.7% was in the form of lager beer, which was notably banned in Iceland until 1989, more than 50 years after prohibition was dropped on all other alcohol.

As the accompanying graph shows, consumption increased dramatically that year and social drinking, which was once frowned upon, has become more accepted over the years. That's not to say that it has replaced Iceland's traditional binge drinking culture, which is alive and well on weekend nights in downtown Reykjavík.


Source: *Statice.is*

## Top 10 Most Popular Beers Sold At Vínbúð Stores In 2012

1. Víking Gylltur (Iceland) 500 ml 1.687.994
2. Víking Lager (Iceland) 500 ml 849.699
3. Víking Lite (Iceland) 500 ml 652.080
4. Thule (Iceland) 500 ml 615.376
5. Tuborg Gold (Iceland) ml 500 568.840
6. Egils Gull (Iceland) 500 ml 552.740
7. Tuborg Green (Iceland) 500 ml 504.965
8. Hollandia (Holland) 500 ml 453.579
9. Faxe Premium (Denmark) 500 ml 424.557
10. Víking Gylltur (Iceland) 330 ml 368.893

Source: *Vínbúð*

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## Apologies For Drunken Behaviour

From Icelandic newspapers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries

Compiled by  
Hjördís Erna Þorgeirsdóttir

Translated by  
Tómas Gabríel Benjamin

I the undersigned Þórður Magnússon from Auðsholt deem the ill words that I spoke about the brothers Guðjón Erlendsson from Sviðholt and Magnús Erlendsson from Gróf, both in Reykjavík and Árnessýsla county, both whilst drunk and sober, as meaningless. I confess that these outrageous comments were completely without cause or reason. I ask them to forgive me for my blunder.

**Sviðsholt July 5, 1894**  
**Þórður Magnússon from Auðsholt.**  
**Witnesses: Magnús Þorgilsson, Gísli Þorgilsson.**

I withdraw the offensive comments that I made about my foreman, Jóhann Bjarnason, as they were spoken in a bout of ale-madness [in Icelandic, "ölæði,"], and I have no desire to attack his integrity. It should be noted that I was hired as a deckhand on his ship for the coming spring, and we have mutually agreed that my contract shall remain in effect.

**Bolungarvík, March 31, 1896**  
**Guðmundur Sölvason**  
**Witnesses: Sigurg. Bjarnason, Ásgeir Jónsson.**  
**I wholeheartedly agree with the above written announcement.**  
**Jóhann Bjarnason.**

Ithe undersigned declare that I have apologised to the merchant Jón A. Mathiesen

from Hafnarfjörður for the injuries I inflicted on him when I attacked him, while drunk and completely out of my mind, in a shop in Hafnarfjörður on the 27th of the last month. Likewise do I withdraw all the abusive things I said to him and the people who were present, as I would not like to offend the honourable Jón, who has always been kind to me, my people, and our county.

**Brú in Hafnarfjörður August 29 1904**  
**Helgi Þórðarson**

Now

## Debauchery And Dumb Mistakes

From the Facebook page 'Játningar af djamminu'

Translated and Compiled by  
Tómas Gabríel Benjamin

It's no secret that Icelanders love drinking and a good debauched night on the town. And more than just drinking, Icelanders love to talk about drinking. Several Facebook groups serve as a forum for these stories, the biggest of which is called "Játningar Af Djamminu" ("Party Confessions"). These tales regularly involve alcohol-induced shenanigans, black outs and unexpected romantic encounters. Below are some of the best stories that we've found, translated for your pleasure.

### A girl, a pizza place and a tanning bench

Exams were over and I was out celebrating with friends. By midnight I was really drunk, so I decided to head home, stopping at a pizza place on the way. I started acting a bit crazy when I got there, and the members of staff happily went along with it. Their shift was almost over so they invited me to a party with a few friends of theirs, and for some reason I said yes. When we got to the flat, we continued partying and drinking, so I got even drunker. I saw a tanning bench in the middle of the living room, which the owner of the flat invited me to try out. I thought it was a great idea so stepped in wearing nothing but my knickers and vest [incorrectly known as a tank top in the US]. Then I'm not sure what happened, but a combination of alcohol, heat and exhaustion made me pass out.

When I woke up after god knows how long, I found myself alone in the flat and still in the bench. And the bench was still on. I was so badly burnt that I had to be rushed to the hospital.

I've never set foot in that pizza place since.

### The dangers of online (drunk) dating

This one time I came home from partying downtown, completely drunk, so I decided to do something crazy and create a fake account on [Icelandic dating site] Einkamál.is. I went to the chat room and a really fun cute guy started talking to me. He asked me to turn on my webcam, complimented me, and told me how beautiful I am, so I decide on a whim to flash him. This gets him super excited and asks me to meet up with him. Suddenly I notice I have a ridiculous amount of comments on my profile, and after reading a few of them I realise I hadn't just flash the cute guy I was chatting to, but also about 50 other horn dogs in the chat room.

I recommend against going onto dating sites whilst under the influence.

### Not everyone is meant to be Captain Jack Sparrow

I was in a Halloween party on the second floor, completely wasted and dressed as Captain Jack Sparrow. At one point that night the police showed up, and in my intoxicated state I shouted at them: "Gentlemen, you will never forget this day that you almost caught Captain Jack Sparrow," and leapt out of a nearby window. I did end up in the police car that evening with two broken legs.

### Next time just crash at your friend's place

Last Friday I went with my friends to a party. We drank a lot before moving somewhere else, where a friend picked me up. We talked together for a really long time in her car, and at six in the morning I left to go home, only to realise I had forgotten my keys somewhere. In my inebriated state I got the great idea of climbing onto the roof and getting in through the window to my room.

When I had almost reached it, four metres from the ground, I slipped and fell backwards. My fall was broken by an outdoor hot tub, and the next thing I know I'm in the hospital with three broken ribs and a bill for a new hot tub lid.

I had tried breaking into the wrong house.

### Bad decision breeds unforeseen consequences

I went home with a guy I met downtown, and we lost the condom we were going to use, but decided to have sex anyway. One morning-after pill and a few days later, I was on the toilet after feeling like my period had started, which was obviously a cause for celebration for me.

All of the sudden I felt something making its way out of my fanny, and I thought to myself "wow, my period has never felt that funny!" I looked into the toilet basin, and 'lo and behold, the missing condom had made its way out after living inside me for three days!

Now I wonder if there's anything else hiding in there that I don't know about.

# Cabbie Confessions

**Travis Bickle** works as a taxi driver in Reykjavík. His name might not be real, but the rest of it is...



Illustration by Magnús O. Magnússon

The man is enveloped in an aura of ominousness. He stumbles forward, about to trip and fall at any moment. As he reaches for the handle of the cab door, I nearly put my foot down on the pedal, but then she appears. She is like nagging in the flesh. It's as if she has a litany that contains all of your life's misdoings and sins, and she is going to tell you off for each and every one of them. Then two wispy little things follow in their footsteps. Daughters, but not sisters, in their twenties, each the offspring of these mishaps of creation.

They all mix like a laboratory experiment waiting to explode. The man gets in the front. The ladies get in the back. The man can't piece together a sentence and lies slumped over on the verge of unconsciousness. The woman, on the other hand, pieces sentences together at such an alarming clip I suspect she's trying to get proper mileage out of each and every word she knows before they all go out of style.

They want to go to the farthest reaches of the city. But first one of the girls must get downtown. Admonishments fly left and right. At a hip downtown address she moves to get out, but not before her comatose father tumbles headfirst out the door and bangs his cranium on the pavement. The blood comes gushing out of his bruised temple and the woman goes off like fireworks.

She yanks the girl out of the car as if she were a pair of jeans from the closet. A fist to the face is her reward. Bowed down like hunchbacks they pull at hairs and throw haymakers at each other. The other girl moves to join the fray, but gets sidetracked by the bleeding husk of a man, now semi-erect. The fisticuffs move along to a soundtrack of name-calling. She is a slut to him is a drunk to her is a bitch to her is a cunt to him is a whore to her.

I get my iPhone out, not knowing whether to film this or call the police, but the snitch in me prevails. Before the bright blue lights arrive, the tragic woman and her long suffering child re-enter the car amidst a flurry of blows, and as the doors close, the other girl bellows a catalogue of curse words and kicks the side of the car like she was at football practice.

He is a fiend with a checkered past. His stories reek of embellishment and his life seems like a tragedy of Greek proportions. He namedrops like he is flipping through a rolodex of state prison inmates and his millions illegally gained seem like they could at least pay for the cab fare, which he can't afford in the end. Like the bums of the downtown benches and squares, his saga is urgent and needs to be heard for him to feel like he still exists. Like the recollections of his glorious heyday somehow justify the bleakness of his today. I'd not like to walk a mile in his shoes, although maybe having one of his stories to tell as your own might make you the centre of attention at a dinner party. Depending of course on what kind of lowlife dinner parties you frequent.

"I get my iPhone out, not knowing whether to film this or call the police, but the snitch in me prevails."

To round up the shift I get stiffed. This jogging suit wearing son of a bitch be showing up at 7 am on a Saturday seeming totally legit in his utter sobriety and talking all casual on the way to Mosó, where he pretends to have lost his card and goes inside to fetch legal tender, never to show up again. I got sumbitches number though. He about to get stepped on.

HALLGRIMSKIRKJA CHRISTMAS MUSIC FESTIVAL 2013  
DECEMBER 1ST - DECEMBER 31ST 2013

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SCHOLA CANTORUM – CHAMBER CHOIR OF HALLGRÍMSKIRKJA  
DECEMBER 1 – 1ST SUNDAY IN ADVENT – 5 PM  
PREMIER OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS BY HAFLÍÐI HALLGRÍMSSON AND ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS A CAPPELLA  
MUSIC BY MACMILLAN, ARVO PÄRT, KREEK AND SVIRIDOV.  
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**ADVENT LUNCHTIME CONCERT**  
SCHOLA CANTORUM – CHAMBER CHOIR OF HALLGRÍMSKIRKJA  
DECEMBER 4, WEDNESDAY – 12.00-12.30 NOON  
CONDUCTOR: HÖRÐUR ÁSKELSSON. ADMISSION 2000 ISK.

**OTHER EVENTS:**

**DECEMBER 1 - 1ST SUNDAY IN ADVENT**  
11 am Festive Mass with the Bishop of Iceland, the Hallgrímskirkja's Motet Choir, cond. Hörður Áskelsson and organist Björn Steinar Sólbergsson.  
12.15 noon Opening of a new exhibition with artist Hildur Bjarnadóttir in the foyer. Free entrance.  
2 pm Reykjavik Boys Choir at Hallgrímskirkja Advent concert  
Lenka Mateova orgel  
Conductor: Friðrik S. Kristinsson  
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# Australian Artist Reclaims Reykjavik's Rough Walls

Guido Van Helton creates refined street murals from his past as an anonymous tagger



**Words**

Alex Baumhardt

Australian artist Guido Van Helton rides up a construction lift at Seljavegur 2 to meet his canvas. The wall he paints is old and slightly corroded, two stories high and the west facing part of a building that once used to be a theatre but is now an industrial workspace. With his can of Spanish Montana brand spray paint, he creates the outline of a grey eye, and the image of a woman's face, her vintage dress and the man she dances with begin to blossom in proportion to it. If a static image can be said to look fluid, Guido's murals appear to swoop and fall with each soft layer of spray paint he adds, bringing the wall and his photo-inspired works to life.

Guido was commissioned to paint this wall in part to reclaim it from persistent tagging, a form of graffiti art he used to practice as a teen. The 26-year-old grew up in Melbourne, Australia's graffiti capital, tagging trains with his friends.

"We did the logo-based, repetitive branding stuff," he says. "It's fun and it taught me everything I know about this, but I just started getting into lots of trouble for it."

Guido was arrested five times in Australia for his graffiti and the time and money involved seemed like a waste. While this could have put him

off of graffiti for good, it instead became the impetus to creating more professional and developed work. "I started to think that there had to be another way to redirect the graffiti," he says.

He went to university in Brisbane, Australia, where he studied visual art and experimented with watercolours. He was developing his style in this medium, but was not receiving the same level of satisfaction he got when he was working on a great mural and unconventional, outdoor canvases.

"There's a drive with graffiti

that's hard to replicate anywhere else," Guido says. "What inspired me was that people were going to see it. It's out on the street, you see it immediately; it's going to be judged immediately."

**Conceptualised street art**

Graffiti was no longer about rebellion for Guido, but about the potential to exhibit his art in a public forum.

"I tend to think of graffiti as anti-social. You don't have to speak to anyone, you don't have to ask any-

one permission, you just do it, and you hide your face when you do it, and you might not even tell people that you did it," Guido says. But his murals are not something he can, or would, choose to hide behind. Now if he wants to spray paint a wall, he asks.

A recently completed work on a home just up the street from his mural at Seljavegur began with a knock on the door. The base of the house had some typical tagging on it and Guido and a friend asked the owner if Guido could paint over it. He showed her other works he had done and she was particularly taken with his detailed paintings of old faces. She fetched a bedside picture of her grandfather and asked Guido to paint him, the very man who had built the house.

The woman was out of town when the newspaper Morgunblaðið called to ask her about the mural and when she saw the image of her grandfather's face painted on the home, she wrote Guido to share the most beautiful feedback he has ever received for a painting.

"I came to realise it's because it's supposed to be there. It's a part of that building now," he says. "People

see a familiarity within that face and to the woman whose grandfather that is."

**Coming to Iceland and into his own**

Guido came to Iceland for the first time in April to participate in a two-month Nes Artist Residency in Skagaströnd. The mayor of Skagaströnd drove Guido around the town of 500, enthusiastically pointing out walls the artist could reclaim. They were old, cracked, weather beaten and perfect for Guido.

"I really like corroded surfaces or a crumbling wall. It's like I'm borrowing and using this texture to make my art better. A painting on a white wall is just a painting. A painting on these old shitty walls is more than that," he says.

Skagaströnd's natural beauty provided unique inspiration to Guido who has worked primarily in Australia and the UK. "Having a snow topped-mountain in front of you, sea behind you, and, essentially, the next stop north is Greenland, that to me was so inspiring," he says. "That was just as interesting

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“A painting on a white wall is just a painting. A painting on these old shitty walls is more than that.”

if not more than painting in a city like Edinburgh.”

Equally inspiring was the response from the residents of the town.

“I feel like my work is really coming into its own here because I’m engaging with the community,” he says. “It’s not just me doing my own art and saying here, this is me, on you.”

**Reimagining a play in Reykjavík**

The wall he’s working on now was commissioned after the building’s owner saw Guido working on the painting of the grandfather’s face. Guido was offered a free place to stay and materials in exchange for murals on three of the building’s walls. A lift was hired for Guido to access all reaches of the wall and his mainstay spray paints from Spanish Montana were shipped in from the UK. They are the only paints he uses.

“I’m just real picky now with this,” he says. “I’ve worked out what works and what doesn’t.” He can spend weeks mixing the colours through a process of freezing a can of one colour, puncturing a hole in it, and then submersing it

into the can of another colour.

Presented with three, blank, wall canvases, Guido went to the Museum of Photography and found a series of photos from a 1961 production of the play ‘No Exit.’ The painting he’s working on now of a woman in the dress dancing with a man is the actress Helga Löve. Her daughter actually discovered Guido painting her mother by happenstance. “A week or so ago this woman came by and asked me what I was making and then suddenly said, ‘That’s my mother!’” Guido explains.

When Guido finishes all three walls, he’ll go back to Australia for the Southern Hemisphere’s summertime and the opportunity to make some money in order to continue travelling and painting his murals. He’s interested in returning to the north to paint in Greenland, though he’s open to nearly anywhere a building is crumbling or a tagged space needs reclamation. “I’ll just go to wherever the art takes me,” he says. “I’m totally at the mercy of it.”

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# The Friendliest Little Crime Fest In Reykjavík



Illustration by Magnús O. Magnússon

## Iceland Noir: Iceland's First Festival of Crime Fiction

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**Words**

Larissa Kyzer

Going into its first year, Iceland Noir, the first ever Icelandic literary festival dedicated exclusively to crime fiction, has already set a high bar: months prior to the event it attracted over one hundred and twenty registered participants, many of whom will be travelling to Iceland from abroad to attend. Arnaldur Indriðason will be the Guest of Honour, and among the panel participants are a number of much loved and lauded authors such as Ann Cleeves, whose Vera Stanhope novels have been adapted into a popular BBC TV show; John Curran, a leading expert on the life and writing of Agatha Christie; and 2013 Glass Key winner Jørn Lier Horst. And yet, the idea for the conference has very modest—and spontaneous—origins.

"It arose over a curry," says British author Quentin Bates, who organised Iceland Noir along with fellow crime writers Ragnar Jónasson and Yrsa Sigurðardóttir. The trio met at the inaugural meeting of the Icelandic chapter of the Crime Writer's Association—the first CWA chapter, it bears noting, which has been established outside of the UK. Quentin says that they all thought "it was odd that Iceland had never had its own crime fiction festival. By the time we met again a few weeks later at CrimeFest [another international crime fiction festival], the decision had more or less been made to organise Iceland Noir ourselves."

**Keep it simple**

This decision was only made in May, but "as you might expect from Icelanders," Ragnar says, "we thought, 'let's do it this winter.' We all have the same mentality. We weren't afraid to do this right away, and it's been very enjoyable. We have zero budget, but still haven't spent a single krónur—everyone is volunteering and all the events are free."

True to this communal spirit, none of the authors appearing at the conference are being paid appearance fees, and all of those who are travelling from other countries

are paying their own way. Neither has there been a shortage of organisations and participants willing to freely offer their services: the Nordic House has made its facilities available for panel and reading events free of charge; the BBC and iTV allowed the festival to screen the first episode of the forthcoming "Shetland" series (based on books by Ann Cleeves) without paying for the rights; Eymundsson is staffing a pop-up bookstore stocked with books by all the participating authors; All Iceland Travel Agency is independently organising sightseeing activities for overseas visitors (although participants will have to pay for such tours); and Irish crime novelist William Ryan is even teaching a free crime writing workshop for festival guests and participants.

The idea, Ragnar says, was to make the whole process as easy as possible—a particularly important point given that all three organisers have full-time jobs outside of their writing careers. (These aren't your typical day jobs, either: Ragnar is a lawyer, Quentin is a journalist and writer, and Yrsa is a civil engineer.)

"One of the things that made this possible was that none of us were looking to make money out of it, beyond hopefully selling a few books," agrees Quentin. "The plan

"It arose over a curry," says British author Quentin Bates, who organised Iceland Noir along with fellow crime writers Ragnar Jónasson and Yrsa Sigurðardóttir.

was to set up a friendly, informal event with a bunch of like-minded people. Crime writers really do like to enjoy themselves when they get together."

**Keep it open**

When they started organising the festival, Ragnar, Quentin, and Yrsa simply invited fellow crime authors who they knew to participate, and the response was quite positive. "We had hoped that Arnaldur Indriðason could be persuaded to take part, but when he did say yes it was a bit of a surprise," Quentin says. Through word of mouth and a little advertising, other authors heard about the event, and asked to participate. "We haven't said no to anyone," Ragnar says. "It's not an invite-only thing. Any crime writer who approaches us would be welcome."

This open spirit is extended to readers and conference participants as well. Beyond opportunities to meet at special outside events, like a Christmas buffet at Hotel Borg, readers will also be able to speak with authors throughout the conference. Each author will be on hand after panels to meet conference guests, sign books, and chat. "There's no fun in just writers meeting writers," Ragnar says. "The point is to allow writers and readers to meet informally, to get to know each other."

**Looking ahead**

Even before the first conference takes place, Iceland Noir has already exceeded the modest expectations of the organisers. "What has taken me by surprise," says Quentin, "is that people are already asking when the 2014 event will take place. We hadn't planned to do another one—or, rather, we had planned to see how this one pans out before making any decisions on any more. But such is the enthusiasm for it that we find ourselves in the position of having to organise another Iceland Noir next year."

The organisers have some ideas about how future conferences could expand a little—perhaps host some panels outside of Reykjavík to give foreign guests some exposure to the Icelandic countryside, or look for a larger venue so that more people could attend—but they aren't getting ahead of themselves.

"Ask me once it's all over," Quentin says. "We will have to take stock of it all once Iceland Noir is over and figure out what to do next year. One of my goals would be to attract writers from further afield, as there are so many of them in far-flung parts of the world. I'd also like to maybe move it between locations. We've joked about Iceland Noir in the Faroe Islands in 2017—but who knows?"

# Talking Crime In Iceland

**Words**

Larissa Kyzer

With more than 25 authors participating in this year's Iceland Noir festival, there are plenty of well-known names from the Icelandic crime scene—including Guest of Honour Arnaldur Indriðason and co-organiser Yrsa Sigurðardóttir—as well as many notable authors, critics, translators, and scholars who will be arriving from the UK, Norway, Germany, and The Netherlands. In anticipation of the event, we reached out to participating authors to find out what they are most looking forward to about talking crime in Iceland. The answers below have been excerpted; see [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is) for the full Q&As.

**Yrsa Sigurðardóttir**



Yrsa Sigurðardóttir is a popular children's book author and one of Iceland's best known crime novelists. She has gained worldwide popularity for her series featuring Reykjavík lawyer Þóra Guðmundsdóttir. Her novel 'I Remember You,' is currently being adapted for a Hollywood film.

**How did the idea for the festival come about?**

Ragnar Jónasson came up with the idea when we were attending Crimefest in Bristol this spring. He wasted no time in setting things in motion and now it is almost upon us, and it's much more impressive than I, for one, had originally anticipated.

**Have there been any particular challenges in planning this first event?**

I think the challenge was probably all on Ragnar and Quentin's side when they realised that I was not kidding when I said I would not be able to do much. The two of them

have done almost everything. I have offered to work in the coat check to make up for it.

**What/who are some of the events, panels, or speakers that you are most excited about?**

I think all events have their merits, and the nice thing about the panel format is that you get varying voices and opinions, which tends to make things livelier. Anne Cleeves is, of course, the most distinguished foreign writer attending and we are really pleased as well to have Arnaldur Indriðason participating as the guest of honour.

**How would you describe the crime writing community in Iceland?**

Friendly. Crime writers in Iceland, like elsewhere, are nice and decent people. There is not a lot of hooking up as a group here, but when we do meet it is always enjoyable. I was told by a foreign photographer who specialises in photographing authors that the crime writers are usually very funny and sweet, while humour writers are very bleak and depressed in person. I can verify the crime writer bit, but do not know enough humour writers to make a call on that conclusion.

**Who are some of the Icelandic crime authors you would like to see gain a greater audience?**

I think people would be surprised to know how many Icelandic crime writers and authors in general are in translation. Unfortunately, I am unable to quote any percentages but it is a hefty amount. To be honest, it would make me very happy if they all became hugely successful. I am also sure that some will, it is just very hard to say which ones. If it was easy to predict the public's opinion of books, i.e. what will sell and what won't, then publishing wouldn't be as tough a game as it is. Neither would writing.

**Jørn Lier Horst**



**Jørn Lier Horst is the former senior investigation officer in the police department in Larvik, Norway. He is the author of nine crime novels starring Police Inspector William Wisting (also of the Larvik police), and is the first crime novelist to bump Jo Nesbø from the top of the best-seller lists in Norway.**

**What kind of challenges do you face when trying to incorporate your real life police experience in your novels?**

Only my first novel was based on reality, and I had to balance the content between fiction and fact. In a way, I started my career as a writer on my first working day in the police: December 8, 1995. This was the day when Ronald Ramm was found raped and murdered in his own home in my hometown

Larvik. It was a thrilling experience to be in such a crime scene, seeing how there had been a fight to the death going from room to room until it ended up in the outer corridors where Ramm was found slain and with hands tied. For a young policeman, it was a very special feeling to stride over the threshold into a murder scene, knowing that I went in the footsteps of an unknown killer. The murder of Ronald Ramm has been described as one of the most bizarre and brutal killings in recent Norwegian criminal history.

What really happened at that time, 18 years ago, is still not known. The killer has never been caught. The murder mystery has engaged me ever since. My debut novel, 'The Key Witness,' is based on this unsolved crime mystery, and offers a fictional solution.

**Viktor Arnar Ingólfsson**



**Viktor Arnar Ingólfsson is the author of seven crime novels, and has been twice nominated for the Glass Key Award. His book "Daybreak" was adapted for the 2008 TV crime series "Mannaveiðar" ("Manhunt").**

**Who is another author at the festival that you are interested in meeting or hearing speak, and why?**

I have met authors who were not much fun to be with, but I've never met a boring crime writer. I look forward to meeting and getting to know all of them.

**Which of your own novels is your favourite and why?**

Which of your children is your favourite? There are not many who can or are willing to answer that question. 'House of Evidence' was with me for many, many years. 'The Flatey Enigma' takes place on a very special island I knew very well. 'Daybreak' was the first of my books to make it to the screen. Every one of them is special in some way.

**I believe that you have a full-time job in addition to writing—is it difficult to balance these two work lives? Would you want to write full time if you could?**

My life is good as it is. I have a day job I really like, excellent co-workers and a decent coffee machine at the workplace. Occasionally it's fun to think of new ways to kill people, but I don't need to do that all the time.

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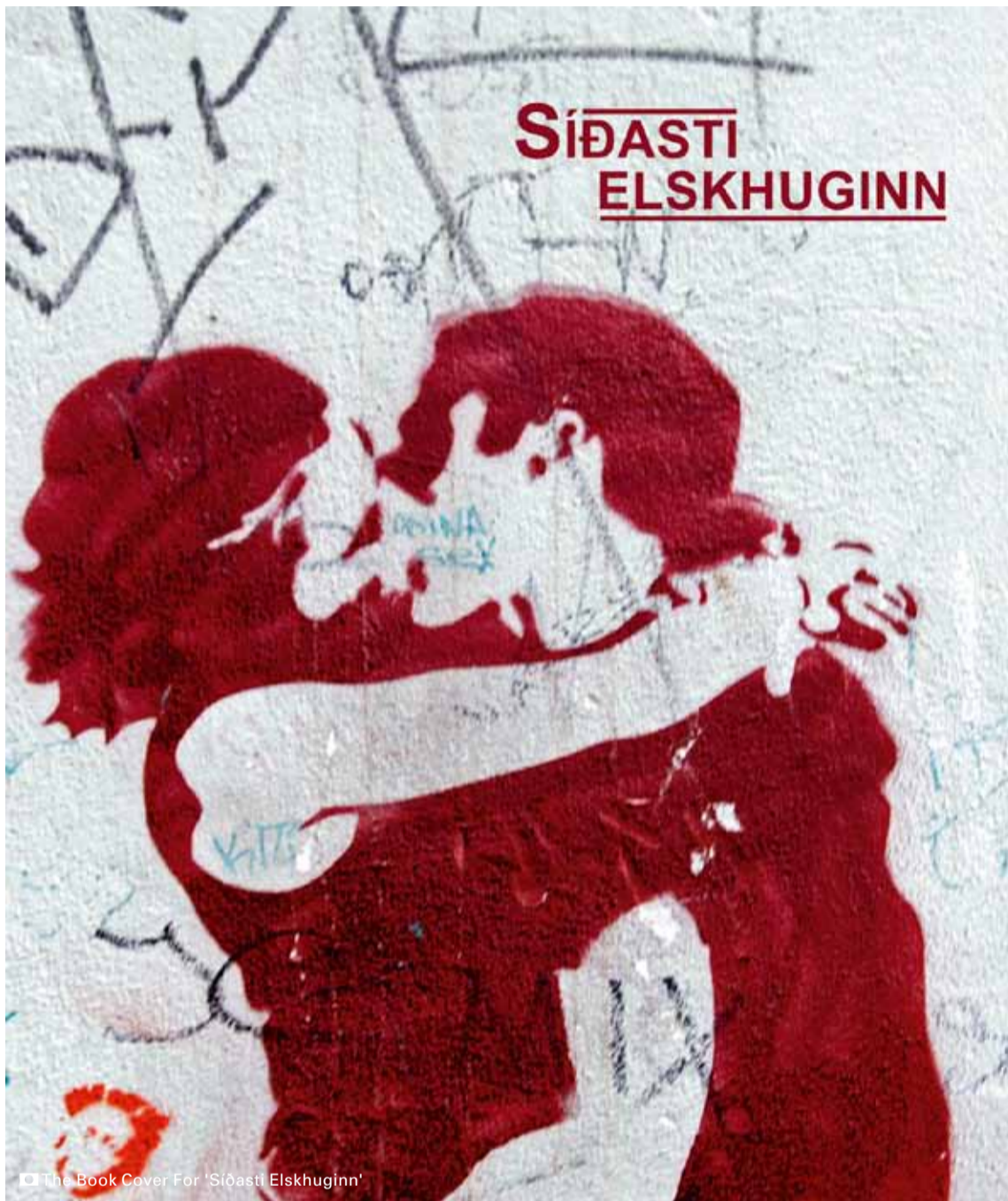
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## Why Is There No Dating In Iceland?



**Valur Gunnarsson** was the first editor of Grapevine. He is currently publishing his second novel in Icelandic, called 'Síðasti elskhuginn' ("The Last Lover") for which he has widely researched the difference in relationships between Iceland and everywhere else.



The Book Cover For 'Síðasti Elskhuginn'

"So how did you meet your boyfriend," one of the girls asked. "At Prikjó," one answered. "At Vegamót," another said. "At Harlem," offered the third. We all laughed. We were at an Icelandic Eurovision party in Berlin, and this was indeed the way things worked back home. The only girl present not to have met her boyfriend at a bar was also the only one who was seeing a German guy.

That Icelanders almost always hook up at bars and almost nowhere else is not a subject that needs debate. If still in doubt, just try the same experiment conducted above on your Icelandic friends. The results will invariably be the same. Sure, people might first meet other places, but it still takes that trip to the bar for the next step to take place. And the meeting there will almost always be coincidental.

### People Talk

Rather than asking if or how, it's much more interesting to wonder why this is so. Perhaps a comparison will shed some light:

In the film 'Of Snails and Men,' recently shown at Bíó Paradís, a Frenchman comes to a small Romanian town and asks a local girl out on a date. "No," she says. "Why not?" he asks. "This is a small town," she answers. "There is nothing to do here and besides, people talk." There is indeed quite a lot to do in Reykjavík compared to towns of similar size, but still the options are limited compared to big cities, the weather is often harsh and things are pretty expensive. None of this is conducive to dating. But the second

reason is perhaps more important. People do talk.

### ...Those Two?

If you were to go out on a date with someone, say to the movies or a coffee shop, you would invariably bump into someone you know. Said person would give you a curious glance, perhaps followed by a smirk and then ask everyone you mutually know: "Are those two seeing each other?" The cat is out of the bag by now and your first and perhaps only date suddenly feels more like an engagement ceremony.

Much better then to wait until the lights go out, everyone you know has gone home, is too drunk to care or engaged in their own business. In other words, going out, getting hammered and then heading home with whoever happens to be standing next to you at closing time carries much less social penalty than meeting in broad daylight. It is widely understood that what happens at the bar doesn't really count. Leave it until the morning after to figure out if you two really have something in common and if the same thing happens again next weekend

with the same person, you have yourself a relationship.

### Rushing In

The flipside of drunken sex is that Icelandic relationships actually develop quite quickly. Whereas in bigger cities the whole vetting process may take weeks or even months while you are asked about everything except your bank statements and family history of mental disease (and sometimes even that), people here tend to jump directly into a committed relationship right after the second sleepover, or thereabouts. In fact, it is generally considered bad form not to. Once doesn't matter, but do it twice without following through and you start to get a bad reputation.

This all goes back to point two again. The smallness. Dating several people at the same time is socially impossible. Everyone would know. Fistfights would ensue. Better to do the trial and error one person at a time, which is why Icelanders tend to have a series of either one-night stands or serious relationships, but no overlapping dates. So now you know.



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## Hair Of The Dog That Bit Me



**Ární Arnason** is a musician who likes a good Bloody Mary.



□ Ární Arnason

In order to nurse the wounds of Airwaves weekend, I went on a Tuesday afternoon hunt for the elusive Icelandic Bloody Mary.

This spicy little comfort blanket is not a drink I was particularly accustomed to before moving to the UK a few years ago, so I set out with minimal hopes and as expected, hit a few speed bumps along my way. A couple of interesting takes on the drink were to be found at places that don't open till after 6 o'clock, which completely defeats the point of selling a universal hangover cure. In addition to that, I came across a few places which had been drunk completely dry by the Iceland Airwaves patrons. They therefore couldn't serve me one even if they wanted to. But this isn't par-

ticularly surprising. For a country that legalised beer in 1989 and has only recently come to terms with the idea of a "glass-of-wine-over-dinner," our drinking culture doesn't provide much leeway for people who enjoy a breakfast drink. And as it turns out, Icelandic law apparently prohibits serving alcoholic drinks before noon. That on its own cuts acceptable Bloody Mary time from five to three hours (until this experiment, I had never had a Bloody Mary after 3 o'clock).

### Snaps

I found my first Bloody Mary around 2 o'clock in the afternoon at a bistro called Snaps. My order sparked the day's first of many desperate searches for celery to garnish my drink, but after it was found I was served a perfectly acceptable, yet non-descript, airport bar type Bloody Mary. The usual suspects, Tabasco and Worcester sauce, were elevated by the addition of Iceland's own Reyka vodka, which is head and shoulders over most of the bottom-shelf vodkas I was yet to be treated to. The surroundings, the relatively reasonable price (1,800 ISK) and the vodka selection make Snaps' Bloody Mary your best bet if you're trying to find a place where your drinks order won't spark subtle judgment from your fellow customers.

### Slippbarinn

Prior to this mission of mine I had been told by various sources that I'd find Reykjavík's best Bloody Mary at Slippbarinn. Not completely willing to blow my load this early in the day I tried to order one at various hostels and bars on my way down there. Kex? No tomato juice. Bunk Bar? Nada. Bast? Maybe in a few weeks. This fruitless roam around town meant that I didn't have my next Bloody Mary until 4ish. Slippbarinn's version of this drink is a perfect example of how far you can stretch its recipe. Homemade tomato puree served in a jam jar with a spoon, it resembled a thick gazpacho type soup more than a drink. It contained pepper infused vodka and soy sauce and was beautifully garnished with ginger, a slice of lemon and lightly pickled and shaved celery. A very interesting take albeit way too

much of a meal to serve its function as "hair of the dog." It was by quite some distance the most intricate Bloody Mary I've had and at 2,200 ISK, it was bizarrely not the most expensive drink of the day.

"Homemade tomato puree served in a jam jar with a spoon, it resembled a thick gazpacho type soup more than a drink."

### Laundromat

Some of the best Bloody Marys I've enjoyed have come from dive-y American diners that you'd never associate with great cocktail making, and whilst Laundromat could not be referred to as a dive, it is a pretty straight up American diner, and I therefore had to try. My 17:30 order sparked another frantic search for garnish and whilst my bartender's colleagues looked for celery, he proceeded to put a splash of Cointreau in my otherwise fairly standard Bloody Mary. I'm not one to turn my nose at experimental cocktail making, but sickly sweet orange liqueur mixed with tomato juice and Tabasco? I ended up ordering a beer and leaving my 2,100 ISK cocktail pretty much untouched.

### 101

Having already covered a hotel bar, I didn't really feel like going to 101 Hotel for a drink, but after wandering around for forty or so minutes without finding anything, I was forced to admit defeat and reluctantly roamed towards the-way-too-swanky-for-my-liking 101. With expensive cocktails, expen-

sive looking furniture and expensive sounding lounge jazz, 101 is the type of place that made me feel dirty upon entering and even dirtier as I ordered a brunch drink around 19:30 in the evening. Shame on me. Seeing as 101 boasts a fairly extensive cocktail menu that actually includes a Bloody Mary, I was pretty shocked when my drink arrived void of any garnish or spice. A shot of Absolute vodka mixed with tomato juice and nothing else of notice. This was the budget airline version of a Bloody Mary. Although at the crazy price of 2,350 ISK it could hardly be called budget.

### So, where to turn in times of need?

First of all, the main thing I took from this experience is that nobody should ever attempt to drink more than one, or in severe cases, two Bloody Marys. This adventure of mine started a whole vicious cycle by leaving me in need of another one the morning after. Terrible idea.

If you are someone who thinks they'll be in need of a Bloody Mary whilst roaming around town, my best advice is to carry a bottle of chipotle hot sauce wherever you go. A splash of some smoky chilli would have made all my drinks considerably more enjoyable. But failing that, I wouldn't dare to go anywhere but Slippbarinn or Snaps to enjoy this particular tippel.



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Laugavegur 54

## Aboard A Whaling Vessel



© Jonny Zwick

### Words

Jonny Zwick

It was mid-afternoon when I received the email I had been waiting for all summer. Guðmundur Konráðsson, son of long time minke whaler, Konráð Eggertsson, informed me that I was welcome to board their whaling vessel, the Halldór Sigurðsson, if I could make it to Ísafjörður in time for the next hunt. I promptly rented a car and took off on a seven-hour journey to Iceland's famously beautiful Westfjords area, astonished that these men had just granted me access to film the killing of a minke whale.

I boarded the ship two days later, after some bad weather postponed the hunt. It wasn't the rain or haziness that deterred the whalers, but the choppiness of the wind-blown ocean that held them back. The Eggertsson duo hunts whales independently, so they don't feel the pressure of going out on a difficult day. They hunt when they want to and sell their meat to Gunnar Bergmann Jónsson, head of the Minke Whaling Association and owner of Hrefna HF, the leading distributor of minke whale meat in Iceland.

Before the engine started Guðmundur looked me straight in the eyes with a very serious look on his face. "If anything goes wrong when we shoot the minke whale," he said, "I am going to tell you to turn off the camera. You must do it. It only happens one out of 100 times, but it could happen." I agreed, nodding my head, while conjuring up ways of capturing the moment things "go wrong" without the whalers noticing. Immediately switch the memory cards? Set up my GoPro in a hidden location? I was distressed enough by the thought of witnessing the brutal act of things going right, so the idea of a mishap really put me on edge. "Things going wrong" entails the explosive harpoon entering the wrong area of the whale, leading to a slow and miserable death.

### Whales spotted!

As we slowly drifted out of the harbour, the two men scrambled to prepare the harpoon. They attached a rope to the end of the red-tipped explosive metal rod and ran it along the length of the boat. The rope wrapped around a circular beam at the end of the vessel, which acted as a crane to drag the minke whale onto the back platform once it had been shot. After setting up the rope, Konráð ran inside the cabin to grab something. I followed him and sat in the corner, filming as he rummaged through a box. After he had found what he was looking for he walked back toward his son who was still fiddling with the deadly weapon at the front of the ship. All of a sudden Konráð turned on his heel, looked directly at me, and lifted a red object in the air before saying, "this is bomb" with a large, animated smile on his face. Shivers ran up my spine as the reality of the situation set in.

From an outside perspective the atmosphere would have seemed similar to that of a regular fishing expedition. The

men drank cup after cup of steaming hot coffee, occasionally looking down at the radar monitor or grabbing their binoculars to scan the glassy water. Other boats in the small community knew them well and waved cheerfully as we passed. The whalers even received phone calls from other fishermen in the fjord who reported minke sightings.

About two hours into the voyage we came across our first whales—a cow and her calf—but to the Konráð's dismay, they were of the wrong species. Humpback whales are protected by the government. Konráð and his son have spoken to media outlets about how it is in Iceland's best interest to resume the killing of this species, which is currently protected by the government.

**"If anything goes wrong when we shoot the minke whale. I am going to tell you to turn off the camera."**

After three months of whale watching all over Iceland, I found it ironic that my closest encounter with whales was aboard a whaling ship. The magnificent mammals rose to the water's surface directly in front of me as if they were a friend of mine coming to let me know things would be ok. My initial reaction of enthusiasm must have been off-putting to the whalers as I momentarily forgot where I was. I looked over to them in awe as I was so accustomed to share my excitement with fellow passengers on whale watching tours. As if the beautiful beings spurred them on, they cranked the ship into high-gear and off we went, leaving the ever-so-peaceful humpbacks to roam their waters.

### Unexpected chaos

Unexpected chaos exploded in an instant when we saw a minke whale around 3:00 PM, seven hours into our journey. Konráð shouted "HREFNA!" ('minke' in Icelandic) to his son with eagerness as he grabbed ear protection and headed for the harpoon. I leapt to my feet and got into position atop the second story of the boat where I thought I had the best position for capturing the kill on camera. A siren rang loudly, warning others that a powerful explosive would soon be launched into the ocean. Guðmundur

stood next to me, driving the boat from the second platform, changing directions to keep the minke whale directly in front of the boat. Konráð swung the harpoon violently, changing directions as the minke whale continually broke the surface of the water. It seemed as if Konráð had at least four clear opportunities to shoot the whale, so I felt the need to ask Guðmundur, "Is he going to shoot it?" Guðmundur simply responded with, "You never know when he is going to shoot." After about eight minutes of intense follow, the whale had vanished. We slowed down to almost a standstill and crept through the empty fjord for about an hour before the men gave up and continued onward.

As relieved as I was, it was confusion that stood out as the dominant feeling in my mind. I had never seen a whale watching operator lose a minke whale. Once they are spotted it is almost always the driver who decides to leave the area after viewing the whales for long periods of time. How could someone who had been doing this for 40 years lose a minke whale that easily on a clear, glassy day? Why didn't he shoot it when he had the chance?

### Just a show?

As the clock turned to 5:00 PM, I realised we were heading back to the harbour. I was ecstatic that one more minke whale would be roaming the North Atlantic, but baffled by the behaviour of the minke whalers. Were they putting on a show for me? Was this whole day a charade put on for the viewers of my film? While interviewing the two men for my documentary about Icelandic whaling, they repeatedly told me that they don't have anything to hide. I will never get a definitive answer, but I believe their motivation was to have me capture them on a hunt, showing people that they are not afraid to kill on camera, without actually having to kill on camera.

As we pulled back into the harbour, Guðmundur began ranting to me that my country, The United States, is responsible for killing more whales than Iceland. I thanked the men for allowing me on their ship and hopped off of the Halldór Sigurðsson, bewildered by my day on a whaling ship.

# So, Like, There's No Sun Up There In The Winter, Right?



**Karen Pease** is a computer programmer and card-carrying nerd who moved to Iceland with nothing but the clothes on her back, a plane ticket, a few dozen large tropical plants, a 12 meter shipping crate, a plug-in hybrid car, and a talking parrot.

Anna Andersen



It seems that nearly every conversation I have with overseas family and friends this time of year where Iceland is mentioned ends up with them saying something along the lines of, "Yeah, but it's dark all the time there now, right?" It becomes clear that they picture it such that, for three months of the year, Iceland is the land of the Mole People, with its human residents stumbling around in pitch blackness or shining flashlights to keep the grues away.

## The Reality Is Surprisingly Complicated.

Most people from lower latitudes picture distinct time periods, "day" and "night," and think of the transition time as relatively insignificant. They also tend to picture day length by season. But neither of these concepts really apply well at a latitude of 64 degrees.

First, to go from "constantly bright" to "lots of dark" over the course of a year, day length has to change fast! In early November, we lose nearly seven minutes of direct sunlight per day. It's enough that people with punctual schedules and a south-facing window can readily notice the decline every day. One starts November with eight hours of direct sunlight, but by the low point in mid December, it's down to just over four. But then by the end of February it's over 10 hours. So simply talking about how much light there is in the "winter" doesn't give a sense of how much it varies, even day to day.

## Then Comes The Issue Of, "What Do You Mean By 'Dark'?"

Just because the sun is below the horizon doesn't mean that it's suddenly pitch black. Now, if you live in a place like Miami, sure, there's not even half an hour between "it's bright enough to see what I'm doing" and "the sun is blazing in my eyes." But up here near the Arctic Circle the sun doesn't go as much overhead as take a low broad arc. In the summer, it arcs all the way around you, rising in the north and setting in the north. In the winter, it barely pops up in the south and sets again just a bit further west in the south. That "in-between time" gets really stretched out.

Day and night are divided into different categories based on how low the sun

is and how much light is out: astronomical twilight, nautical twilight, civil twilight, and direct sunlight.

Astronomical twilight is where there is not enough light in the sky to see much of anything on the ground, but it lights the sky a little bit and blots out faint stars like having a second moon up. During the solstice, Seattle and Paris get about 12 1/4 hours that are this or brighter. Reykjavik gets just under 11 hours. That's right, the night sky at the winter solstice is completely dark only 10% longer in Reykjavik than in such cities!

Nautical twilight is where it's bright enough to clearly see the horizon, but not yet bright enough to do everyday activities. Seattle and Paris are at least this bright for 11 3/4 hours, while Reykjavik has 9 hours of it. So we get over three fourths as much "horizon glow" at the solstice.

Civil twilight is where it's bright enough to do everyday activities but the disk of the sun is not yet up. Seattle and Paris have 9 1/2 hours; Reykjavik gets 6 3/4 hours, or just over 70% as much.

Finally there's what a lot of people only care about: direct sunlight. Paris and Seattle get 8 1/4 while Reykjavik gets just over 4 hours, or only half as much. But it gets worse because while in the former cities the sun rises to an 18-degree altitude, here even in the southern side of mountainous Iceland it doesn't muster three degrees! The most minimal of mountains can block most to all direct daylight, while any low clouds can easily turn the sun into nothing more than a fuzzy haze. Some small towns in Iceland get no direct sunlight for months on end.

So to sum up: it's absolutely true that we don't get much direct sunlight in the winter, and around the solstice, there's barely any. But we do get a surprising amount of "dim."

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# Suspended In Silfra

Snorkelling through Iceland's most famous fissure

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#### Words

Alex Baumhardt

The most notable fissure to be found along Þingvellir lake is the Silfra fissure, a rift in the earth's crust between the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates. When you step into the near-freezing water of the Silfra fissure as a diver or snorkeler, you are literally stepping between two continents. This is a dark, cold and spectacular place.

#### Suiting up

The difference between a national park in Iceland and the rest of rural Iceland is subtle. When the van toting a group of five middle-age Danish women and I arrived at Þingvellir, I hadn't actually realised that we'd entered a national park. It was winter, the sky was grey and the water reflected it. The landscape around the lake is sparse and volcanic, surrounded by distant snow-topped mountains and plateaus. It's otherworldly in the way that the Icelandic landscape demands you acknowledge something in its nothingness.

There are things that sound more appealing on a winter's morning in Iceland than jumping into water that is 2°C. We stayed in the heated van for as long as possible, took instructions from one of our snorkelling guides in the van, learned how to suit up in our dry suits in the van and then we were cut loose to dress ourselves in a thick, down onesie that made us all look doughy. Over that we put on bulky dry suits and pushed our bowling ball heads through a latex collar the width of a CD. We pulled on neoprene diving hoods that covered the top of our heads and our necks and squeezed our hands into neoprene gloves. Right before diving into the water we put on snorkelling goggles, stuck a breathing tube in our mouths and then flopped in with our flippers.

To understand the initial shock of that water on your face, your lips, your head and your hands, you have to understand that neoprene is wetsuit material, not drysuit material like the rest of the get-up. Those parts of the body protected by neoprene get wet and there is really no relief for your hands during the 30 to 40 minute submersion. Your lips lose feeling fast and you won't be bothered, but the hands remain icy limbs that you can only hope to forget about while you take in your surroundings.

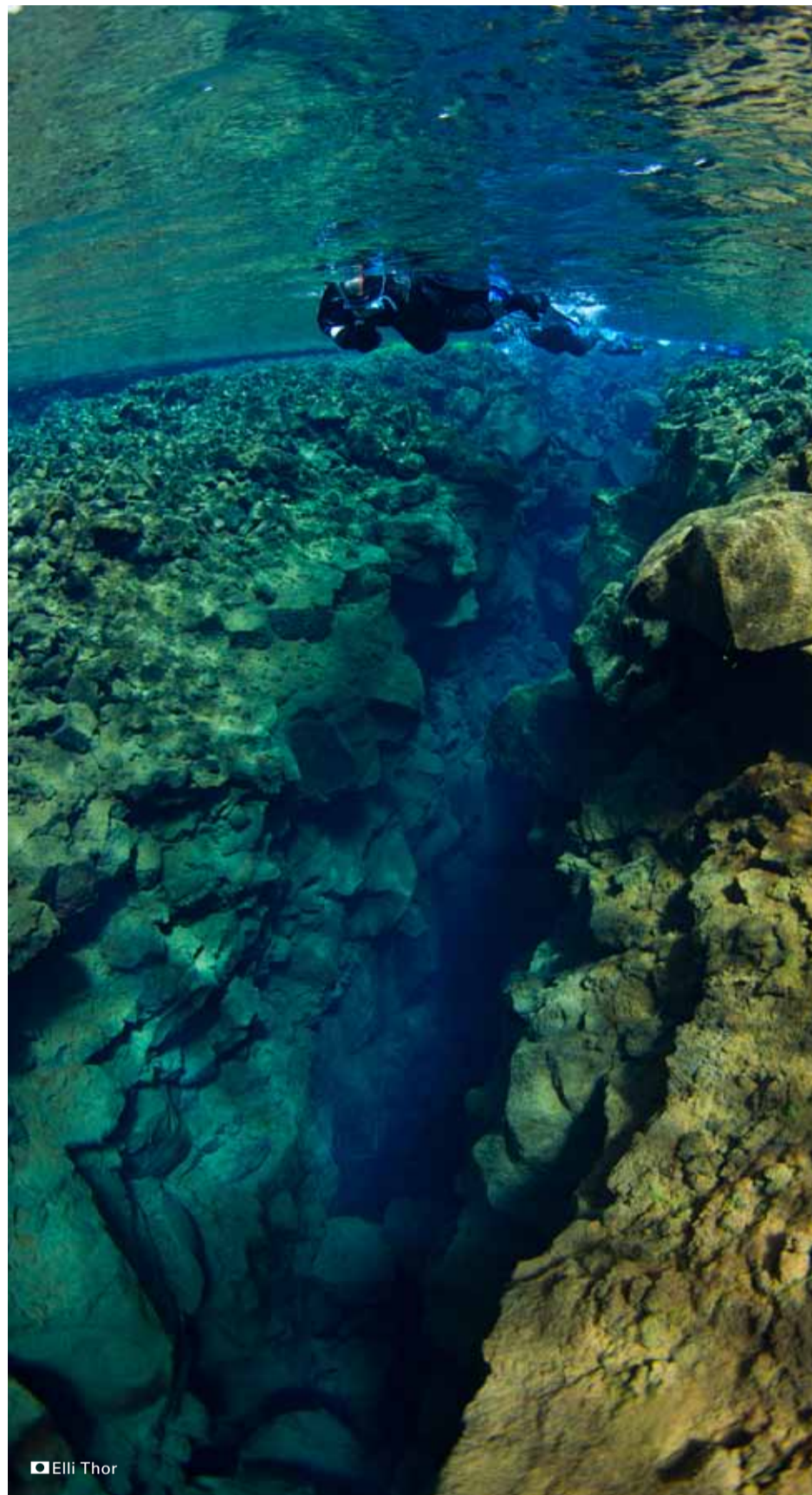
#### Beneath the surface

The water that on the surface had looked rather dull was surreal from beneath. Visibility in the fissure is around 100 metres and we were reminded that in the ocean, on a good day, it's about 30 metres. The deepest most mind-bending blues—Super Man blue to glacial, icy blue to a dark, starry night blue—were all represented at various depths. The fissure is quite shallow at parts and reaches 63 metres down at its deepest. Scuba divers that come here get to go lower into the divide but visibility is so great that all who look beneath the surface see the bottom.

Small bits of algae dance suspended in front of you, writhing slowly to the backdrop of the dim light filtered through from the sky. When you hold your breath and lose the trail of the person in front of you it is so quiet and so isolating. From what I've heard and read about sensory deprivation tanks—the feeling of floating in an abyss, of mental wandering, of meditative peace—this could be very similar. The lava rock walls are covered with a translucent, orange algae that looks like the skin of a jellyfish. This is the only life most snorkelers and divers see in Silfra. Occasionally a trout will swim in, but even that is rare.

Very little swimming is done along the journey. A slow and steady current carries you through most of the fissure to the final 'lagoon,' a 120-metre long pool where we exited the water onto land. While everyone walked around, shaking out their hands to try and regain some feeling, our guide told us that we still had one more aquatic emersion ahead of us.

We walked to a rock ledge that was about four metres above another small pool of water in the fissure, and took turns jumping in without goggles or breathing tubes or flippers. I thought that any traces of sleepiness had escaped me when I initially entered the water for the snorkelling journey, but few things wake you up as instantly as icy water pouring into your ears and your eyes and your nose on high impact. The pure beauty, and untainted taste and feeling of that water is somewhere between invigorating and electrifying and I literally gulped it up as I made my last swim back to land.



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# Historical Hipsters

Photos by Ingimundur Guðmundsson



Hipsters have been an Icelandic fixture for decades. Just consider these photos we found in an old family photo album of hip young people in Ísafjörður in the 1920s. We don't know who they are, but they seem pretty happy.

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**P.6**

“I tested my banana research on random Icelanders. When I asked if they knew or believed that Iceland was producing hoards of bananas, the response was equal parts rejection of the claim and slight belief that it could be true. “How come I’m still buying Chiquita at the grocery store?”

**Iceland has a sweet, starchy secret and it is B-A-N-A-N-A-S.**



**P.12**

“Not to be outdone, Lady Liberty lights the way to overflowing buckets of pretzel sticks, Jello mix, and marshmallow fluff. Welcome to America Days: help yourself to some high fructose corn syrup.”

**American culture exists somewhere between a donut burger and the bottom of a can of Tab.**



**P.20**

“There’s a drive with graffiti that’s hard to replicate anywhere else,” Guido says. “What inspired me was that people were going to see it. It’s out on the street, you see it immediately; it’s going to be judged immediately.”

**Australian street artist brings his watercolor inspired works to life on Reykjavík’s walls.**



**P.22**

“It was odd that Iceland had never had its own crime fiction festival. By the time we met again a few weeks later, the decision had more or less been made to organise Iceland Noir ourselves.”

**Of course the most criminal event taking place in Iceland this month is a crime fiction festival.**

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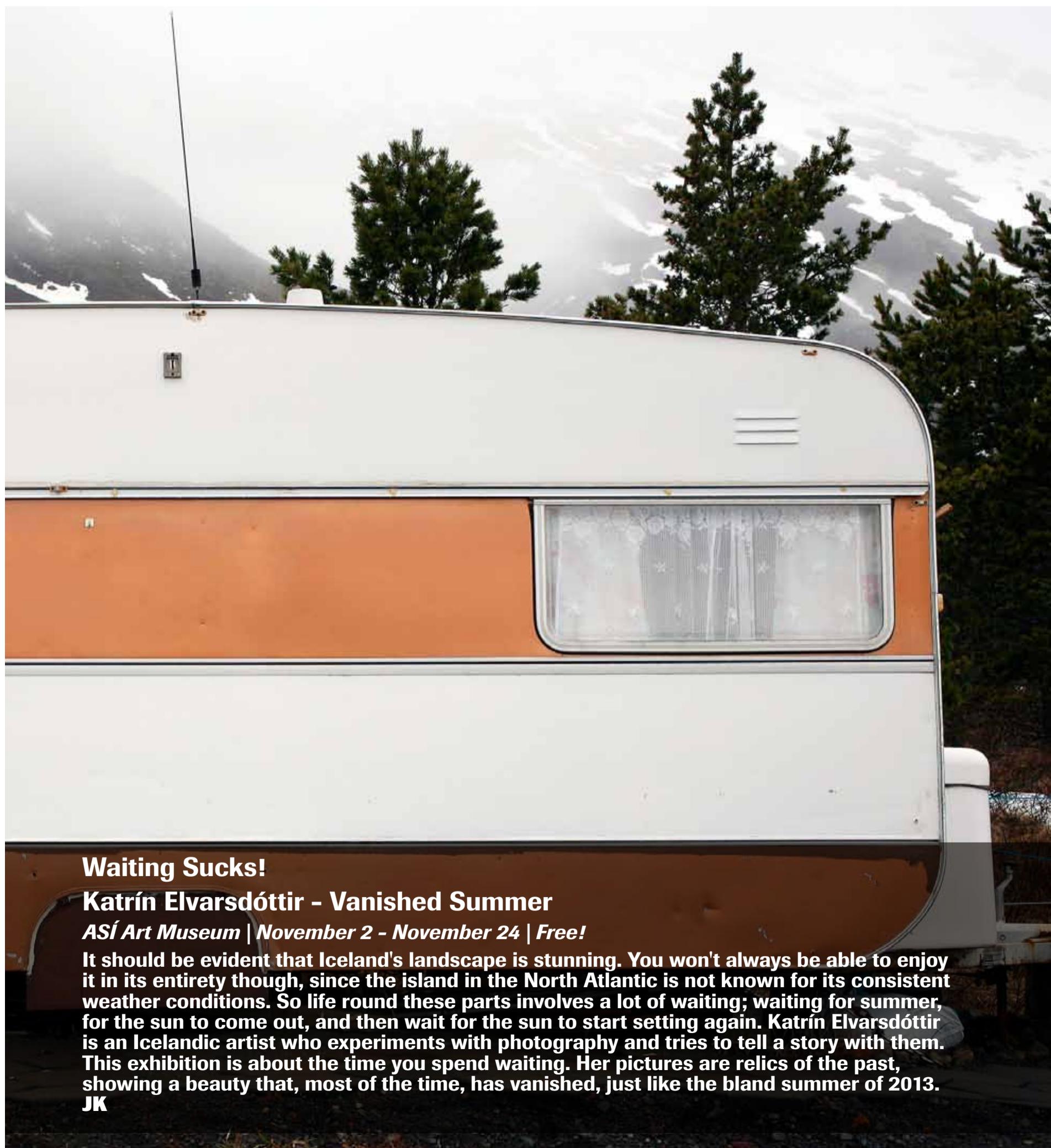
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Issue 17 - 2013

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**Your essential guide to life, travel and entertainment in Iceland**



## Waiting Sucks!

### Katrín Elvarsdóttir - Vanished Summer

*ASÍ Art Museum | November 2 - November 24 | Free!*

It should be evident that Iceland's landscape is stunning. You won't always be able to enjoy it in its entirety though, since the island in the North Atlantic is not known for its consistent weather conditions. So life round these parts involves a lot of waiting; waiting for summer, for the sun to come out, and then wait for the sun to start setting again. Katrín Elvarsdóttir is an Icelandic artist who experiments with photography and tries to tell a story with them. This exhibition is about the time you spend waiting. Her pictures are relics of the past, showing a beauty that, most of the time, has vanished, just like the bland summer of 2013.

**JK**

# MUSIC

## CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE

November 8 -  
December 5

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

### Friday November 8

**Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Ljótu hálfvitarnir  
**Dolly**  
21:00 DJ Sura / B2B / DJ Gay Latino Man  
**Gamli Gaukurinn**  
21:00 Vintage Caravan / Nykur / Conflicts  
**Harlem**  
22:00 Atli Kanill / DJ Yamaho / Exos  
**Háteigskirkja**  
12:00 Chamber Group Silla perform Jean Sibelius and other Nordic composers  
**Hressó**  
21:00 Oyama / Knife Fights  
**Stúdentakjallarinn**  
20:00 Dusty Miller

### Saturday November 9

**Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Ljótu hálfvitarnir  
**Dolly**  
22:00 DJ Kariús  
**Gamli Gaukurinn**  
21:00 Black Sabbath Tribute Band  
**Harlem**  
22:00 DJ Dauði / Benni B-Ruff / Pedro Pílatús  
**Hressó**  
21:00 Tandoori Johnson

### Sunday November 10

**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Troubadour Raggi  
**Hallgrímskirkja**  
17:00 Rachmaninoff's Vesper

### Monday November 11

**Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Valur Heiðar & co  
**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Troubadours Hjalmar & Dagur Hjalmar

### Tuesday November 12

**Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Músakk  
**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Troubadour Roland  
**KEX Hostel**  
20:30 KEXJazz

### Wednesday November 13

**Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Forlagið Literature Reading  
**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Troubadour Heimur  
**Dolly**  
22:00 DJ OCP  
**Harlem**  
22:00 Two Step Horror / Rafsteinn

### Thursday November 14

**Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Ásynjur  
**Harlem**  
21:00 Cell7 album release concert  
**Harpa**  
19:30 Icelandic Symphony Orchestra: Bartók and Schumann  
**KEX Hostel**  
21:00 Benni Hemm Hemm album release concert  
**Stúdentakjallarinn**  
21:00 Slowsteps

### Friday November 15

**Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Mood  
**Den Danske Kro**  
21:00 Troubadours Ingi Valur / Gunni  
**Dolly**  
22:00 DJ Pedro Pílatús  
**Harlem**  
21:00 FM Belfast DJs / DJ Kári / Lovísa / Calvache (BEL)  
**Harpa**  
19:30 Todmobile / Jon Anderson  
20:00 Guitar Celebration - Arnaldur Arnarson  
**Hressó**  
21:00 Mr Viking

### Saturday November 16

**Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Ellen Kristjánsdóttir & family  
**Den Danske Kro**  
21:00 Troubadours Tryggvi & Biggi  
**Dolly**  
22:00 DJ Yamaho and Emmsjé Gauti B-Day Bash  
**Harlem**  
21:00 Berndsen release concert feat. Nolo, Hermigervill & Retro Stefson



### Calling All Rock And Rollers Mark Lanegan live in concert

Frikirkjan | Nov. 30 & Dec. 1, 20:30 | 6,990 ISK

The legendary Mark Lanegan of Screaming Trees and Queens of the Stone Age fame is coming to town and holding not one, but TWO concerts in Reykjavík at the lovely quaint Frikirkjan! This will be the first time Mark makes his solo appearance in Iceland. Lanegan just released his new album 'Imitations,' which is a selection of songs that remind him of the melancholic music he listened to while growing up in his native Washington state. Those of you who missed out on the opportunity to get tickets for his first concert are in luck because the second concert is not yet sold out! So don't miss the chance to see this fucking awesome musician! **KL**



13  
November

### Mental Ecstasy Two Step Horror & Rafsteinn

Harlem | 21:00 | Free!

There are lots of ways to get your mind blown. Some of them are healthier than others, with some not recommended at all. This time it's about getting your brain blasted by outstanding ambient music. Two Step Horror & Rafsteinn, two bands that are experimenting with sounds as well as with beats, are going to lead you into their world of spheric sounds and pumping drums. Get infected, dance your ass off, enjoy yourself and have a great trip. **JK**

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MONDAY - FRIDAY 7.30 - 18.15  
SATURDAY 7.30 - 17.30. SUNDAY 8.30-17.00

## Sunday November 17

**Harpa**  
17:00 SOLAR 5 'Journey to the Center of Sound'  
19:30 The Notus Trio at the Chamber Music Society  
**Kaffibarinn**  
21:00 FKN Sunday

## Monday November 18

**Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Valur Gunnarsson sings Leonard Cohen for the last time  
**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Troubadours Hjálmar & Dagur  
**Kaffibarinn**  
21:00 DJ Katla

## Tuesday November 19

**Café Rosenberg**  
22:00 Thin Jim  
**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Troubadour Gunni  
**Harpa**  
20:00 The Sound of Brass Through Harpa #2  
**KEX Hostel**  
20:30 KEXJazz

## Wednesday November 20

**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Troubadour Hreimur  
**Dolly**  
22:00 DJ Sura  
**Kaffibarinn**  
21:00 Bakkelsi

## Thursday November 21

**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Kristjana Arngrímsdóttir & guests  
**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Troubadour Pétur  
**Dolly**  
22:00 Anna Rake! & Ýr  
**Harlem**  
21:00 Ojba Rasta DJ night  
**Harpa**  
19:30 Iceland looks to the East – Icelandic Symphony Orchestra  
**Iónó**  
20:30 GRM  
**Stúdentakjallarinn**  
21:00 Emmsjé Gauti / Jón Jónsson & co

## Friday November 22

**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Stella Hauk's 60th Birthday Concert  
**Dolly**  
22:00 Rvk Soundsystem  
**Harlem**  
21:00 Benni B-Ruff  
**Hressó**  
21:00 Goðsögn  
**Stúdentakjallarinn**  
20:00 Waveland

## Saturday November 23

**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 KK og Maggi  
**Dolly**  
22:00 DJs Benni B-Ruff B2B Árni Koccon  
**Harlem**  
21:00 DJ Housekell / Pick a Piper / Brad Weber DJ set  
**Hressó**  
21:00 Dalton

## Sunday November 24

**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Troubadour Tryggvi  
**Harpa**  
16:00 Young Voices – Rúnar Kristinn Rúnarsson

## Monday November 25

**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 White Signal  
**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Troubadour Hjálmar & Dagur  
**Harpa**  
20:00 Jonathan Wilson  
**Kaffibarinn**  
21:00 DJ Dauði

## Tuesday November 26

**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Bee Bee & the Bluebirds  
**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Troubadour Roland  
**Harpa**  
20:00 Paul Lewis: Works by Bach-Busoni, Beethoven, Liszt and Musorgsky  
**KEX Hostel**  
20:30 KexJazz

## Wednesday November 27

**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Forlagið Literature Reading  
**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Troubadour Hreimur  
**Dolly**  
22:00 DJs EL Heffe & Sensei  
**Kaffibarinn**  
21:00 Alfons X



## The Vikings Are Coming! Skálmöld & The National Symphony Orchestra

Harpa Eldborg | Nov. 28, 29 & 30 | 3,300 ISK

Iceland's music scene houses many great acts that are willing to experiment with their creation. When it comes to Icelandic metal, Skálmöld are one of the big acts to catch, as they combine Icelandic folk songs with the sound of bands like Iron Maiden, Anthrax, Slayer and Metallica. Just like the last mentioned band, Skálmöld are about to join forces with the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra to put on a massive show reminiscent of Metallica's S&M album. Even if you are not that much into metal, this historic event might be worth attending. FYI: It is staged three times at Harpa Eldborg. November 28 and 29 at 20:00 and on November 30 at 17:00. **JK** Photo by Guðný Lára Thorarensen



## Oh, That Magnificent Hair! Hrafkell Örn Guðjónsson

Seemingly everywhere at once | Since 1989

For Airwaves-goers, there was one drummer you couldn't miss: This guy! Look at him and his glorious red-glowing hair! During the festival he played no fewer than nine live shows with rap band Úlfur Úlfur, Emmsjé Gauti, alternative-rock band Sign, and his principal math-rock band Agent Fresco. No stranger to the drum kit, Hrafkell has been in a band since age 3, and shows no indication of putting his drumsticks away. He's taking it easy now, merely preparing for an album release tour with Emmsjé Gauti and Sign, after which Agent Fresco's new album will hopefully get released, putting him on the road again. In the meanwhile, you can catch him in high spirits downtown, smiling that radiant smile of his. Don't ask for a lock of his hair, though, he's been growing it since 2008! **TGB** Photo by Joseph Henry Von Ritter

## Thursday November 28

**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Ingi Gunnar Album Release Concert  
**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 DJ Jesús  
**Dolly**  
22:00 DJ Gay Thug  
**Harpa**  
20:00 Skálmöld & The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra  
**Kaffibarinn**  
21:00 HúsDJús with Marcos Cabral

## Friday November 29

**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Big Band VOR  
**Dolly**  
22:00 DJ KGB & Elinens  
**Harlem**  
21:00 DJ KGB / Marcos Cabral (US)  
**Harpa**  
20:00 Skálmöld & The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra  
**Hressó**  
21:00 Saints Of Boogie Trouble  
**Kaffibarinn**  
21:00 Hunk Of A Man

## Saturday November 30

**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Halli Reynis Birthday Concert  
**Dolly**  
22:00 Lagaffe Tales  
**Frikirkjan**  
20:30 Mark Lanegan

**Harlem**  
21:00 DJ Katla

**Harpa**  
17:00 Skálmöld & The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra  
**Hressó**  
21:00 Penta Reuninon  
**Kaffibarinn**  
21:00 Kaffibarinn's 20th Birthday Party!

## Sunday December 1

**Frikirkjan**  
20:30 Mark Lanegan  
**Hallgrímskirkja**  
14:00 Hallgrímskirkja Christmas Music Festival 2013

## Monday December 2

**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Troubadours Hjálmar & Dagur

## Tuesday December 3

**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Troubadour Gunni  
**KEX Hostel**  
20:30 KexJazz

## Wednesday December 4

**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Troubadour Hreimur

## Thursday December 5

**Den Danske Kro**  
22:00 Troubadour Pétur



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# ART

## OPENINGS AND ONGOING

November 8 -  
December 5

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

### Opening

#### ART 67

December 1

Painter Martina Guðsteinsson and her photographer husband were working as tourguides traveling around Iceland all year. All kind of light and weather conditions inspired them.

*Runs until December 31*

#### ASÍ Museum

November 30

##### Á Staðnum - Locally

Paintings, furniture, photographs and video work by local artists.

*Runs until December 22*

#### Bió Paradís

November 9, 18:00 - 21:00

##### Valur Gunnarsson's Book Release Party

Valur Gunnarsson, the first editor of The Reykjavík Grapevine, will be having a book release party at Bió Paradís. He will screen 'The Decline of the American Empire' and read from his new book, 'Síðasti Elkhuginn.' ('The Last Lover') After the screening there will of course be a party.

#### Hallgrímskirkja

November 22

##### Ulrich Seidl Paradise Hope

##### Screening And Retrospective

Ulrich Seidl will come to Iceland and open the last film in his Paradise trilogy (Paradise: Hope).

*Runs until November 24*

#### Kling & Bang

November 30, 17:00 - 21:00

##### The Visitors

Ragnar Kjartansson will exhibit his video installation 'The Visitors' with live performances from local musicians.

#### Kunstsclager

November 16

##### Disappointing Sculpture

Installation by the Icelandic artists Arnar Ásgeirsson and Heiðar Kári Rannverson is minimalism at its best. Just a sculpture, an empty room, the audience and lots of interpretation.

*Runs until November 30*

#### Museum Of Design And Applied Art

November 13

##### Arts and crafts from Norway

This exhibition features pieces that show the Norwegian development in arts and crafts.

*Runs until January 5*

#### National Gallery

##### CREATIONS

November 8

Kristín Gunnlaugsdóttir's art works are shaped by the contrast of erotics and religion.

*Runs until January 19, 2014*

##### TREASURES - Beasts in Cages

November 8

This exhibition gives a good insight into the variety of Icelandic art in modern and contemporary periods. The National Gallery's collection of prints by Edvard Munch, will be on display for his 150th anniversary.

*Runs until January 19, 2014*

#### Nordic House

##### Relate North exhibition and conference at the Nordic house

November 8

Relate North is organized by the Arctic Sustainable Arts and Design (ASAD) thematic network at the University of the Arctic.

*Runs until November 24*

##### Bog Of Gold Exhibition

November 30

Steinunn Gunnlaugsdóttir, Ósk Vilhjálmsdóttir and Hildur Hákonardóttir put on their second exhibition together.

*Runs until January 12*



## Crystals, Light Shows And Other Things You'd Expect At A Pink Floyd Concert

**SOLAR 5, 'Journey to the Center of Sound'**

*Harpa | Twice on Nov. 17 at 17:00 & 21:00 | 2,500 ISK*

It sounds like a Tom Cruise flick (just add exclamations: 'Solar 5! Journey to the Center of Sound!') but this is science, not Sciencology, and it's a sensory journey through space and sound. The Solar 5 are five aural and visual worlds meant to take you from the macro- to microscopic. You move throughout these worlds and interact with them during the performance, which lasts for about an hour. The performance is inspired by the five-fold symmetry of the Quasi Crystals that make up the exterior walls of Harpa. Much like Harpa, the performance is a marriage of art and technology, science and sound. Unlike Tom Cruise, guests won't be granted an afterlife in Venus as a Thetan. **AB**

#### Nordic House Christmas Calendar

December 1

The Christmas calendar countdown in the Nordic House takes place daily with live music, dance, reading, performance, yoga, and games. Non-alcoholic mulled wine and gingerbread will be on offer. The event is free of charge.

*Runs until December 23*

#### Spark Design Space

November 21

##### MIRRORS

Linda Árnadóttir, the founder and creative director of Scintilla, will open a show of her own. *Runs until February 28*

### Ongoing

#### Árbær Museum

A guided tour in English through this open air museum, which consists of twenty buildings happens daily at 13:00. Admission 1,100 ISK.

*On permanent view*

#### The Culture House

##### Medieval Manuscripts, Eddas, and Sagas

The exhibit includes principal medieval manuscripts and the Icelandic Sagas.

*On permanent view*

##### Child of Hope - Youth and Jón Sigurðsson

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

*On permanent view*

##### Millennium - Phase One

A selection of pieces from the collection of the National Gallery, including a variety of works by Icelandic artists from the last two centuries.

*On permanent view*

##### The Library Room

The old reading room of the National Library displays books of Icelandic cultural history dating from the 16th century to the present day.

*On permanent view*

#### The Einar Jónsson Museum

The museum contains close to 300 artworks including a beautiful garden with 26 bronze casts of the artist's works

*On permanent view*

#### Gallerí Fold

##### Rafskinna

An exhibit of the first Icelandic electric advertisement board and the colourful ads that ran in it. Features works by Jón Kristinsson, Jóni- and Tryggvi Magnússon

*Runs until November 17*

#### Gallerí Ófeigur

##### UPPÍMÓTI

An exhibit by Gugga, two years in the works. She uses oil and canvas to explore the magnitude of Icelandic

waterfalls.

*On permanent view*

#### Gallery Sign (Skilti)

##### Skirt

Alison Willoughby displays new photographic work on the cultural iconography of the British Kebab Shop.

*Runs until December 20*

#### Hafnarborg

##### Beside The Deep Water

Exhibition by Rúna Sigrún Guðjónsdóttir that focuses on her life and diverse career. Features paintings as well as sculptures. Familiar motifs of Rúna's work are landscape, nature and female figures.

*Runs until January 5*

#### i8 Gallery

##### Solid Stars And Other Conditions

The exhibition will feature new sculptures and installations by Berlin-based Polish artist, Alicja Kwade.

*Runs until December 14*

#### The Icelandic Phallogical Museum

The museum contains a collection of more than two hundred and fifteen penises and penile parts belonging to almost all the land and sea mammals that can be found in Iceland.

*On permanent view*

#### Knitting Iceland

Whether you are a beginner or pro, you can come knit at Laugavegur 25, 3rd floor, every Thursday, 14:00 - 18:00.

*Ongoing*

#### The Living Art Museum -

##### Nýlistasafnið

##### Embracing Impermanence

Works from the museum's collection will be presented alongside recent works by emerging artists. Works deal with impermanence and durability.

*Runs until December 1*

#### Listamenn Gallerí

##### The Art Side Of The Múm

Album artwork for the band Múm will be displayed along with works by some band members.

*Runs until November 9*

#### he National Gallery

##### Divinity Revisited

Photos by Jóhann Agúst Hansen showing The Sugarcubes' first concert, held in Hotel Iceland, 1988.

*Runs until November 28*

#### The National Museum

##### The Making Of A Nation - Heritage and History in Iceland

This exhibition is intended to provide insight into the history of the Icelandic nation from the Settlement to the present day.

*On permanent view*

#### Icelandic Silverwork

Various silver items that have been made in Iceland over the last 150 years. A Part-Time Silver Smith, a separate exhibition, will run simultaneously and display a



The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

# IN YOUR POCKET

WHAT'S INSIDE

Reykjavík Map | Happy Hour Guide | Places We Like | Best Of Reykjavík | Practical Info

Reykjavík

November 8 - December 5

Keep it in your pocket

## Four Weeks

The Grapevine picks the events, places and what to experience in the next four weeks

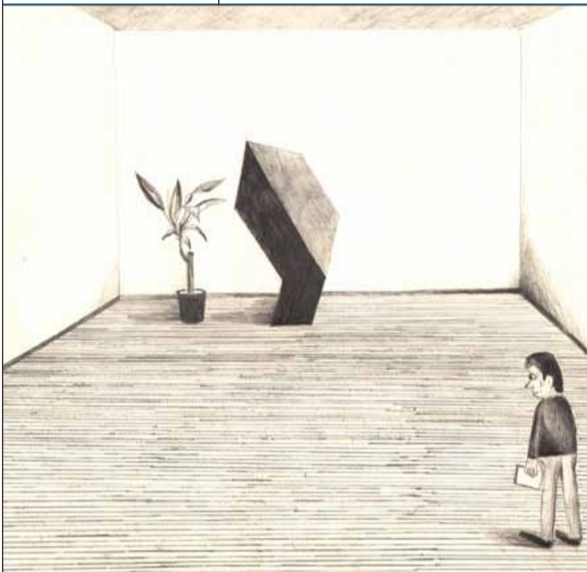
16-30  
NOVEMBER

Art Is Dead,  
Long Live Art!

7

NOVEMBER

It's A Small World After All  
'Constructed Sites'  
photo exhibition



**Disappointing Sculpture**  
Kunstschlager

Free!

Disappointing Sculpture, an installation by the Icelandic artists Arnar Ásgeirsson and Heiðar Kári Rannversson, is minimalism at its best, featuring one sole abstract sculpture in an empty room. Perhaps the exhibit asks the meta question of whether this is art, and what expectations art enthusiasts are allowed to have. Or perhaps it is a nihilistic prank. Or perhaps it's claiming that everything has been said and done, and minimalism is the answer to a culture that's built on spectacle rather than substance. **JK**



**Photo Exhibition of Miniature Figurines**  
Reykjavik Museum Of Photography

Norwegian photographer and visual artist Nils Olav Bøe is a human shrink ray. He takes press photos from around the world and then stages 3D replicas of them using miniature figurines. Once the scene is set, he rearranges the figurines to create a distorted, look-alike reality and photographs it. His work is more inventive than making jungle sets with Legos and perhaps strange enough to defy physical properties of our universe (wrap your mind around photographs of fictional incidents recreated from photographs of reality!). The created scenes seem eerily real and if you stare at them too long, you're likely to follow him down the rabbit hole. **AB**

Sundays  
NOVEMBER

Lazy Sunday At The Cinema  
Black Sundays

November 9 & 18 **BOOK RELEASE MADNESS**  
Grapevine's first editor **Valur Gunnarsson** just released a new book and will screen **The Decline of the American Empire** at **Bío Paradís**, and then play **Leonard Cohen** for the **very last time** in **Café Rosenberg!** You don't want to miss this.

November 9 **I AM IRONMAN!** *Daa-daa, dam-dam-dam, dara dara darada da-da-da!* **Black Sabbath** just released a new album, and as such the forces of darkness have decreed that a **Black Sabbath Tribute Band** be assembled in Iceland. According to the sacred bat-eater's wishes, the band will include elements from **Brain Police**, **Dr. Spock**, **HAM** and **Dimma**, and the ritual offering will happen at **Gamli Gaukurinn**, the altar to rock 'n' roll where the Thule and Viking beer will flow freely, the heads will bang, and merry times will be had by all.

Every Tuesday **T'IS THE SEASON FOR JAZZ**  
Summer has come and gone, but live jazz will always be the thing to listen to at **KEX Hostel** on Tuesdays. So sit down with a tankard of lager, put your feet up, and melt away to the land of the cool cats.



**Sunday Night Screenings** Every Sunday at 20:00  
Bío Paradís 1,400 ISK

It's Sunday, you've been drinking all weekend and are probably terribly hung over, making a trip to the cinema the perfect solution. Bío Paradís will be screening a different cult classic every Sunday, with the dystopian Logan's Run being shown on November 10. The Black Sunday programme is hosted by some of the most prominent cultural icons in Iceland today: Sigurjón Kjartansson, Sjón and Huggleikur Dagsson, with a custom poster designed for each show. Oh, and all the films screened are English-friendly. **KL**



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# MAP

## Places We Like

### Food

#### 1 The Grill Market

Lækjargata 2a

Grillmarkaðurinn (The Grill Market) is renowned chef Hrefna Rósa Sætran's latest culinary venture (you might recognise her from Fish Market). With a specially crafted grill made to withstand extreme heat, Hrefna and team serve up juicy Icelandic dishes to the carnivore's delight.

#### 2 Gamla Smiðjan

Lækjargata 8

This welcomed addition to Reykjavík's pizza palette has been steadily winning over fans since it opened for business, and with good reason. Gamla smiðjan seems to handle every single order with care, love and respect. As the dining area is sparse, locals usually opt for take-out.

#### 3 Fish Company

Vesturgata 2a

The Fish Company (Fiskifélagið) is acclaimed as one of Reykjavík's best 'fancy' restaurants. Located in a charmingly dark space underground at Vesturgata 2a, this bustling, cave-like locale provides fine sanctuary from the cold winds outside in the winter, and respite from the powerful sunshine of summer.

#### 4 Tapas Barinn

Vesturgata 3b

For those with a bit of time on their hands, the evening is well spent at Tapas Barinn, where you can indulge yourself feasting on course after delicious course of miniature dishes served in true Spanish style. There is also a lounge for those who want to hang out and sip a fine glass of red.

#### 5 Laundromat Café

Austurstræti 9

At the Laundromat Café you can do your laundry, drink a beer and have a grandma read to your children all under one roof. This kid-friendly café/bar/restaurant prides itself on its diverse menu, good service, a 5,000 book library, board games, and newspapers and magazines (including a fancy WALL OF GRAPEVINES!)

### Drinking

#### 6 Litli Bóndabærinn

Laugavegur 41

If it's a hot shot of strong java you need, this take-away joint will dose you up with some of the finest caffeinated beverages in town. The small digs are dressed up in authentic farm threads and the service will charm you into wishing you could move in for a while. Their international staff makes it especially visitor-friendly.

### Useful numbers

Emergency number: **112**

Medical help: **1770**

Dental emergency: **575 0505**

Information: **118**

Taxi: Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir: **588 5522**

BSR: **561 0000**

### Tax Free Refund

**Iceland Refund**, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 564 6400

### Tourist information

**Arctic Adventures**, Laugavegur 11,

tel: 562 7000

**City Centre**, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 590 1550

**Iceland Excursions - Grayline Iceland**,



#### 7 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

A popular café on weekdays, on weekends Kaffibarinn turns into a ticket for a wild night out, as the space fills up with the late-night souls oozing energy in every corner. With DJs playing and the occasional rock band, the party usually lasts until early morning, yet often manages to leave you begging for more.

#### 8 Kaldi Bar

Laugavegur 20b

A small, stylish drinking hole popular with the after-work business crowd, this is a great place to feel a little classier and drink with dignity. The beer selection is top-notch, and the handcrafted interior tips the scales of upscale rustic charm. You can be certain that conversation will rule, not loud music.

#### 9 Stofan

Aðalstræti 7

Voted the best place to read a book in the Grapevine Best of Reykjavík 2012 awards, this old-timey coffee house is something straight out of a Carl Larsson painting. A perfect place to spend the day sitting on their antique furniture and sipping delicious drinks, both alcoholic and otherwise.

Hafnarstræti 20, tel: 540 1313

**The Icelandic Travel Market**, Bankastræti 2, tel: 522 4979

**Trip**, Laugavegur 54, tel: 433 8747

### Pharmacies

**Lyf og heilsa**, Egilsgata 3, tel: 563 1020

**Lyfja**, Laugavegur 16, tel: 552 4045 and Lág-múla 5, tel: 533-2300

### Coach terminal

**BSÍ**, Vatnsmýrarvegur 10,

tel: 562 1011, www.bsi.is

### Domestic airlines

**Air Iceland**, Reykjavíkflugvöllur,

tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is

**Eagle Air**, Hótel Loftleiðir, tel: 562-4200

### Public transport

The only public transport available in Reykjavík is the bus. Most buses run every 20-30 minutes (the wait may be longer on weekends) and the price per fare is 350 ISK for adults and children. Multiple day passes are available for purchase at select locations. Complete route map available at: www.bus.is. Tel: 540 2700. Buses run from 07:00-24:00 on weekdays and 10:00-24:00 on weekends. Main terminals are: Hlemmur and Lækjartorg

### Opening Hours

**Bars and clubs:** According to regulations, bars can stay open until 01:00 on weekdays and 04:30 on weekends.

**Shops:** Mon.-Fri. 10:00-18:00, Sat. 10:00-

16:00, Sun. closed. The shopping centres Kringlan and Smáralind as well as most supermarkets and tourist shops have longer opening hours.

**Swimming pools:** Weekdays 06:30-22:00 and weekends 09:00-17:00, although each pool varies plus or minus a few hours.

**Banks** in the centre are open Mon.-Fri. 09:00-16:00.

### Post Offices

Post offices are located around the city. The downtown post office is at Pósthússtræti 3-5, open Mon.-Fri. 09:00-18:00. Stamps are also sold at bookstores, gas stations, tourist shops and some grocery stores.



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### New In Town



#### 13 Bar at Hlemmur Square

Laugavegur 105 | hlemmursquare.com

A wide variety of Reykjavites were spotted at the opening of the chic, modernist Bar at Hlemmur Square. It is a revamped, minimalist space created by designer Rui Diogo, who turned the open design of the Hlemmur Square Hotel and Hostel's lobby into a contemporary meeting space for local craft beers, wine and cocktails. Bar is open daily from 15:00 to 23:00 with happy hour from 17:00 to 19:00 so you can get pickled before your pöbbarölt.

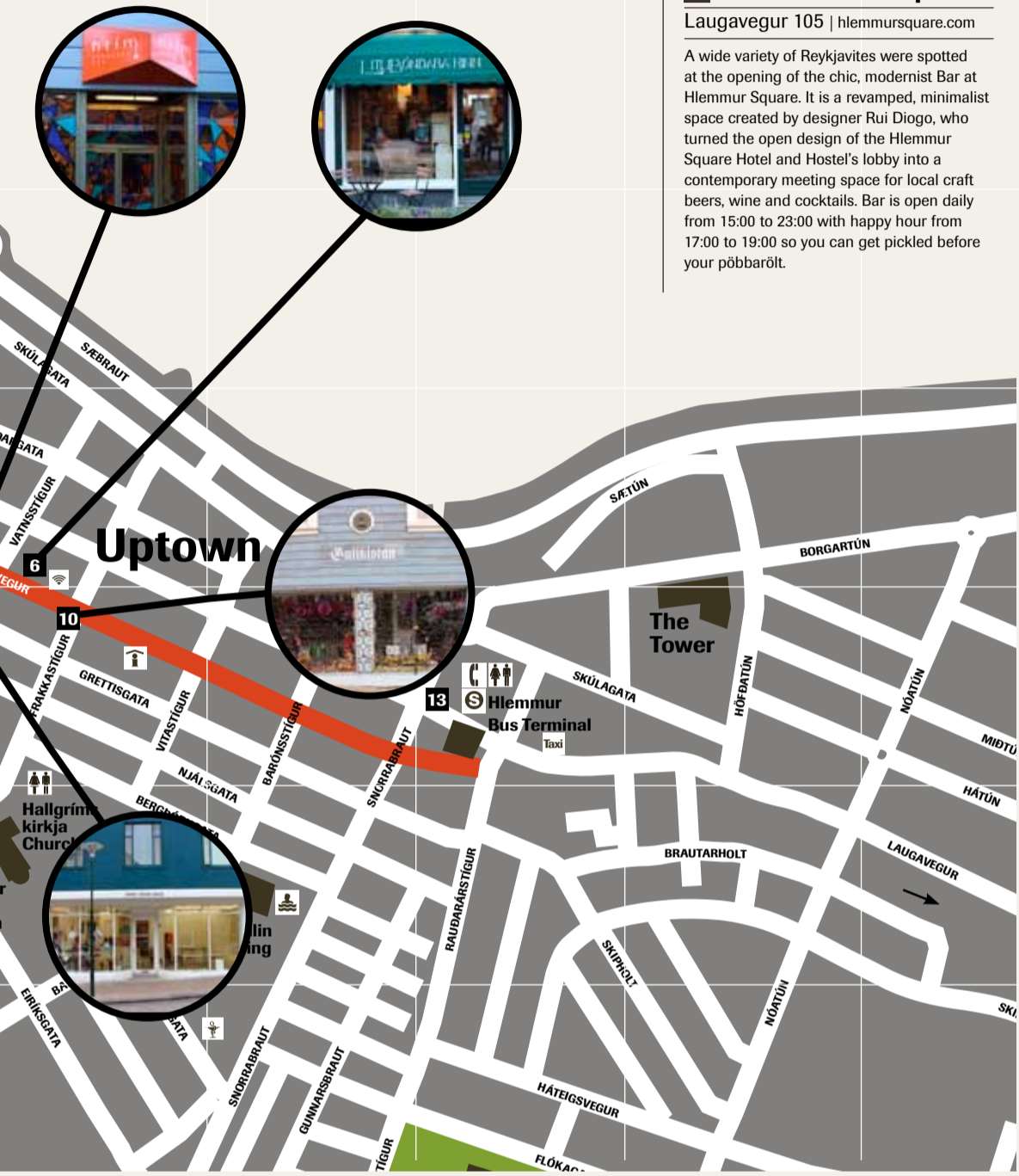
### Venue Finder Music & Entertainment

- |                                               |                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Amsterdam</b><br>Hafnarstræti 5   D3       | <b>Harlem</b><br>Tryggvagata 22   D3           |
| <b>Austur</b><br>Austurstræti 7   E3          | <b>Hressó</b><br>Austurstræti 20   E4          |
| <b>B5</b><br>Bankastræti 5   E4               | <b>Kaffi Zimsen</b><br>Hafnarstræti 18   D4    |
| <b>Bar 11</b><br>Hverfisgötu 18   E5          | <b>Kaffibarinn</b><br>Bergstraðastræti 1   E5  |
| <b>Bjarni Fel</b><br>Austurstræti 20   E4     | <b>Kaldi Bar / Café</b><br>Laugavegur 20b   E5 |
| <b>Bló Paradís</b><br>Hverfisgata 54   F6     | <b>Kofinn</b><br>Laugavegur 2   E5             |
| <b>Boston</b><br>Laugavegur 28b   F6          | <b>Loft Hostel</b><br>Bankastræti 7   E5       |
| <b>Bunk</b><br>Laugavegur 28   E5             | <b>Mánabar</b><br>Hverfisgata 20   E5          |
| <b>Celtic Cross</b><br>Hverfisgata 26   E5    | <b>Ölsmiðjan</b><br>Lækjargata 10   E4         |
| <b>Den Danske Kro</b><br>Ingólfsstræti 3   E4 | <b>Ölstofan</b><br>Vegamótastígur   E5         |
| <b>Dillon</b><br>Laugavegur 30   F6           | <b>Prikið</b><br>Bankastræti   E4              |
| <b>Dolly</b><br>Hafnarstræti 4   D3           | <b>Reykjavík Beats</b><br>Hverfisgata 46   E5  |
| <b>Dubliner</b><br>Hafnarstræti 1-3   D3      | <b>Röenberg</b><br>Klapparstígur 25   E5       |
| <b>English Pub</b><br>Austurstræti 12   E3    | <b>Stofan Café</b><br>Aðalstræti 7   D3        |
| <b>Gamli Gaukurinn</b><br>Tryggvagata 22   D3 | <b>Thorvaldsen</b><br>Austurstræti 8   D3      |
| <b>Glaumbar</b><br>Tryggvagata 20   D3        | <b>Vegamót</b><br>Vegamótastígur 4   E6        |

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HAFNARSTRÆTI 5 & SKÓLAVÖRÐUSTÍGUR 10



### Museums & Galleries

- |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ART67</b><br>Laugavegur 67   F7<br>Mon - Fri 12 - 18 / Sat 12 - 16                               | <b>The Nordic House</b><br>Sturlugata 5<br>Tue-Sun 12-17<br>www.nordice.is                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Ásgrímur Jónsson Museum</b><br>Bergstaðastræti 74<br>Mon-Fri through Sept. 1                     | <b>Reykjavík Art Gallery</b><br>Skúlagata 30   E7<br>Tuesday through Sunday 14-18<br>www.artmuseum.is                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>The Culture House</b><br>Hverfisgata 15   E5<br>www.thjodmenning.is                              | <b>Reykjavík Art Museum - Hafnarhús</b><br>Tryggvagata 17   D3<br>Open 10-17<br>Thursday 10 - 20<br><b>Kjarvalsstaðir</b><br>Flókgata 24<br>Open 10 - 17<br><b>Ásmundarsafn</b><br>Sigtún<br>Open 10 - 17<br>www.listsafnreykjavikur.is |
| <b>The Einar Jónsson Museum</b><br>Eiríksgata   G6<br>Tue-Sun 14-17<br>www.skulptur.is              | <b>Reykjavík City Library</b><br>Tryggvagata 15   D3<br>www.borgarbokasafn.is                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Galleri Ófeigur</b><br>Skólavörðustígur 5   E5<br>ofeigur.notando.is                             | <b>Reykjavík City Museum - Árbæjarsafn</b><br>Kistuhylur 4<br>Open daily 10-17<br><b>Settlement Exhibition</b><br>Reykjavík 871+/-2<br>Aðalstræti 17   E3<br>Open daily 10-17                                                           |
| <b>Hafnarborg</b><br>Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður<br>www.hafnarborg.is                              | <b>Reykjavík Maritime Museum</b><br>Grandagarður 8   B2<br>www.maritime-w-museum.is                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Hannesarholt</b><br>Grundarstígur 10   E5<br>www.hannesarholt.is                                 | <b>Reykjavík Museum of Photography</b><br>Tryggvagata 16   D3<br>Weekdays 12-19 / Sat-Sun 13-17<br>www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is                                                                                                      |
| <b>Hitt Húsið</b><br>Gallery Tukt<br>Pósthússtræti 3-5   E4<br>www.hittusid.is                      | <b>Saga Museum</b><br>Perlan, open daily 10-18<br>www.sagamuseum.is                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Hverfisgalleri</b><br>Hverfisgata 4   E4<br>www.hverfisgalleri.is                                | <b>Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum</b><br>Laugamestangi 70<br>www.iso.is                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>i8 Gallery</b><br>Tryggvagata 16   D3<br>Tue-Fri 11-17 / Sat 13-17 and by appointment. www.i8.is | <b>SÍM</b><br>Hafnarstræti 16   D4<br>Mon-Fri 10-16<br>www.sim.is                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>The Icelandic Phalological Museum</b><br>Laugavegur 116   F8<br>www.phallus.is                   | <b>Spark Design Space</b><br>Klapparstígur 33   E5<br>Mon-Fri 10-18<br>Sat 12-16<br>www.sparkdesign-space.com                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Kirsuberjatréð</b><br>Vesturgata 4   C2<br>www.kirs.is                                           | <b>Wind &amp; Weather Gallery</b><br>Hverfisgata 37   E6<br>Open daily 09-02<br>www.windandweather.is                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Kling &amp; Bang</b><br>Hverfisgata 42   E6<br>Thurs-Sun from 14-18<br>www.this.is/klingogbang   | <b>POKA</b><br>Laugavegur 25   E5<br>www.thoka.is                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Knitting Iceland</b><br>Laugavegur 25   E6<br>www.knittingiceland.is                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Kunstschlager</b><br>Rauðarárstígur 1   G8<br>Mon-Sat from 15-18<br>www.kunstschlager.com        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Living Art Museum</b><br>Skúlagata 28   E7<br>Tue-Sun 12-17<br>www.nylo.is                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Mokka Kaffi</b><br>Skólavörðustígur 3A   E5<br>www.mokka.is                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>The National Gallery of Iceland</b><br>Frikirkjuvegur 7   F4<br>Tue-Sun 11-17<br>www.listsafn.is |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>The National Museum</b><br>Suðurgata 41   G2<br>Open daily 10-17<br>www.natmus.is                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

### Shopping

#### 10 Gullkistan

Frakkastígur 10  
One of the oldest established businesses in the country, these goldsmiths have endured nearly 150 years and have seen three generations of the same family pass down their coveted tradition. Their works are truly unique pieces of Icelandic tradition.

#### 11 Spark Design Space

Klapparstígur 33  
If you're looking for the newest and coolest in Icelandic design, look no further than Spark Design Space. The shop and gallery serves as a platform for artists and designers and their new projects that stimulate all four senses: touch, sight, smell and taste.

#### 12 Hrímm

Laugavegur 25  
Unlike other design shops in town, this one goes beyond the local borders to bring some of the most innovative and stylish creations from designers around the world. They are also the official sales point of Lomography in Iceland, so get yourself a Diana camera and start snapping.

#### Public phones

There aren't many public payphones in the city centre. The tourist information centre at Aðalstræti 2, City Hall, Kolaportíð, entrance at Landsbankinn and in Lækjargata. Prepaid international phone cards are recommended for int'l callers.

#### Internet Access

Most cafés offer free wireless internet access. Computers with internet connections are available to use at:  
Ráðhúskaffi City Hall, Tjarnargata 11  
Ground Zero, Frakkastígur 8, near Laugavegur 45  
The Reykjavík City Library, Tryggvagata 15

#### The National and University Library, Arngrímsgata 3

Tourist Information Centre, Aðalstræti 2  
Icelandic Travel Market, Bankastræti 2  
Reykjavík Backpackers, Laugavegur 28

#### Swimming Pools

There are several swimming pools in Reykjavík. The one in 101 Reykjavík, Sundhöll Reykjavíkur, is an indoor one, located at Barónsstígur. That pool features a nice sunbathing area and some outdoor hot tubs. Opening hours: Monday to Thursday from 06:30-22:00, Friday from 06:30-20:00, Saturday from 08:00-16:00, and Sunday from 10:00-18:00.

#### Public Toilets

Public toilets in the centre can be found inside the green poster covered towers located, for example, at Hlemmur, Ingólfstortorg, by Hallgrímskirkja, by Reykjavík Art Museum, Lækjargata and by Eymundsson on Skólavörðustígur. Toilets can also be found inside the Reykjavík City Hall and the Reykjavík Library.

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# Best Of Reykjavík

Every year around the beginning of July, we make a BEST OF REYKJAVÍK ISSUE celebrating some of what makes Reykjavík-life worthwhile, posting some good entries into a hopefully never-ending discussion. The primary purpose of BEST OF REYKJAVÍK is celebration! It's about big-upping stuff, giving mad props to it and patting it on the shoulder. The following are some nice tips we pulled from BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2013 which you can read in full at [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is)



## BEST ICE CREAM: VALDÍS



This little Italian-style gelato shop in Grandi has been open for just over a month but it already has locals frothing at the mouth and standing in long lines for a couple of scoops. That's no coincidence: The menu is an ever-changing smorgasbord of crowd-sourced flavours picked by Facebook fans. They serve freshly baked waffle cones. And the staff outfits are charming. Yup, Valdís is just the ticket to bringing a bit of sunshine to the cold and grey summer we've been not enjoying lately. We look forward to seeing Valdís thrive and prosper; thank you, Valdís.

Located at Grandagarður 21



## BEST PEOPLE WATCH- ING SPOT: THE BOOTHS AT HRESSÓ



Okay, okay we admit it, we've given Hressó a lot of flak over the years! It was mostly about how much Nickelback they played, but we can't deny that we kind of love that place. It's charming and entertaining, and has the unquestionable best spot to spy on passersby in the form of the booths in the window that skirts Austurstræti. Get there early to watch your acquaintances and enemies drag their asses to work (or do the walk of shame), or head there after work to feast on the evening's brewing debauchery.

Located at Austurstræti 20



## BEST CHEAP THRILL: THE CITY LIBRARY



This was a really strong winner as the library is not only a thrilling adventure of knowledge, but it's also as cheap as you can get—free (lateness fees not included)! You can only take items out if you are a registered resident of the city, but everyone is welcome to browse, dawdle, skim, analyse and delve deeply into their vast collection of books of all types, in several different languages. There's also a great AV collection, particularly for Icelandophiles, and the Reykjavík Museum of Photography is on the top floor. We told you so.

Located at Tryggvagata 15

## A GUIDE THAT FUCKS YOU UP

A list of every  
Happy Hour in  
101 Reykjavík

**101 Hótel**  
Every day from 17:00-19:00. Beer 475 ISK and wine 595 ISK.

**Austur**  
Thursday to Saturday from 20:00 to 00:00  
Beer 800 ISK and wine 800 ISK.

**B5**  
Every day from 16:00-22:00. Beer 550 ISK, cider 700 ISK, wine 550 ISK.

**Bar 11**  
Thursdays to Saturdays from 21:00-00:00. Beer 500 ISK.

**Bjarni Fel**  
Monday to Friday from 21:00-23:00. 2 for 1 one Beer 990 ISK, one single shot with soda 1300 ISK or with energy drink 1400 ISK.

**Boston**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 550 ISK, Wine 550 ISK.

**Bunk Bar**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Wine 700 ISK, Beer 2 for 1 900 ISK.

**Celtic Cross**  
Every day from 17:00 to 20:00.  
2 for 1 on Gull and Brío for 900 ISK.

**Den Danske Kro**  
Every day from 16:00-19:00. 2 for 1 Beer 950 ISK, 2 for 1 Guinness 1000 ISK and 2 for 1 wine 1000 ISK.

**Dillon**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
2 for 1 Beer 900 ISK.

**Dolly**  
Tuesday to Thursday from 20:00 to 22:00, Friday and Saturday from 17:00-22:00. Beer 500 ISK, wine 500 ISK.

**Dubliner**  
Every day from opening - 22:00. 2 for 1 Tuborg 1000 ISK, 2 for 1 wine 1000 ISK, Shot of Jameson 900 ISK.

**Einar Ben**  
Every day from 19:00 to 21:00.  
Beer 500 ISK.



## Download the FREE Grapevine Appy Hour app!

Every happy hour in town in your pocket. Available in the App store and on the Android Market.

**Gamli Gaukurinn**  
Every day from 21:00 - 22:00.  
Thule beer 500 ISK, single shot 500 ISK.

**Glaumbar**  
Monday to Thursday from 21:00 - 1:00. Friday to Saturday 21:00 - 4:30. Beer 390 ISK.

**Harlem**  
Every day from 17:00 to 22:00.  
Beer 550 ISK, wine 700 ISK.

**Hilton Hotel Bar**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.  
All drinks half price.

**Hótel 1919**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. Beer 600 ISK, Wine 575 ISK, Cocktail of the Day half price.

**Hótel Holt Gallery Bar**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. Beer 650 ISK, wine 750 ISK, cocktail of the day 1200 ISK

**Hótel Natura**  
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00.  
50 percent off all drinks, beer 475 ISK (Tuborg), wine 625 ISK.

**Hótel Plaza Bar**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer 500 ISK.

**Iða Zimsen**  
Coffee happy hour every day from 8:00-10:00. All coffee 300 ISK. Alcohol from 19:00-22:00  
Beer (Gull, Tuborg) 445 ISK

**Kaffi Kompaníð**  
Thursday to Sunday from 14:00 to 17:00.  
2 for 1 beer 850 ISK, wine 700 ISK.

**Kaffi Zimsen**  
Every day from 17:00 to 21:00. Beer 550 ISK.

**Kaldibar**  
Every day from 17:00 to 20:00.  
2 for 1 on beer and wine.

**Kiki Queer Bar**  
Thursdays from 20:00 to 22:00.  
Beer 450 ISK, wine 600 ISK.

**Kolabrautin**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 450 ISK, Wine 700 ISK, Cocktails from 1000 ISK, Champagne glass 1500 ISK.

**Lebowski Bar**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.  
2 for 1 beer 900 ISK and wine for 1100 ISK.

**Loft Hostel Bar**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 500 ISK, cider 500 ISK, wine 700 ISK.

**Micro Bar**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer 500 ISK.

**Miðgarður Bistro bar**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. All drinks half price, Beer 500 ISK, Wine 600 ISK.

**Nora Magasin**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Viking Beer for 500 ISK, House Wine for 600 ISK.

**Prikið**  
Monday to Friday from 16:00 to 20:00. 2 for 1 Viking 750 ISK, Viking Classic 850 ISK.

**Roadhouse**  
Friday and Saturday 22:00 to 23:00.  
2 for 1 Beer 895 ISK, Wine 895 ISK.

**SKY Bar & Lounge**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer 500 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

**Slippbarinn**  
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00. Beer 500 ISK, Wine 500 ISK, selected cocktails 950 ISK.

**Stofan**  
Every day from 17:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 650 ISK and Wine 800 ISK.

**Pingholtsbar**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer 500 ISK.

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# ART ONGOING

— continued —

silversmith's workshop from the turn of the century.

*Runs until December 31*

**Sigfús Eymundsson Photography**  
A pioneer of Icelandic photography, an exhibit that taps into the cultural heritage of Iceland.

*Runs until January*

**The Old Harbour**

**Iceland Expo Pavillion**

Every day from 10:00 to 22:00, Sagafilms projects a film of Icelandic scenery inside their Iceland Expo Pavillion which provides a unique 360 degree movie experience.

*On permanent view*

**Reykjavik Art Museum - Ásmundarsafn**

**Tales From the Vault - Sculpture Inspired by Literature**

A collection of Ásmundur Sveinsson's sculptures tied together by a common literary thread. The exhibit presents key works inspired by Icelandic folklore, myth, and poetry.

*Runs until December 30*

**Anna Hallin: Interplay**

In her exhibition Interplay, Swedish-Icelandic artist Anna Hallin explores the threads that form connections in history, art, culture, time and between one artist and another. The exhibition includes sculptures by Anna, as well as drawings and an installation.

*Runs until January 5*

**Reykjavik Art Museum - Hafnarhús**

**Fountains**

Lithuanian artist Žilvinas Kempinas installed reels of magnetic tape that ripple like waves with the help of industrial fans.

*Runs until January 5*

**Creature**

Lithuanian artist Tomas Martišauskis translates the notion of traditional sculpture by translating an object into various mediums. The object itself will not appear in the exhibit.

*Runs until January 12*

**Icelandic Video Art 1975 - 1990**

This exhibition explores the first steps taken by Icelandic artists to use video as an artistic medium. The works shown were first exhibited in Iceland between 1980 and 1990 and only a few have been shown since then.

*Runs until January 19*

**Reykjavik City Museum**

**Reykjavik 871 +/- 2: The Settlement Exhibition**

Archaeological findings from ruins of one of the first houses in Iceland and other excavations in the city centre, open daily 10:00-17:00, 1,100 ISK per adult, 650 ISK per person in groups (10+) and free for children 18 and under.

*On permanent view*

**Reykjavik Maritime Museum**

**From Poverty to Abundance**

Photos documenting Icelandic fishermen at the turn of the 20th century.

*On permanent view*

**The History of Sailing**

Iceland's maritime history and the growth of the Reykjavik Harbour.



**Get Yo Art On**  
**The 22nd Annual Unglist Young Art Festival**

*Tjarnarbíó | Nov 8 - 16 | Free!*

Like many newly minted 22-year-olds, the Unglist Young Art Festival is experimenting with bold, uninhibited ideas, with the potential to make art for a living and telling you to invite mom and dad, because they will likely be the ones supporting you through your own bold, uninhibited period of experimenting with the arts. The festival will showcase design, music, dance, acting, visual art and poetry by students and independent artists. Pull your flatmate from his bongos, grab that girl gluing feathers to her shoes and go interact with your tribe! And to all 22-year-olds out there eating Yum-Yum noodles on a mattress on the floor, perhaps there will even be some free snacks... **AB**



**Find all art listings online**  
**listings.grapevine.is**

*On permanent view*

**The Coast Guard Vessel Óðinn**

This vessel sailed through all three Cod Wars and also served as a rescue ship to over 200 ships.

*On permanent view*

**75th Anniversary of the Seaman's Day Council**

An exhibit celebrating the 75th anniversary of Seaman's Day by telling the story of the Day from its first envisionment to current celebrations.

*Runs until November 30*

**Reykjavik Museum of Photography**

**Combined space**

Exhibition by the Norwegian photographer Nils Olav Bøe who creates artificial scenarios in his studio, imbedding his photographs into films. His latest works includes captions from news photography as well as political statements.

*Runs until December 31*

**Contemporary Landscape**

This exhibition consists of 12 works by Icelandic Photographers who are focussing on nature in Iceland. It is not about "post card photography" but the connection between human

beings and nature itself.

*Runs until January 12*

**Saga Museum**

A Viking Museum that intimately recreates key moments in Iceland's history, giving a compelling view into how Icelanders have lived for more than a millenium. From the time of the earliest settlers, history is brought to life in a unique and exciting way with life-like figurines.

*On permanent view*

**Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum**

**De Profundis**

A collection of sculptures by Sigurjón Ólafsson and the paintings of his contemporaries. This group of artists are known today as "trailblazers of modernism" in Iceland. As the title suggests, beneath the smooth surface of the works lies the turbulence and anguish of the Cold War tensions.

*Runs until December 1, only during weekends.*

**Spark Design Space**

**SKVÍS**

Berlin-based Icelandic graphic designer Siggí Eggertsson's new exhibition will feature 8 modular posters.

*Runs until November 16*

**Volcano House**

The exhibition gives a brief overview of Iceland's geological history and volcanic systems, and there are superb photographs of volcanic eruptions and other magnificent aspects of Icelandic nature. A large collection of semi-precious rocks and minerals from around the country are also on display.

*On permanent view*



**Reykjavik Museum of Photography**

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Tryggvagata 15, 101 Reykjavik  
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Closed on Mondays  
[www.gerdarsafn.is](http://www.gerdarsafn.is)

**350 years of Árni Magnússon**  
The artist's model book



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

**Beside the Deep Waters**  
Paintings, drawings and design by Rúna – Sigrún Guðjónsdóttir



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

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## Into The Cave

### Cava

Laugavegur 28, 101 Reykjavík  
Tel: (+354) 578 3730  
Thu-Sat: 18:00-1:00 (kitchen closes at midnight)  
Sun-Wed: Closed

#### What We Think:

Good first course, great main course, lacking in spice overall. Ambiance and service let the kitchen down.

#### Flavour:

Mexican (mostly)

#### Ambiance:

Sombre-ero

#### Service:

Plenty of servers for a small room but plenty of room for improvement of service.

#### Price for 2 (with wine):

20-25,000 ISK



I was so excited to visit Cava after browsing their menu that the drooling shorted out my keyboard. This review was written with quill and delivered by zeppelin.

To someone born outside of Iceland, Cava might not seem like much, but after suffering through two decades of stale burritos with second-rate ground beef topped with fluorescent guacamole, the sight of someone attempting real Mexican food gave me goose bumps.

So I descended into Cava with a big, dopey grin on my face. And imme-

diately saw that they weren't kidding about the name. Steeped in darkness, save for the occasional candle straining against the night, as Kavinsky techno plays at a conversation-diffusing volume and decaying faces bear down on us from the walls. First impression—Cava is a stuffed raven and a bottle of Absinth shy of a goth bar. Perhaps the stress of designing every restaurant in Reykjavik is starting to affect Leifur Welding's mood.

These cocktails were brought down by the bar staff at the upstairs Bunk bar, which felt like an odd arrangement considering that Cava was wildly overstaffed. We counted five servers for the room, most of whom spent the duration of the evening either staring blankly into space or showering us with unwanted attention while neglecting to clean the tables or removing the menus. There were plenty of smaller issues with the service, most of which could have been cleared with a day or two of proper training. The rules of waiting have not been updated much in the last 150 years and for this price range I'd expect more.

In tune with the service of the evening, the appetizers that were ordered together arrived 10 minutes apart. Having said that, I loved my Ceviche Tropical (1,130 ISK) with shellfish and mango and the Carne Asada (1,090 ISK) filled with a type of ropa vieja was a pungent morsel and a nice window into the alternatives to the usual taco fillings.

The main course consisted of their two main red meat extravaganzas—Adobo (4,500 ISK) and Barba-coa (4,900 ISK). The portions were

enormous—great big bulging meat mountains in the Argentinean tradition. The Adobo was the lamb fillet and the Barba-coa was the grilled rib-eye. The lamb came medium-rare, with a strip of fat and marooned in a swamp of mashed spicy sweet potatoes and salsa roja. The rib-eye came nestled in a scoop of guacamole with a wreath of roasted potatoes. The rib-eye didn't get in the way of the steak but didn't add that much to the dish either. One of the sweet-potato mash with chilli is one of my secret comfort foods so that was a major plus in my book. Both dishes worked because of a well-cooked hunk of good-quality red meat.

For dessert we tried the Dulce de Leche (990 ISK) and Pastel de Tres Leches (990 ISK). I couldn't tell the flavour of the tres leches as it had been suffocated under dulce de leche and strawberries. The Dulce de Leche itself was a fudge brownie that had suffered a similar fate. What a fudge brownie was doing there in place of the angel food cake is anyone's guess. The result was as if Willy Wonka's chocolate factory had caught on fire and melted with you still trapped inside and your only recourse was to chew your way to safety.

We ended up over-stuffed and barely managed one post-dinner beer before crawling home on our bellies like overturned turtles.

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### Asía

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Mon-Fri: 11:30-21:00  
Sat-Sun: 17:00-21:00

#### What We Think:

Sigh

#### Flavour:

Chinese (mostly)

#### Ambiance:

Sombre-ero

#### Service:

The service was actually pretty good

#### Price for 2 (with wine):

12-15,000 ISK



The freezing gale spat us inside like chewed skoal. Past the yellow façade with the green palm tree silhouette and into the wonderfully gaudy pan-Asian dining room decked out in the international language of the prefab Chinese restaurant: Foo Dogs, ornate panels and all-gold-everything. For a period in the mid-'90s, Reykjavík was home to at least five restaurants more or less identical to Asía. Eating ethnic food in Iceland used to be a trip to a fantasy land—a tour of a plastic theme park, a way to temporarily escape the bleak midwinter and indulge in some national stereotypes. But the times have changed and now Icelanders are clamouring for trendy Brooklyn bars, sushi and dainty dill stews in jam jars. Twenty-four years young, Asía stands strong, a remnant of Iceland's fanatical food fixations, and

an attempt to rectify our utter lack of edible Chinese takeout.

Asía boasts a classic old school Chinese restaurant menu with well over a hundred individual dishes, which is just insane enough to be impressive. But the emphasis is on their prix fixe lunch specials. We ordered the satay (1290 ISK), spring rolls (890 ISK), Szechuan lamb (2,290 ISK) and moo shoo pork (2,090 ISK). We ordered some prawn crackers as well, but they never made it. We soon discovered how they managed this dazzling array of dishes on the menu: by ironing out any wrinkle of variety. Those hoping for an elegant, cyclopean wall of carefully balanced flavours should brace themselves for the bland sameness of 100 plus dishes cemented together by the same oily gloop. I honestly suspect them of lathering the same sauce base over everything and only manipulating the colour and level of sweet and sour sauce mix. Neither of us was able to taste anything other than salt, oil and sugar. The plastic tablecloth was a sensible choice. Any other fabric would have been permanently drenched by the deluge of grease flowing out of that kitchen. BP oil-drowns fewer animals in a year than Asía manages in a single afternoon.

Oh, and the dessert was a deep-fried banana with ice cream (790 ISK). The banana had almost definitely been deep-fried in the same oil as the pork, causing it to be infused with a hefty pork aroma. This complemented the bargain bin vanilla ice cream and imitation whipped cream the way an amputee

might lop off his remaining arm for improved balance.

I am not comparing the Chinese restaurants in Iceland to some unapproachable ideal. I'm not expecting haute cuisine and I'm not comparing this to actual Chinese food in actual China (I've never been). I'm comparing them to the cheap Chinese take-away I've had all over the world. The Chinese joint I did the most business with was a hole in a bulletproof glass shield in a dugout in Crown Heights; next to the hole was an aquarium full of dead fish. Not that hard to beat. Asía used to be a decent restaurant and maybe it's not beyond repair. I'm not one for nostalgia, but I must admit a little sadness at seeing the state of the cooking there. Let's just hope it won't be replaced by yet another trendstaurant. You might wonder why people still go there to eat. Why did people post "Perfect Day" to Facebook on the day Lou Reed died? Why do we love playing that song—Lou Reed's ode to heroin use—at weddings? Why do people with functioning taste buds see food primarily in terms of its nutritional value? Why can't Icelanders eat sushi without deep-frying it? Why does "Baby" by Justin Bieber have 920 million views on Youtube? The answer, my friend, is frying in the wok.

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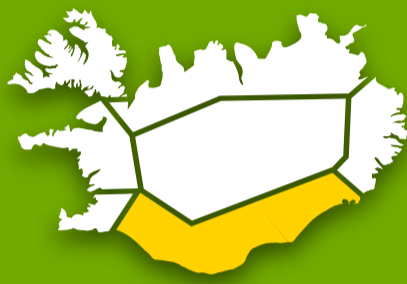


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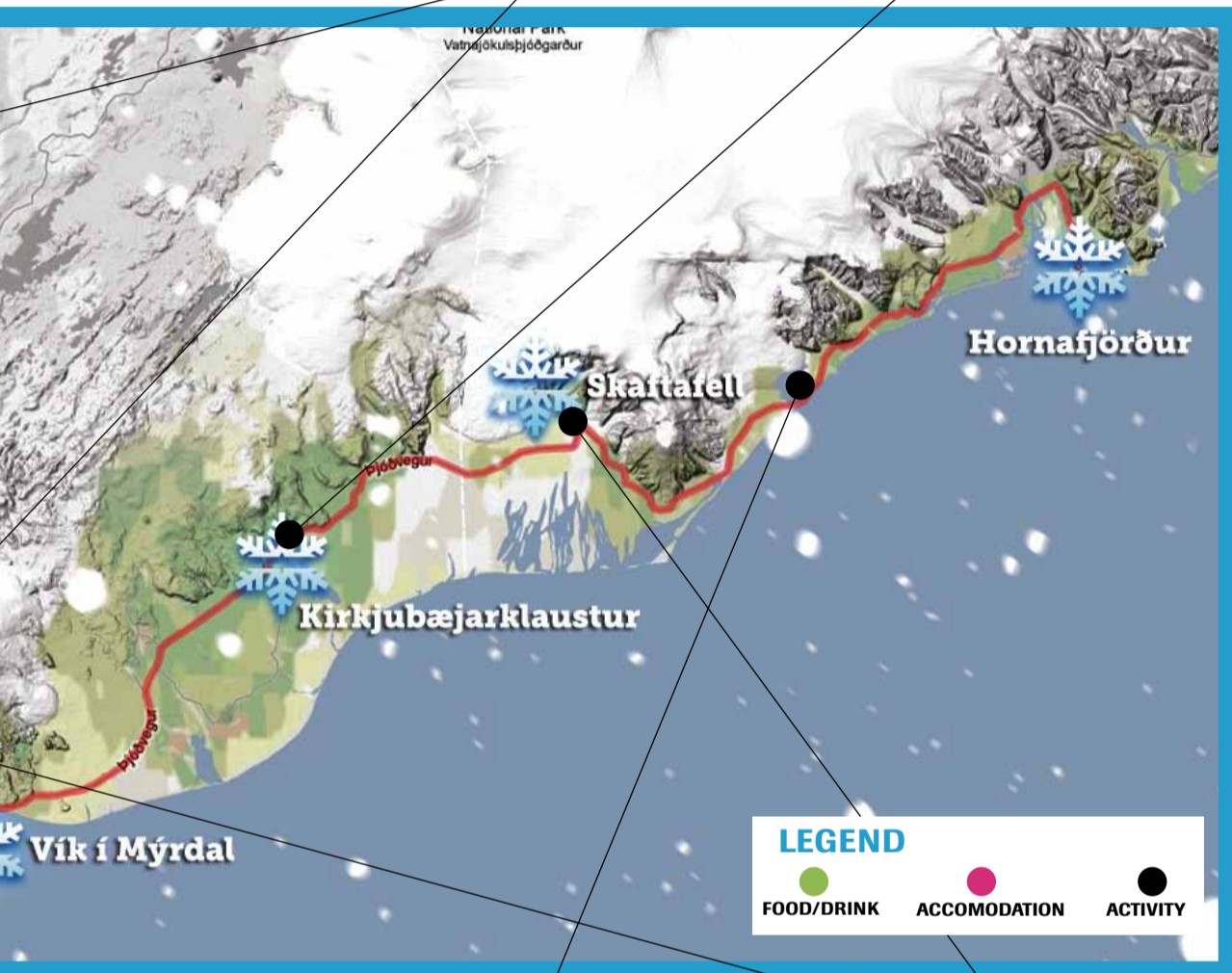


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