

The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE



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Issue Nº 13 – 2008



Iceland Got Milk!

The definitive guide to Icelandic milk products

The University of Iceland Aims for Top-100
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EDITORIAL

Human rights organizations have told us that the Beijing Olympics struck a great blow to human rights in China, in particular freedom of speech. Or, more accurately, it was a major setback for the struggle for free speech, which obviously, the Chinese public didn't really have before anyway.

In Iceland, much of this debate has focused on whether or not political figures should attend the games, and whether in doing so, they would send out the signals that everything was A-OK in China. I am not sure I agree. Nobody, is going to care whether or not the President of Iceland is going to the games or not. The Olympics are not meant to celebrate the politicians. The only thing we care about is the athletes. They were the only ones attending the games who really had the power and the opportunity to create public awareness over human rights infractions in China.

Who remembers Jesse Owens shoving it down Hitler's throat at the '36 games in Berlin? Who remembers Cassius Clay returning home from the '60 games in Rome to throw his Olympic medallion into the Ohio River? Who remembers Tommy Smith's and Johnny Carlos' valiant Black Panther salute at the '68 games in Mexico? I do.

Will we ever witness such heroics again? It is doubtful. This raises the question of the athletes' relationship with their sponsors. The sporting goods giant Nike is one of many sporting goods companies that holds a great interest in China (although it may not be fair to always punk Nike, the others are just as bad), with a great deal of the manufacturing lines located in the People's Republic. You don't bite the hand that feeds you. An athlete making billions of dollars in endorsement money from a sporting goods manufacturer with great financial interests in keeping Chinese authorities on their good side, is not likely to stand up to speak against human rights infractions during the Olympic Games in Beijing.

But, LeBron James standing at the podium with his hand over his mouth in an act of defiance, it would have been a glorious sight.

THE COVER



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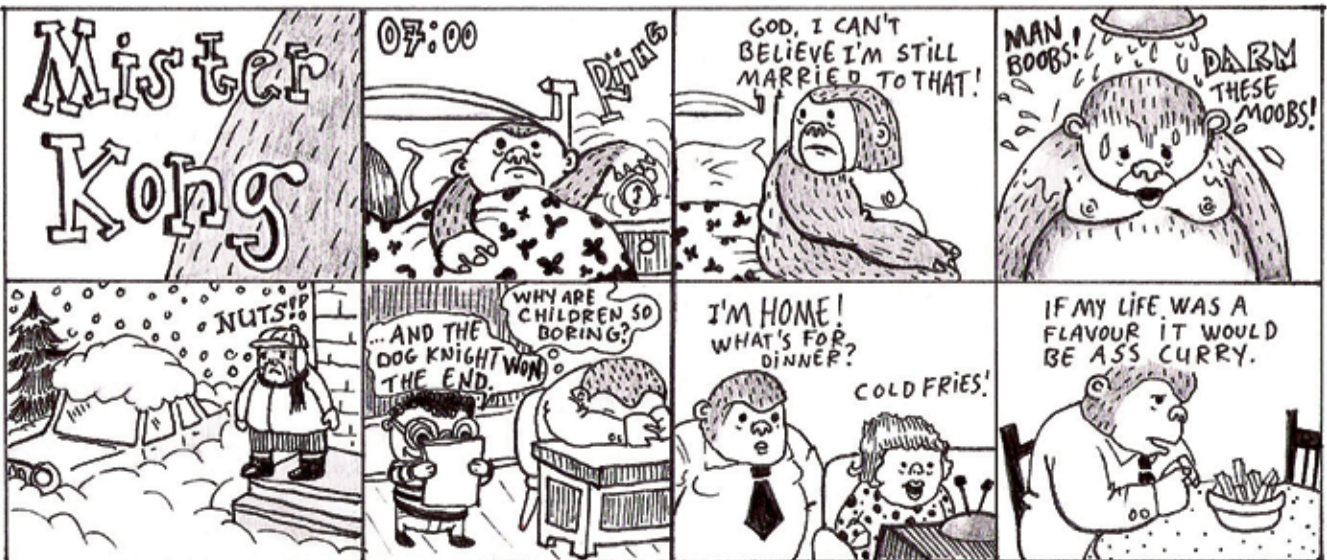
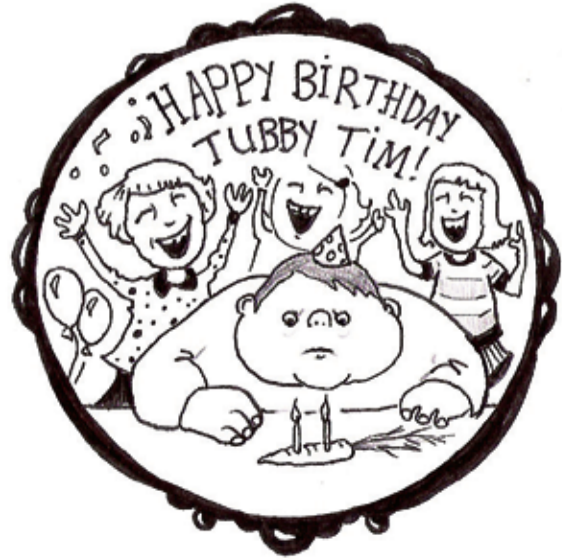
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Sour Grapes

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Good Day. I am hearing this statement far too much here in Reykjavík. I mean this literally, I am hearing Good Day when I enter a store or restaurant, and it is not coming from Icelanders recognizing me as a foreigner. Now I am an Immigrant in this country, and since my first trip to Iceland I have been doing all I can to learn this very difficult language. I am not asking other foreigners to speak fluent Icelandic, as I am nowhere close to this myself (though we should be working towards this). However, I have learned to say hello and introduce myself, to order my food or coffee, and to say farewell. In other words I have learned some polite conversation, and am trying to learn more.

For those Immigrants who are showing no attempt to even say Takk, please learn a few words in Icelandic. You are showing a great disrespect to your hosts by ignoring the fact that the first language of Iceland is Icelandic. It does not take a lot; even if your pronunciation is bad, just TRY. Góðan dag and takk fyrir should be the least you say. I do not understand how you can honestly feel it is acceptable to speak not even a single word of Icelandic and yet live and work in this country.

Some of this blame should also be placed on the business owners who are not helping their employees with the language. I am not suggesting that you must offer language classes, though it would be great for your community if you did, but at least teach your foreign employees a few words. You can even look at this from a business point of view. The more your staff speaks Icelandic, the more business you will be receiving from Icelandic Citizens. I know from discussing this with many of my friends that this is a subject that bothers them.

Personally, I have stopped supporting businesses where the staff will not even use a word of Icelandic. There are enough businesses to choose from, those who are neglecting to show respect for this country's language are the ones I no longer visit. I will stop by again in the future to see if there has been a change, and maybe if more people did this it would force the owners to assist their foreign staff to learn even a couple of words. I have found that when I use the "smá íslensku", little Icelandic, I have learned, people are very receptive, and are even willing to help me when I get it wrong.

So do not worry if your pronunciation is bad, just give it a try. Next time you go to work make yourself do it. Come on, try it, góðan dag og takk fyrir. Once you start trying you will find you can learn a little more each day. Re-

member this lovely country we are living in is called Iceland, so show some respect and learn some Icelandic.

Bestu Kveðjur,
Robert Zartarian

In the spirit of this letter, I will only reply in Icelandic.

Pó ég sé ekki viss um að ég sé sammála þér um að það sé óvirkning við land og þjóð að erlent starfsfólk leggi sig ekki eftir að læra íslensku, þá held ég að erlent starfsfólk sé klárlega betur komið ef það lærir smá íslensku. Það hjálpar fólki að ná tökum á lífi í nýju landi og aðlagast breyttum aðstæðum.

So, yeah... góðan dag and takk fyrir is a good beginning.
Editor

.....

An Open Letter To the Reykjavík Grapevine From Björk Guðmundsdóttir

I saw in the last issue of Iceland's newspaper in English: "grapevine", that Valgeir Sigurðsson was credited for having written all the instrumentals for my album Vespertine. Could I please offer a correction:

I have noticed last 7 years that Mr. Sigurðsson has often been credited for either writing or producing that album. I'd like to say that he didn't write it or produce. He was a computer programmer for a third of it and a recording engineer for a third. The other two thirds were done by other engineers and programmers.

Here is the creditlist to show you the correct crediting of Vespertine. I don't understand where that misunderstanding has come from

could be one of four options:

1: the pop critics of this world have not totally yet worked out the difference between engineering, programming, writing and producing electronic music. Visually this appears very similar. A man/woman sitting in front of a computer. Not as different as for example a drummer, a brass arranger and an engineer. But these are 3 completely different jobs which journalists must start to see the difference

2: it could be that this is some degree of sexism. m.i.a. had to deal with this with the respected website pitchfork.com where they assumed that diplo had produced all of her Kala album without reading any credit list or nothing, it just had to be, it couldn't have been m.i.a. herself! It feels like still today after all these years people can-

not imagine that a woman can write, arrange or produce electronic music. I have had this experience many many times that the work I do on the computer gets credited to whatever male was in 10 meter radius during the job. People seem to accept that women can sing and play whatever instrument they are seen playing. But they cannot program, arrange, produce, edit or write electronic music.

3: I'll admit that one thing could confuse things: people have to use their ears and actually read the creditlist to get this information. All the music I have made: like for example string arrangements, synthbasslines or programming of electronic patterns, I never play myself live because I want to give 100% of myself into the singing. I either ask the computers to play it or I get other musicians to play it. This could confuse things.

4: one thing that could have kept this misunderstanding alive is that neither me nor Valgeir Sigurðsson have bothered to correct it

but I am doing it now

I hope this correction will be a positive input into more discussion about this

warmth
Björk.

Dear Björk,
After carefully reviewing past issues of the Grapevine, I have reached the conclusion that you are referring to a list in the back pages of Issue 11, where DJ B Ruff is asked to name his favorite albums. At number three, he names your album Vespertine and his full answer goes: "A little heavy but it's really impressive how well Björk's voice mingles with Valgeir Sigurðsson's instrumentals. My favourite Björk album."

Seeing as this is a direct quote to DJ Mr. Ruff, we have a hard time correcting him, without directly misquoting him. It is our policy to rather let people be wrong than misquoted.

The Grapevine has never claimed that Valgeir Sigurðsson was directly involved in the creative process of your album. In fact we have in the past published interviews with Valgeir where he directly refutes this.

But I do hope that this input from you will finally correct what seems to be a common misconception.

Editor



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OPINION



The Lover’s Guide to Iceland

BY SIGURÐUR KJARTAN KRISTINSSON

The well-known myth about Icelandic women being goddess-like and undisputedly the most beautiful specimens of the female kind in the world is a great tourist attraction. Of course this is not meant to put down the Icelandic male population which is considered by many to be just as attractive, with their Viking-like anatomy and their fierce-looking features. The basic point is that there are many who actually come to this gloomy island because of these rumours, wanting to attain true love. I've decided to give these love-seeking enthusiasts a few pointers, and maybe even bust a few myths.

To begin with it has to be stated that finding true love in Iceland will be a challenge under most circumstances, so choose your actions carefully. The first rule is based upon the extremely unwelcoming attitude ingrained in Icelanders: therefore, try your luck when the subject is drunk. If you approach a candidate for your love out in the streets or in a café they will suspect you are soliciting something and turn their back. So the most ideal venue is probably a bar late at night, when the attitude of the inhabitants turns completely around.

When you detect a possible subject, approach him or her and offer a drink. If he or she accepts your offer, you might as well chitchat a bit for fun, although the subject will probably not remember your conversation the morning after. The next step is playing the waiting game. No Icelander wants to leave a bar unless being physically removed, so you can assume that you'll stay there 'til dawn. Don't even think of proposing anything as blatant as leaving the premises to go home with you, just keep on buying more drinks. The rule of thumb is: the drunker the better. It should also be noted that inviting the target on a date the first night is extremely inappropriate, for nobody would ever go on a date with you unless having already bunked with you at least twice; counter to the customary rule of not bunking with anybody until after at least two dates, which applies to the rest of the world.

When the going-home-in-a-taxi routine finally appears you should offer to pay the fare and if the target endorses the proposal you've probably reached the goal line.

The morning after you should begin by introducing yourself and hope that the subject actually remembers you. If he or she does you can try and send them text messages on the next few weekends (never before 3 AM though, when there's a slight possibility the subject's still sober) and if the feedback is positive you can, in about a month's time, finally ask the subject out on a date and then initiate the conventional hitting-on process known around the world. 🍷

INTERVIEW BY STEVIE WARD — PHOTO BY GAS



FESTIVAL FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR ÞORSTEINN STEPHENSEN PUTS ON HIS GAME FACE.

Ten Years of Iceland Airwaves

Þorsteinn Stephensen, Festival Director holds court

The Iceland Airwaves music festival is celebrating its tenth anniversary this October. Right about now, the line-up is being rounded out and the pre-festival buzz is heating up. A Grapevine reporter sat down with Þorsteinn Stephensen, the festival founder, who recently returned to his previous role as the festival director after a few years on the sidelines.

How is this event different to how it was ten years ago?
I don't think I would have expected to be in this position ten years ago. I wasn't sure if we'd make it through, no one really believed this had a chance, people were very sceptical; it took a lot of convincing, but it's different now. Everyone wants to be a part of it, and the last few years have been more pleasure than pain. Now it's still hard work but you have the wind on your back instead of in your face.

How many people are you expecting? If the demand is so high wouldn't you like to expand?
It should be sold out around 4,000 people. I wouldn't want it to get bigger. It's different from other festivals. The popularity is because it's so small and so intimate, fans and artists are drinking in the same bar. If it was bigger we'd have to include bigger venues, we're basically using every big venue in Reykjavík as it is.

Is the current economic situation in Iceland threatening the festival?
It costs probably somewhere between 14–15 million Icelandic krónur to run – it should cost half that. That's another thing that has changed, it's a big event in Reykjavík and the volunteering spirit that dominated in the beginning has partly gone. We used up all our favours so now we pay full price wherever we go. Sometimes I feel like we are victims of our own success. We used to get hotel bookings for artists because no one is coming; now we can't because everyone is here to see us! The programme is getting so extensive we basically have every capable stage technician and sound technician working for us, so it's getting more expensive for us.

Is this why the event feels downsized?
There are changes to the programme, which is different from last year. Tunglið has now changed

into a club so it's going to be an all electronic music venue for the festival; we are having an all girls night, with great female talent from Iceland and beyond. We're also having 'Label Night' with Kimi records and a few others promoting all the headliners from their labels. The basic structure for the festival is still the same: The Art Gallery, Tunglið, Organ and NASA, these are the backbone. It's been a winning strategy so far, so we're not going to change it.

How big is your team?
There are three people, including myself, who work here year round, then more people come on board the closer we get to the festival, it goes up to around 78. There are always setbacks and u-turns, but usually its goes according to plan.

Who picks the bands, is it led by personal taste or by what you think people will like?
There are people who know more about the local scene, but we listen to all the demos together – there were well over 300 this year – then I have the final say, but we go as close to what people want as possible, there are always surprises. Obviously personal taste has everything to do with it, if we don't like it, it doesn't get on, but we also consider what's going on. You have to respect other peoples' taste, you have to put on what's popular in different crowds, but taste has a lot to do with it.

With the international acts do you chase them or do they apply?
This isn't the biggest festival in the world and we don't try to be. Communication with the outside world takes up a lot of our time, musicians and journalists, and we try to give everyone as much info as possible. We write to the people we really want to have on the bill, but we get loads of requests. People play the festival, then a year later their friends who played with them on the US tour want to come. It makes it a family feeling, friends who are friends of other bands, or managers who know managers. I kind of like that, it's cosy and homey. Out of the 2000 foreigners who come to

Iceland, even though you don't know them, they are normally regulars.

What's the best stuff?
I'm looking forward to seeing international acts I haven't seen yet, but I'm looking forward to new Icelandic stuff I haven't seen too, and also a lot of established bands will be playing new material: FM Belfast and Reykjavík! for example. There are so many things to see and you can only see so much.

If you could book a dream band, living or dead, who would it be?
Frank Sinatra? Nah, I'm joking. Kraftwerk would have been a great booking. They played a one off gig a few years ago. Airwaves has never been about 'one big band.' Sometimes the best performances are from the bands you've never heard of or hardly have a record out. It's not about 'the one Rage Against the Machine concert' or the 'one Pearl Jam concert'. It's a good platform for new talent. These are very good conditions to do a good show, you have a very perceptive crowd and venues that are packed. Bands say they play their best gigs ever at Airwaves, so it's a perfect platform for up-and-coming bands to get recognised. People were so obsessed about getting people from Sony and BMI in the house, but now it is more democratic, it's about reaching out to as many people as possible. 🍷

INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS

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CSS (BR)
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El Perro Del Mar (SE)
Familjen (SE)
Final Fantasy (CA)
Junior Boys (CA)
P NAU (AUS)
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ARTICLE



How to Properly Celebrate Our Silver

BY JÓN TRAUSTI SIGURÐSSON

The Icelandic handball team recently returned from the Beijing Olympics sporting silver medals (and, yes, it's a real sport.) This is Iceland's greatest sports achievement to date and the whole nation is overwhelmed with pride. A proper welcoming ceremony was hosted for the team on Arnarhóll upon their arrival, where the President of Iceland awarded the team with the Falcon Medal for Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Excellence.

However, here at the Grapevine World Headquarters, the general consensus is that not enough has been done to celebrate the heroes of the handball team. We really don't get that many Olympic medals around here. The following is a list of suggestions on how Icelanders can properly celebrate their golden... erh, silver, boys:

- 1) Due to inflation and a free falling currency, Icelandic money is fast losing its value. This would be a great opportunity to replace the 500 ISK bill with a 500 ISK silver coin. That silver coin should have handball-style pattern on the backside.
- 2) The faces of the handball team members should be carved into a mountain (Mt. Rushmore style). This could be done in a remote fjord in the West fjords. The carved mountain would boost tourism and thus the local economy, replacing its need for oil refinery and/or aluminium smelting.
- 3) To emphasize the importance of handball in Iceland, the one area that most visitors to Iceland see, the national Airport building in Keflavík, should be torn down and rebuilt in the shape of a giant handball.
- 4) The statue of independence hero Jón Sigurðsson in front of the Parliamentary building on Austurvöllur should be replaced with a statue of the team's captain Ólafur Stefánsson.
- 5) The renowned Icelandic delicacy, Brennivín, should be sold in handball shaped bottles only.
- 6) The handball team should be awarded space in the National Graveyard of Iceland, located at Þingvellir national park. They could then spend eternity next to other heroes of the Republic.
- 7) August 24, the day Iceland won the silver medal, should henceforth be celebrated as "Silverday" and declared a national holiday.
- 8) Main streets and squares should honour the team with names after frequently used handball phrases such as "2 Minute Penalty Square" and "Free Throw Avenue". Smaller streets would then be named after renowned Icelandic handball players, past and present.

Iceland's handball team: WE SALUTE YOU! 🇮🇸

ARTICLE BY JAMES CRUGNALE — PHOTO BY GAS



WHILE TECHNICALLY NOT MILK, SOUR CREAM IS A GRAPEVINE FAVOURITE.

Got Mjólk?

The definitive guide to Icelandic milk

Milk, it does a body good, but with so many different varieties in Iceland, how does one know which ones to drink...or not to drink? Don't get bilked on your milk! The Grapevine brings you the go-to guide to becoming the ultimate Icelandic dairy aficionado.

Be proud to rock your milk moustache! There is much pride for Iceland's milk. In fact, studies have shown there are actual unique health properties to it. "In scientific studies, Icelandic milk has been found to have different protein composition than milk from other cow breeds which may play some part in lower incidence of diabetes in Iceland than in neighbouring countries," says Guðný Steinsdóttir, spokesperson for Mjólkursamsalan, the largest milk distributor in Iceland. According to Statistics Iceland, the country consumes a staggering 183.1 litres per capita of milk products yearly, one of the highest milk consumption rates around world just barely behind Finland, trailing by only 0.8. It's not hard to see why with so many different assorted brands sitting on the grocery shelf. As a new traveller from abroad visiting Iceland for the first time, it can be a safari just trying to pick the right one. The Grapevine rose to the challenge, buying out a small chunk of 10/11's milk supply and meticulously reviewing each one.

SKYR
Skyr is perhaps one of Iceland's most treasured cuisines, known around the world for its thickness and creamy texture very similar to the German Quark, but better. This dairy concoction has gained so much international acclaim that it is now available in Britain and Scandinavia, and at premium grocery stores in the United States including Whole Foods. Icelandic folks here eat it with fruit and cream (berries are your best bet!), adding sugar (mmm!) or just eaten plain (not recommended!). "Skyr is a remarkable dairy product unique to Iceland," says Steinsdóttir. "It is made from skim milk and is virtually fat free. It's also a product that is not only high in protein but also contains a considerable amount of whey proteins, which are considered to have many health promoting qualities both with regard to muscle build-up as well as weight management." There are many varieties of skyr with added flavours like banana, strawberry or pear; for the uninitiated, these are your best bets, not plain. It's also perhaps one

of the cheapest things to buy in the country, so nothing should be stopping you from this mouth-wateringly delicious milk-based snack.

CONVENTIONAL MILKS
For those looking for your more normal, everyday milks, there are several brands out there that at first maybe seem daunting from the unusual names but are perfectly okay for you to put on your cereal:

Nýmjólk
Found in a blue jug with the hilariously effete catch phrase, "Muu" (which is apparently what Icelandic cows say). This is pasteurised milk and probably the closest thing to typical American-style milk, yet still somewhat delectably creamier.

Léttmjólk
With a yellow container, this is more of a low-fat milk; it tastes kind of like 1% milk, but with a subtle distinction.

Undanrenna
For the health conscious looking for fat-free or skim, look for the mjólk with the pink box, this is your closest bet.

After much deliberation between trying all three, Nýmjólk passes the "Coco Puffs challenge" – it tastes the best and is the most popular choice here.

Kókovármjólk
Literally 'choco-milk' – this chocolatey milk is a hit with the kids. It comes in a little milk box or plastic jug, and is emblazoned with an excessively cheerful-looking muscular purple and yellow cat that tells its buyers "you will get strength from Kókovármjólk." You can't argue with that cat; it has muscles after all! Plus, those who buy it are eligible to win prizes like mountain bikes! Radical! Also comes in sugar-free varieties as well, but this completely throws off the taste. Regular Kókovármjólk is more generic chocolate milk than a rich creamy Ovaltine, but it's passable.

MORE UNUSUAL FARE
Sármjólk
In English, 'sour milk'; this acerbic yogurt-esque liquid takes a little getting used to, to say the least.

It starts off innocently enough but then hits you with a pungent roundhouse kick to your stomach, guaranteed to knock your socks off if you mistake this for regular milk. This esoteric drink comes in several different flavours including strawberry and mixed berry. I have to admit it isn't my favourite and threw my gut into knots. This is reserved only for the most adventurous of milk connoisseurs.

WHO'S DRINKING ALL THE MILK?
Finland – 183.9
Iceland – 183.1
Sweden – 145.5
Ireland – 129.8
Netherlands – 122.9
Norway – 116.7
Switzerland – 112.5
Germany – 92.3
France – 92.2
Italy – 57.3
(Per Capita Consumption of Milk and Milk Products in Europe in litres, 2006. According to the International Dairy Federation.)

AB mjólk
Short for acidophilus/bacillus, this sour yogurty liquid thing is filled with probiotics which are friendly bacteria that help with digestion. Icelanders customarily drink this as a breakfast drink in the mornings. This comes in several flavours including pear, which is highly recommended. Plain ab mjólk is less astringent than súrmjólk but still has some bite to it.

G-mjólk
Also referred to as long-life milk, it is a long-life UHT (ultra high temperature) milk which has been heated to at least 135°C for at least one second. This über-

creamy "milk" is typically added to coffee and not drank individually (those who do will be frowned upon, take it from me!)

Rjómi
Don't mistake this for milk! Comes in little cartons next to the others so it's easy to get mixed up. It's actually straight-up cream, perfect for cooking and DIY whipped cream. 🇮🇸

FOR THOSE LOOKING FOR YOUR MORE NORMAL, EVERYDAY MILKS, THERE ARE SEVERAL BRANDS OUT THERE THAT AT FIRST MAYBE SEEM DAUNTING FROM THE UNUSUAL NAMES BUT ARE PERFECTLY OKAY FOR YOU TO PUT ON YOUR CEREAL.



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*From the Hávamál, 1300 AD

ARTICLE

Cheap Reykjavík

BY HAUKUR S MAGNÚSSON

Now, Reykjavík isn't really cheap. However, there are plenty of ways to shave impressive amounts of krónur off your monthly purchases, and "Cheap Reykjavík" is where Grapevine attempts to pass some of them on to you, loyal reader. Please send your saving tips to haukur@grapevine.is. and he will pass them along.

CHEAP MOVIES

Downtown Reykjavík's only movie theatre, Regnboginn, has celebrated this summer in style, offering a special discount on all screenings. While other movie theatres will charge you anywhere from ISK 950 to 1.200 per ticket, you can enjoy Hollywood's latest regurgitations at Regnboginn for only ISK 650. This offer is only meant to last until fall, so hurry up and score your tickets to Mamma Mia! now.

READER TIP:

CHEAP(ISH) GOURMET EATING

This tip was phoned in by avid cheapskate Jacek, who wishes to spread the word on his most treasured find since he moved here from Poland last winter. Jacek tells us he enjoys gourmet foods and dinner parties as much as the next guy, but that he doesn't always have the time or resources for whipping up fancy courses. And this is where gourmet fish store Fylgífiskar comes in. "I go to their Skólavörðustígur store. They have some great pre-prepared seafood dishes there that sell for really cheap. It's fresh fish, prepared in different styles, and all you have to do is cook it on a pan or in the oven for a while. Maybe boil some rice or potatoes. For around ISK 500 per person, you can impress your guests."

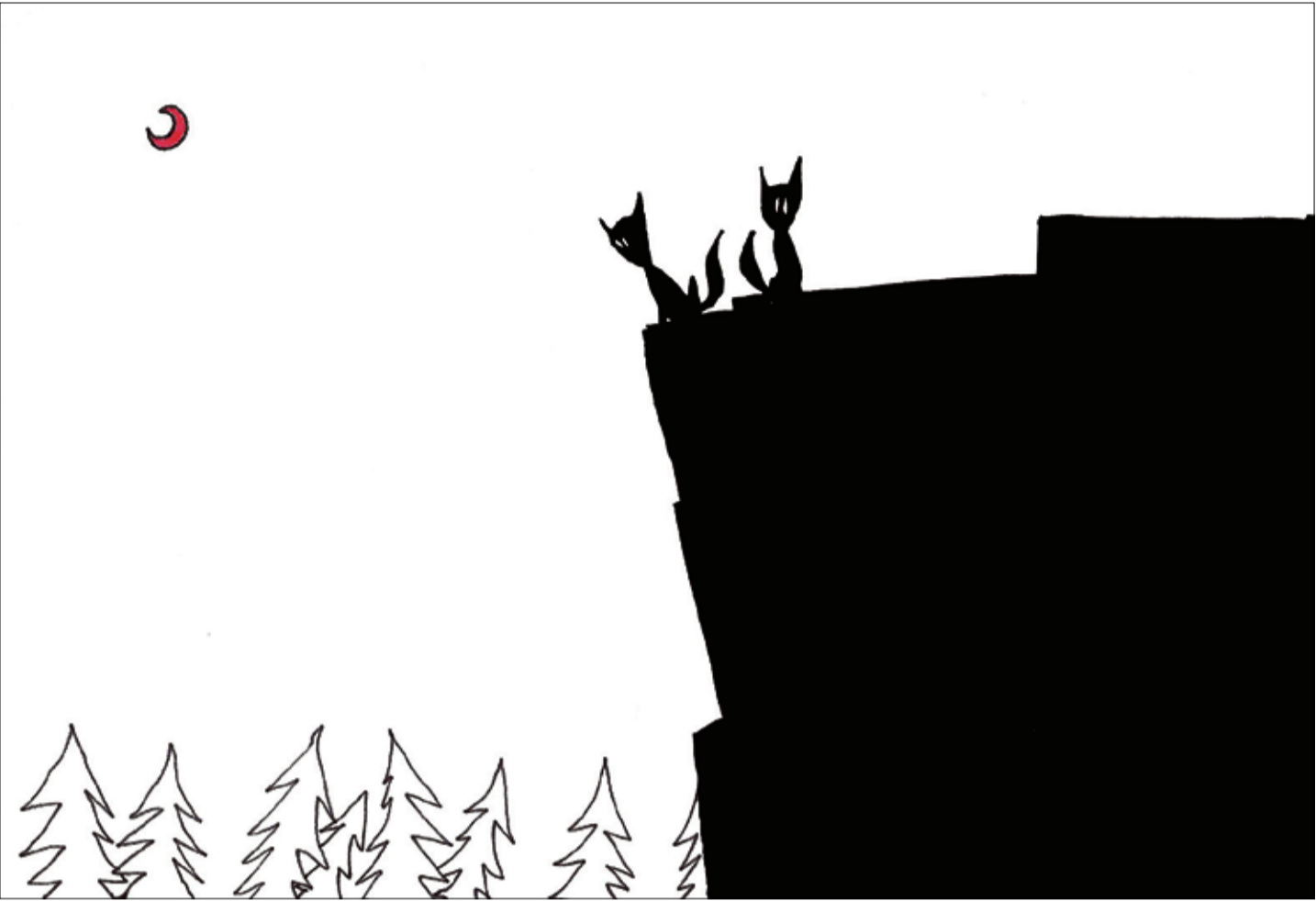
READER TIP:

GÓÐI HIRÐIRINN

It's beyond us why we haven't mentioned Góði Hirðirinn before, as it is a great resource for saving on all kinds of items, and all of its proceeds go directly to charity. Luckily, a helpful miser by the name of Harold took it upon himself to remind us of Góði Hirðirinn's greatness: "Góði Hirðirinn absolutely saved my life when I spent a winter in Reykjavík a couple of years back. I got a great set of speakers, a living room couch, a toaster, silverware and a bunch of vinyl records – basically everything I needed for the apartment we rented – for under 4.000 ISK. It's a great institution."

We might add that Góði Hirðirinn is a second hand store, and sells items that are donated by the public at various drop-off venues in Sorpastations around the city. Góði Hirðirinn is located at Fells múli 28, 108 Reykjavík (off Grensásvegur, near Skeifan – bus route 2). 🐾

ARTICLE BY HAUKUR S MAGNÚSSON — ILLUSTRATION BY HUGLEIKUR DAGSSON



THE TERRIBLE SKOFFÍN. IF IT SEES YOU, THEN YOU ARE DEAD.

More Monsters and Mythical Beings:

Meet Skoffín

Here is where you'll learn what the offspring of a cat and a fox looks like, and to avoid its deadly gaze at any cost.

"In our past and our stories, we've got this massive database of monsters and creatures. A lot of their stories are really fascinating, and I think it's a shame that they're not used more in modern culture. Many haven't heard about them," remarked master comic artist Hugleikur Dagsson in the Grapevine earlier this summer. The subject was his latest graphic novel, Garðarshólmi, in which he depicts many of the aforementioned creatures. This prompted the Grapevine – on a perpetual quest to educate the masses – to draft Dagsson to illustrate a series of articles on these monsters of yore. And for this instalment in the

series, you'll learn the terrible consequences of unprotected fox-on-cat sex: Skoffín.

Icelandic folklore claims that catastrophic events may lead from Iceland's native land mammal, the arctic fox, breeding with a female cat. Post conception, and a gestation period, the cat will spawn an unholy abomination that can kill you by merely looking your way. This creature is known as a Skoffín, and it is positively evil in every way.

Often referred to as the Basilisk's Icelandic counterpart, Skoffín seem to have no immediate function sans being super evil and really, really scary. It literally kills you just by looking at you. You don't get to run, you don't get to hide. You stumble into its line of sight and its curtains, pal. You are dead. And they talk, too. Say all sorts of wicked, nasty things.

One story goes that a few hundred years

ago, when Skoffín were much more rampant, a priest was bidding farewell to his congregation after mass. Strangely enough, every parishioner dropped dead on the church's doorsteps immediately after exiting. The priest figured that a Skoffín was sitting on the church's roof beam, so he pushed out a mirror, tricking the Skoffín into killing itself by looking at its own deadly reflection.

There, the priest used one of two known Skoffín-killing ways known to man. And there aren't any more, the critter is damn near indestructible. Should you encounter a Skoffín on your travels through rural Iceland, try and avert its gaze for as long as possible (assuming you reach it from behind). Showing the Skoffín its reflection is really the only guaranteed way of killing it, but if you left your mirror at home you might try firing silver buttons at it (carving a cross on them really helps). 🐾

ARTICLE BY MARCUS WALSH — PHOTO BY GAS

Scooter = Trouble Shooter

Renting a scooter may be the answer to your problems

Renting a scooter for a few hours is just the ticket to see a good amount of Reykjavík in a quick spurt of time. Tired of walking everywhere, and nonplussed with the bus services, I was able to zip in and out of the sidestreets to find all the best sights in a single day.

If you've never ridden a scooter before, it's beneficial to try a small practice run. There are a few drain covers on the harbour you can weave in and out of to get the feel of it. In thirty seconds you'll feel like a natural. The harbour is quiet making it the perfect place to start.

First up I went to Hallgrímskirkja. It was difficult to navigate around the one-way system near the church so I was essentially performing laps of the same circuit, which was fun but I wasn't really getting anywhere. Then, I headed for the main shopping strip Laugavegur, which was so slow paced it felt like Monte Carlo, with time to people

watch and weave in and out of traffic which was locked at 10 km/h.

Next up: Vesturgata and left at the roundabout to Ánanaust to simply follow the ocean all the way up to the lighthouse. The road is around 5km long and takes in an exquisite, aquatic view. The route is also a great way to build up some serious velocity on the straight. I hit 60 km/h in no time, and suddenly "Take My Breath Away" was in my head. All I needed now was nemesis named Iceman and a wingman named Goose.

At the lighthouse, I parked, took a stroll, and gawped at the rocks, seaweed, ocean, long grasses, and summer sun. It was desolate there, so this would make a great romantic Top Gun moment. If you're just hiring for a couple of hours, this route is definitely the best bet, as you can spiritually escape Reykjavík for a short time, albeit not technically. 🐾

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ARTICLE

Whose Data is it Anyway?

Is public data really public?

BY HJÁLMAR GÍSLASON

Government institutions and other public organisations gather a lot of data. Some of them – like the Statistics Office – have it as their main purpose, others as a part of their function, and yet others almost as a by-product of their day-to-day operations.

In this case I'm mainly talking about structured data, i.e. statistics, databases, indexed registries and the like – in short, anything that could logically be represented in table format. This includes a variety of data, ranging from the federal budget and population statistics to dictionary words, weather observations and geographical coordinates of street addresses – to name just a few examples.

Within these public data collections lies tremendous value. The data that has been collected for taxpayers' money for decades, or in a few cases even centuries (like population statistics), is a treasure trove of economical and social value. Yet, the state of public data is such that only a fraction of this value is being realised.

The reason is that accessing this data is often very hard. First of all it's often hard to even find out what exists, as the sources are scattered and there is no central registry for existing data sets. Many agencies don't even publish information on the data that they have.

More worrying is that access to these data sets is made difficult by a number of restrictions, some accidental, others due to lack of funding to make them more accessible and some of these restrictions are even deliberate. These restrictions include license fees, proprietary or inadequate formats and unjustified legal complications.

I'd like to argue that any data gathered by a government organisation should be made openly accessible online. Open access means absence of all legal, technical and discriminating restrictions on the use or redistribution of data. A formal definition of Open Access can be found at www.opendefinition.org

The only exception to this rule should be when other interests – most importantly privacy issues – warrant access limitations.

There are a number of reasons for this. First of all, we (the taxpayers) have already paid for it, so it's only logical that we can use the product we bought in any way we please. If gathering the relevant data and selling it can be a profitable business on its own, it should be done in the private sector, not by the government. Secondly, it gives the public insight into the work done by our organisations in a similar way as Freedom of Information laws have done – mainly through media access to public sector documents and other information.

The most important argument, however, is that open access really pays off. Opening access and thereby getting the data in the hands of businesses, scientists, students and creative individuals will spur innovation and release value far beyond anything that a government organisation can ever think of or would ever spend their limited resources on.

Some of these might be silly online games with little monetary value but yet highly entertaining. Others might be new scientific discoveries made when data from apparently unrelated data sources is mixed. And yet others might be rich visualizations that give new insights on some of the fundamental workings of society, showing where there's need for attention and room for improvement.

A recent study on the state of matters with Public Sector data in the UK concluded that the lack of Open Access is costing the nation about 1 billion pounds annually in lost opportunities and lack of competition in various areas. Per capita, a billion pounds in the UK equals about 750 million ISK for Iceland and that's without adjusting for Iceland's higher GDP and arguably some fixed gains per nation.

Surely a huge opportunity for something that requires only a thoughtful policy change and a little budget adjustment to enable the institutions to make the needed changes and continue their great job of gathering valuable data. 🇮🇸

ARTICLE BY VALUR GUNNARSSON — PHOTO BY GAS



VANTAR

Dick Cheney is the Dark Knight

Lederhosen not included

After a slew of thought provoking and intelligent films that helped turn public perceptions against the war in Iraq (remember that one?), we are now back to business as usual. Valur Gunnarsson takes a loot at this summer's blockbusters.

Hellboy 2 did indeed manage to show us that the world is going to hell, though this was rather due to the diabolical plot rather than the I-was-picked-to-direct-the-Hobbit special effects. Here, we have as contrasts the German by-the-book officer who won't let Hellboy torture prisoners for information (damn Nazi). Of course, both he and the audience soon accept Hellboy's ways as being most effective. And, he may be the son of Satan, but at least he doesn't have a European accent. It's funny how quickly European directors turn on their home continent once Hollywood calls.

HULK BEATS HELLBOY

The best of the bunch is actually The Incredible Hulk, by far the best superhero film this year. It goes down much the same path as Batman Begins did three years ago, injecting a real dose of the outside world into a comic book saga. TIH is full of references to AIDS, poverty in Brazil, the angst and paranoia inherent in living in a big city. Even the bad guy manages in a single sentence to convey the tragedy of aging that we must all eventually face. Not bad for a monster film.

Hellboy, on the other hand, fails to find any meaning for its monster, so instead we see him watching Frankenstein on TV – as if Guillermo's lack of depth can be substituted with allusion. Not to mention the X Files movie catchphrase, "To find the truth you must believe." No, actually, to find the truth you must doubt and examine with scientific enquiry. But that's not quite as sexy sounding.

THE JOKER VS. JAR JAR BINKS

Which brings us to The Dark Knight, probably cinema's biggest disappointment since The Phantom Menace. And in the same way that Jar-Jar Binks made you yearn for the Ewoks, The Dark Knight kinda makes you miss George Clooney.

Batman Begins is still by far the best superhero movie ever made. It harkened back to 70's cop films such as Serpico, with Batman and Gordon the only honest men in a crooked city. But it's funny how every time realism is injected into action movies, it eventually succumbs to the demands of the genre, and before you know it has turned into a new form of movie cliché.

Here, the honest all-American criminals become virtual heroes. They are only in it for the money, which makes it alright then. The Joker is the true menace, not because he kills people but (whisper it) he burns money. The idealist, Harvey Dent, is shown up to be just as bad as the bad guys (damn idealists). But Batman is a Kissinger type realist. His only weakness is his inability to kill people. His failure to launch a pre-emptive strike, of course, leads to countless innocents getting killed. Within the premise of the film, as well as the comics, the only right thing for Batman to do would be to kill the Joker right off. But Batman is a sadist and the Joker is a masochist, which is why they make the perfect couple.

Of course, the Batman premise is flawed to begin with. If someone with Bruce Wayne's wealth really wanted to eradicate crime, he could do so with a host of social programs that would all be less cinematic than donning a cape and beating up bad guys. In fact, if you look at early Batman comics from the 40's, he wasn't cleaning up the streets so much as providing home protection for the wealthy. In other words, protecting the interests of his class.

Worse still is that the Batman eventually wins out by high tech spying on everyone in the city. But that's alright, you know, cause it's the good guys doing it. Of course, they would never abuse their power. And in any case, the terrorist Joker is so evil that any response becomes good in comparison. How a seemingly intelligent person like Christopher Nolan decided to go pro-Patriot act now, when everyone else has wised up, remains a mystery.

LIBERAL NIGHTMARE VS. CONSERVATIVE FANTASY

The Incredible Hulk is a liberal nightmare, of scientists being constantly hounded by the government and forced to apply their knowledge to make WMD's. Tim Blake Nelson says quite matter of factly that he hates the government as much as

anybody, just before bullets start flying through the windows. The Dark Knight, however, is conservative fantasy – someone who cuts through the red tape and throws bad guys off of balconies. Government here is not insidious, just useless. It is up to private (and very wealthy) individuals like Bats to clean up.

To each his own. But the one thing you should be able to expect from a non-stop action film apart, of course, from non-stop action, is at least a semblance of a coherent plot. This is soon dispensed with in the Dark Knight. The entire Gotham mob keeps all its savings in paper bags, left in the care of a Chinese person which serves as an excuse for Batman to go to Hong Kong. The Joker, despite his contempt for money, has people everywhere and explosives rigged to every building in the city. How he gets people to work for him is never explained. The officials here are not corrupt as in Batman Begins, but merely incompetent, which makes for far less compelling viewing. In between, we get some fuzzy wuzzy philosophising about freaks, which was done before and just as irrelevantly by Tim Burton in 1992. Hulk makes you believe that if giant green monsters would exist, they would be something like this. Batman, who only dresses up in leather and rides a bike, is far more fanciful.

Anyone still awake at the ending will see Batman chased by the police. Why? Because he has to frame himself so as to protect Dent's reputation. In the midst of a killing spree by an insane clown posse, Batman decides to FRAME HIMSELF, to account for the killings. Batman deserves to be put away for life. What he does not deserve is another sequel. But no one ever gets what they deserve, it seems. 🇮🇸

THE JOKER IS THE TRUE MENACE, NOT BECAUSE HE KILLS PEOPLE BUT (WHISPER IT) HE BURNS MONEY.



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AMERICAN EXPATS: GUESS WHO ATE THE SKATE!

The Book of Non-Icelanders

What defines an American expat living in Iceland?

Journalist and author Colleen Kinder recently visited Iceland to interview American expats for a book projects she is working on. Here's what she found out.

"I've never heard thunder here," Jonas, an American living in Reykjavík, blurted out during our hike, as raindrops flecked our bare arms.

"Really?" I checked. I'd been interviewing Americans living in Iceland for a month for a book project about expatriates. Just over a thousand Americans live in Iceland, and the few dozen I contacted were willing to talk over tea or shark. I wanted to know, first: what brought them to Iceland; next: how they felt about this second home.

My sources could handle the first question in a word: "WWII" for instance, or "Einar." But part two required another cup of tea, a tangent, a brief rant on the rules of Icelandic grammar. Listening, I felt like I'd stumbled into an odd family reunion and taken refuge at the in-laws' table. Like me, these expats were outsiders. But unlike me, they knew all about the inside.

I have Iceland's expats to thank for coaching me through my first taste of shark, but also for nudging me out of the plane of first impressions. Every first-time traveller to Iceland begins by noticing the black fields of lava, then the quaint, corrugated homes, and finally, the spindly yellow cranes looming in every view. An expatriate, though, long ago looked past the features of the landscape, to notice what's absent. He uses what he misses and, conversely, what he's glad to miss, to characterise his second home.

Iceland: where the busiest corner of the capital stations no beggar. Where no one starts her workday by shoving onto a hot subway car. Where grown men aren't hawking cheap souvenirs. Where little boys aren't washing the windshields of cars stuck in traffic. Where women aren't blighted for babies they didn't plan.

Where litter is rare. So are pimples, and catcalls and sirens and the faintest sense of danger. Where strangers at a party don't need to know where you work. Where parents don't need to know where kids play. Where store clerks and waiters don't bother with those how-are-you pleasantries, instead just asking what it is you want.

Glenn misses grape jelly, variety in cold medicine, relatives that are his. Paul misses corned beef, Maryland crab cakes, criticism in the arts. Others miss diversity that's not so conspicuous, drinking that's not so excessive, humidity,

anonymity, washing machines that open up top.

Each time I read through these phantom grocery lists and non-phenomena, I wonder what they tell us about the American lives paused or deserted for Iceland.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

People warned me not to expect commonalities among expatriates in Iceland. Work and love – the most universal of all themes – accounted for the presence of Americans on this island. Sure enough, most Americans I spoke with had clear professional purposes. To lump these purposes together would make as much sense as forming a union of Volcanologists, Artists, Smelter Engineers & Baristas.

Rather than shove Americans under a thematic umbrella, I'll define them as they define Iceland: by contrasts. Around the globe, my fellow citizens are infamous for sticking out, and doing little to change that. Reykjavík, thank heavens, is not a depot of "ugly Americans." People tell me an outsider will never truly fit in on this island, but could one ever last here without trying?

I understand now why my interviewees resisted the term "expat," hinting that they identified more as non-Icelanders: defined not by where they came from, but where they did not. At this latitude, the challenge of expatriation is to claim whatever space remains in a society that might as well be called a family. And just as in-laws at a family reunion know to go along with the customs, the lingo, and the inside jokes, Iceland's expats eat the skate, even if it feels like a joke on them.

I expected Americans to stand out from the Icelandic family when I opened the phonebook. Tipped off that native names rarely begin with the letter 'c,' I flipped right to the third letter of the alphabet and began cold-calling. Soon, I was talking to a bunch of British Catherine's and Christopher's, who sounded as confused as I felt. My criteria for an "American name" was proving flimsy, not to mention disturbingly anglophile. Names that looked too Latino or too European, I caught myself passing over for ethnically milder versions. When I called Caroline Linda Jeans on the basis of the jeans in her surname, I knew I was grasping at straws for an American identity. I finally threw in the towel when Chuck Mack didn't answer his phone.

Colleen Kinder is the author of the book *Delaying the Real World: A Twenty-something's Guide to Seeking Adventure*. She is currently working on a book about American expats.

Though depressing, my phone book experiment was a clue to understanding what might incline an American to approach a culture as dense and preserved as Iceland's with respect. We Americans take pride in our heterogeneity, but it can also leave us feeling diluted. Melt everything into one pot and it becomes hard to describe the taste.

Shark can be criticized on many accounts, but not for lack of taste.

AFRAID OF THE LIGHT

Unaided by the phonebook, I resumed my expat hunt by word of mouth, following one expat to his friend, to her ex-boyfriend, etc. I sometimes felt like I was cobbling together the tree of Iceland's foreign community: The Book of Non-Icelanders, WWII to present. Though I'd be lying if I said my interviewees were clamouring for an Americans-In-Iceland club. There was just one person who craved Yankee fraternity: me.

June's brilliant light had troubled my personal relationship with Mother Nature. I dreaded the freakish evening hours like a little kid afraid of the dark – except I wasn't afraid of the dark. I was afraid of light. Iceland's light. Unable to wind down and sleep, I asked my interviewees for tips.

"How do I fall asleep?" Stasia, an 88-year-old American, repeated my question back, as though I'd asked how to yawn or chew. She'd moved from Pennsylvania to Iceland on a freighter ship in 1946 and narrated her tale as "the second American woman to come here," with the pride of a pioneer. "What colour are your blinds?" Stasia asked.

Immediately, I knew my error. "White."

I realized also why I was touching base so compulsively about June light. Foreigners have no choice but to submit to the terms that govern Iceland, but it helps to first get a nod from one of your own that these terms are not normal.

"Oh no," the pioneering American in Iceland clucked at me, thereby revealing that once upon a time, some three or four decades ago, she had taken some measure to acclimate to this new world.

Because the language of frontiers kept coming up (almost as much as outer space) I finally looked up "pioneer" in the dictionary, finding one of its definitions well-suited to the experience of expatriation to Iceland: "a plant or animal capable of establishing itself in a bare, barren, or open

area and initiating an ecological cycle."

July dimmed and so did my astonishment for midnight sun. But I went on collecting tips, enjoying the routine verification that something was odd, flip-flopped – alter-natural? – here. Planet Iceland: too many orbits away to hear thunder clapping.

"Isn't that weird?" Jonas had asked.

There was, in fact, a scientific explanation for Iceland's mute storms. But the point was to grant this fellow non-Icelander my whole-hearted agreement.

"Weird."

Who, but someone born elsewhere, could?

REPATRIATION

My last interview was with an American expat on his way out, bound for New York. It dawned on me to ask what he would miss most about Iceland. If Americans in Iceland portray the place like Rorschach portraits, the blanks as telling as the blotches, what ghost features might a returned-expat project onto Manhattan?

Seth looked out the window at Laugavegur Street. He, like me, lived three blocks away. It was easy for us to meet. Each time we did, he ordered soup.

"The simplicity," Seth answered.

I was in New York the day I sat down to finish this essay. Rain poured down in a sudden August deluge, and roughly 313,000 wet New Yorkers took cover in the same Starbucks as me. Perhaps because my mind was many orbits away, on a planet where light teaches you to miss darkness, where ease puts stress into relief, and vice versa, a violent bang overhead made me jump like a child. That was thunder. This was home. 🐻

AND JUST AS IN-LAWS AT A FAMILY REUNION KNOW TO GO ALONG WITH THE CUSTOMS, THE LINGO, AND THE INSIDE JOKES, ICELAND'S EXPATS EAT THE SKATE, EVEN IF IT FEELS LIKE A JOKE ON THEM.





POLITICAL SCIENTIST BALDUR ÞÓRHALLSSON AND RADIO-PRESONALITY ERPUR EYVINDARSON LOCKED IN A DEADLY STARING MATCH.

“Machiavellian Disaster”/”Satanic Circus”

Two very different men tell the same story

Earlier this month, the good people of Reykjavík got to witness the swearing in of their fourth Mayor in just two years. While they generally don’t agree on why exactly this is happening, people do agree that this isn’t good. To give you readers a little insight into how the public

has viewed these events, and maybe even explain what has been going on, the Grapevine drafted two different citizens, a loudmouth rapper and a political scientist, to tell the story of the last two years, in their own words and understanding.

Baldur Þórhallsson:

The situation be traced to the city council elections of 2006. The two dominant political parties, Samfylkingin (“Social Democrat Coalition”) and Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn (“Independence party”) both had a weak following in the election, so in the end there were five parties that managed to get in representatives,with Vinstri Grænir (“Left-Greens”), Frjálslyndi Flokkurinn (“Liberal Party”), Framsóknarflokkurinn (“Progressive Party”) all also voted in.

Using some rather Machiavellian tactics, Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn managed to form a ruling coalition with Framsóknarflokkurinn, after side-tracking [“Liberal Party” representative] Ólafur F. Magnússon, essentially distracting him from entering one with others. Early on in the coalition it was clear that Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn felt they were getting the short end of the stick, both in terms of policy forming and seats on various committees. It also became apparent early on that Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn was divided on some key issues, and that [then-mayor and party leader] Vilhjálmur Þ. Vilhjálmsson stood on weak grounds with the members of his own party.

The ruling parties then started to publicly quarrel about the Reykjavík Energy Invest fund, which culminated in a breach of trust between the Mayor and Framsóknarflokkurinn’s representative, then-City council president Björn Ingi Hrafnsson. He broke the majority coalition and formed a new one with the opposition parties.

The new coalition was nicknamed Tjarnarkvartettinn, and was generally well received in Reykjavík. Their Mayor, Dagur B. Eggertsson, was popular with the public, especially since Vilhjálmsson had been controversial during his reign.

However, Tjarnarkvartettinn only survived for a hundred days. Behind the scenes, Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn made Frjálslyndi Flokkurinn’s repre-

sentative Ólafur F. Magnússon a great offer, promising that all of his policy matters will be put in the forefront of a new ruling coalition between the two, something he felt he felt wasn’t the case with Tjarnarkvartettinn, and that they would appoint him mayor. He opted to break the current quartet coalition and form a new one with Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn.

This of course came as a surprise to the other parties, who claimed that Magnússon hadn’t been vocal about his dissatisfaction. For a second time, Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn sold themselves short to get into office; they basically vowed to enforce most of Magnússon’s pre-election agenda, and to make him Mayor.

The methods Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn used to form that new majority caused a stir in Reykjavík. Icelandic voters rarely flock to City Hall to protest, but they did so when the new coalition was sworn in.

That new coalition then broke recently, and I believe there are three main reasons for that. Firstly it seems near impossible to work with Ólafur F. Magnússon, as he seems rigid and

stubborn in his ways. Secondly, Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn was in the end not willing to implement Magnússon’s manifesto. Thirdly, the governance of that majority was total chaos, city council decided something, the Mayor went directly against it, etc. It wasn’t working, and this is why Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn ultimately broke their coalition with Magnússon and the Liberal party.

Thus we are once again being governed by a coalition of Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn and Framsóknarflokkurinn, which maybe goes to show what a hasty move Framsóknarflokkurinn made in breaking their coalition the first time around. se, this has been one hell of a Machiavellian disaster, one that’s especially fun for political enthusiasts to witness, even though it is very damaging to the City of Reykjavík. 🐉

Baldur (born 1968) is a professor of Political Science at the University of Iceland and holds a Ph.D in the subject from the University of Essex, England. He regularly comments on Icelandic and European politics in the Icelandic media and is a respected voice on matters concerning the EU.

Erpur Eyvindarson:

We’ve gone through four city governments in two years, right? It’s been four. This is starting to feel like Italian politics. Wait. Yeah, this is the fourth majority coalition, first there was Framsókn and Sjálfstæðisflokkur, then we had Tjarnarkvartettinn, then Sjálfstæðisflokkur and Frjálslyndir and now Sjálfstæðisflokkur and Framsókn again. The problem I think is that our politicians value power over ideals. You could say that Ólafur F. Magnússon has achieved a lot of his political agenda and ideals, especially since he is essentially a one-man party. There are others, like Óskar Bergsson [Framsóknarflokkurinn’s current representative] that I think are in it just to get a comfortable job. You know. That place, City Hall, its basically just clown college.

There has been a satanic circus going on here, it’s like some strange form of stand-up comedy and we’re still waiting for a punch line that never comes. And it’s slowly stopped being funny, somebody better bring an intensely clever punch line soon for this to make sense, because this is the biggest load of bullshit that the people of Reykjavík have experienced.

What happened is that Samfylkingin decided to break up the R-listi coalition [of Samfylkingin, Vinstri grænir and Framsóknarflokkurinn the governed the city from 1994-2006] by demanding more representatives in it beyond their popularity. They wanted to list Dagur B. Eggertsson as an independent, when everyone knew he was a card-carrying member of Samfylkingin. Vinstri grænir didn’t like this and the coalition decided not to run mutually as R-listinn in the 2006 elections.

What we’ve been experiencing since is basically the hangover from that decision, the left has been running amok instead of putting together a new R-coalition and that has given Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn the opportunity to grab the reigns. Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn is very adept at back-room deals

Erpur (born 1977) is an extremely vocal musician and radio-personality. He is perhaps best known for his work with platinum-selling Icelandic hip hop outfit XXX Rottweiler, and as for acting the role of Ali G like television star Johnny National.

and all sorts of conniving and trickery, that sort of bullshit. That clearly includes fooling the weakest link in the Tjarnarkvartett coalition into abandoning it, and that member is certainly Ólafur F. Magnússon, a man that doesn’t have any idea which political party he belongs to when he wakes up in the morning. Is he in Íslandshreyfingin [“Iceland movement”], Frjálslyndi Flokkurinn, Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn, an independent? He’s been everywhere, sort of like a political drag queen. Some might say, and rightfully so, that he has a strong political conviction, but I also say that he is a nut.

But Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn managed to lure the weakest link to jump ship and climb aboard with them. Now people are saying that that was just a plot to break the unity of the leftist parties, and I agree. Even though Magnússon isn’t a leftist, he has a strong social agenda. So they get him aboard that loony-ship that was their coalition and make him Mayor, with his miniscule following.

Of course Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn was bound to find an even weaker link, and of course it was Framsóknarflokkurinn’s candidate Óskar Bergsson who provided that service. Fact is no one wants Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn as a ruling party in the city, polls and votes have shown that consistently, time and time again. The left parties should just run as a single coalition, I know they have their differences in the parliament but at the level of city politics they speak the same language and want the same things. But Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn is such a power-party; they thrive on being in control and stop at nothing to get there. But coalitions formed through such methods don’t last, and this one won’t. That’s my analysis. 🐉



Institute of Higher Learning Ranking

The University of Iceland aims for the top 100

In 2005, Kristín Ingólfssdóttir succeeded Páll Skúlason as Rector of the University of Iceland. After a year on the job, she revealed her ambitious plan to take the University of Iceland to the top 100 of the leading university ranking lists. Now, two years later, the institution is already showing progress towards that goal, but what does it all mean?

Since its foundation in 1911, and for pretty much the rest of the twentieth century, the University of Iceland was the only institution of higher learning in this country. With the addition of more schools at the university level, the University of Iceland is now in an unusual position where it needs to compete for both money and research funding with other national universities.

For Rector Kristín Ingólfssdóttir this is a welcome challenge and one that she has decided to tackle by making the University of Iceland one of the best in the world. “Our long term goal is to be among the top 100 universities in the world, in the next 10–15 years. We have identified several goals along the way that we need to reach in the next five years to obtain that goal. Already, we have noticed a substantial progress,” Ingólfssdóttir says.

“Iceland is the only Nordic country that does not have a university in the top-100. We believe this is a realistic goal for us, and we think it is a necessary goal, both for the University and our society, because a nation that is among the ten richest in the world, we think it is natural that we have one of the best universities in the world.”

Martin Ince, editor of the Times Higher Education Supplement’s World University rankings, seems to agree. When I asked him if he thought the University of Iceland was likely to make the list, he says: “If Reykjavik wants to be among them it will need to build its whole strategy on the need to do so, es-

pecially on becoming more visible on the world stage.” Asked if he has any idea how far outside the list the University of Iceland currently lies, he replied: “No. But other Nordic institutions do well in these rankings as do other small countries and territories such as Singapore and Hong Kong. Iceland is richer than these nations and might do well in our rankings. We rank mainly large, general universities. To do well in our system, a university needs to be good in several of our five areas – medicine, science, arts and humanities, technology, and the social sciences.”

While the University of Iceland boasts outstanding departments in some fields, Ingólfssdóttir realises that making the University as a whole stand out is a more difficult task. “It surely is. But we since we started to work towards this goal we have seen an increase in peer-reviewed publications in all fields. In the two years since we installed our plan, we witnessed the mentality change around the school. The productivity is up, publications are up, and people pay more attention to publishing in ranked publications.”

HOW ARE THE RANKINGS COMPILED?
There are several lists that rank the world’s best universities, but in the world of academia, there are only two that carry any weight. One is the World University Ranking list compiled by the British weekly Times Higher Education Supplement and the independent education service company Quacquarelli Symonds. The other is the Shanghai’s Jiao Tong University’s Academic Ranking of World Universities, commonly referred to as the Shanghai list.
The Times list is more subjective in nature, as it places more weight on ‘peer assessment’ where scholars are asked to rate the best institutions in their field. In the 2007 edition of the list, editor Martin Ince explains: “The core of our methodology is the belief that expert opinion is a valid way to assess the standing of top universities. Our rankings contain two strands of peer review. The more important is academic opinion, worth 40% of the total score available in the rankings. [...] A further 10% of the possible score in these rankings is derived from active recruiters of graduates. [We] ask major global and national employers across the public and private sectors which universities they like to hire from.”
So, a full 50% of the total score is derived from subjective reviews rather than actual empirical data. The rest of the score breaks down so: 20% is based on staff-to-student ratio. Another 20% is based on citations of an institution’s published papers, and finally 5% based on number of international staff, and 5% based on international students.
The Shanghai list is based more on quantifiable measurements. The score is based on Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals won by alumni (10%), Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals won by faculty (20%), citations by faculty in 21 broad subject categories (20%), articles published in Nature and Science (20%), the Science Citation Index, Social Sciences Citation Index, and Arts and



Humanities Citation Index (20%) adjusted to size by the per capita academic performance of an institution (10 percent).

THE VALIDITY OF RANKING

Both lists have received substantial criticism for their rankings and methodology. The Times list is generally considered to be too subjective and lacking in quantifiable measures, while the Shanghai list is considered too focused on natural sciences and research excellence rather than educational indicators. In an interview with the Grapevine, Martin Ince, editor Times World University Rankings, stated: “We have now published the Rankings four times and we have enhanced their quality by gathering more data and improving our quality assurance.” But evidence seems to indicate otherwise.

A study of both lists by academic researchers published in the open access journal BioMed Central Medicine found that only 133 institutions made the top 200 of both lists and four schools from the top 50 on the Shanghai list didn’t even make the top 500 on the Times list. The authors stated that “the lack of better concordance [was] disquieting” and blamed these discrepancies on poor methodology and inappropriate indicators.

The research points out that the response rate for the peer review survey that the Times rankings are heavily based on was less than 1% and that there are no guarantees for protection from selection biases. The international character of an institution is said to be more of an indicator for economic and legislative factors than academic excellence and other aspects of the ratings are questioned as non-transparent and unreliable.

The research also raises several questions regarding the Shanghai formula. While Nobel and Fields awards “clearly measure research excellence, even if they don’t cover all fields [...] it is unclear why universities with Nobel- or Fields-winning alumni are those

that provide the best education. As for faculty, Nobel- and Fields-winners typically have performed their groundbreaking work elsewhere. We found that of 22 Nobel Prize winners in Medicine/Physiology in 1997–2006, only seven did their award-winning work at the institution they were affiliated with when they received the award. Therefore, this measurement addresses the ability of institutions to attract prestigious awardees rather than being the site where groundbreaking work is performed. Finally, the vast majority of institutions have no such awardees. Thus, such criteria can rank only a few institutions.”

The study goes on to question the way citations are applied to the rankings. The method used is inherently flawed, and furthermore, the research found that among the corresponding authors of the 10 most-cited articles published as recently as 1996–1999, 50% had changed institutions or were deceased by 2006. Their final conclusion was that “naïve lists of international institutional rankings that do not address these fundamental challenges with transparent methods are misleading and should be abandoned.” If the accuracy of global university ranking list is proven to be suspect at best, if not all together impossible, the question remains: What purpose do they serve?

THE COMMODIFICATION OF EDUCATION

The most obvious answer is that everybody loves rankings. We rank the best movies, the best songs, the best books, the best football players, the most handsome movie stars and the most desirable women. Why should universities be any different?

But, as much as I love to browse through Maxim’s Hot 100, I have to admit that there is considerably more research behind the leading university rankings than a panel of journalist measuring saliva reflexes over photos of skin-clad women. It is tempting to assume that there is something more behind

these lists than our love of rankings.

The lists fill a certain gap in consumer information for prospective students. They are known to affect students thinking when short-listing schools to attend. And in today’s education system, students equal money – either in direct tuition, or public funding per student. And good students generate even more money. So there is a financial incentive for academic institutions to make the ranking lists, if it makes the school more attractive to the students.

But student attraction only tells half the story. While a study done by the Cornell Higher Education Research Institute only focused on national rankings, it is likely revealing for the rest of the world. The study “shows what educators have longed suspected – where colleges and universities place in U.S. News and World Report’s annual rankings really makes a difference – affecting enrolment yield, student quality, financial aid packages and, as a result, even where institutions place in the rankings the following year.”

Furthermore, studies have suggested that higher ranked universities receive more public and private funding for research. This seems to indicate that there is considerable financial incentive to being placed high in the rankings. THES editor Martin Ince admits as much:

“We are measuring large, general universities because they are increasingly global. Because we don’t have any subject-specific data, the Rankings are useful to students and academics but need to be supplemented by extra data. Their main users are managers of universities and people in education ministries, funding bodies etc who want to know about the strength of their universities and their university systems.”

What does it Mean?

I don’t question whether the University of Iceland can make the top 100 in the not so distant future. I believe that with the right

funding and good intentions, the University of Iceland could very well make an appearance as one of the 100 top-ranked universities in the world. But I wonder if it really means what you think it means?

There seems to be little to suggest that a top ranked university offers better teaching for the average student than a non-ranked university. The rankings may be somewhat useful as a general indicator of the quality of an institution’s research power, but it seems to be difficult to establish if the rankings even manage to measure quality over quantity, and there seems to be little in the criteria to justify the difference between top 25 and top 50.

In and of itself, the top 100 goal may be beneficial for the University of Iceland. It is a good opportunity for some navel-gazing and internal reviews. But when you look at it like that, top 100 just doesn’t have the same ring to it anymore.

Sources:
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ICELAND IS THE ONLY NORDIC COUNTRY THAT DOES NOT HAVE A UNIVERSITY IN THE TOP-100. WE BELIEVE THIS IS A REALISTIC GOAL FOR US, AND WE THINK IT IS A NECESSARY GOAL, BOTH FOR THE UNIVERSITY AND OUR SOCIETY.



ARTICLE

“Without this, I would have died”

Erna Ómarsdóttir explains what she is dancing about

BY HAUKUR S. MAGNÚSSON — PHOTO BY GAS

Contemporary dancer Erna Ómarsdóttir comes from Kópavogur, and is a lauded artist in her field.

The Grapevine caught celebrated contemporary dancer Erna Ómarsdóttir on the phone from Zurich, where she is staging a show in collaboration with artist Gabríela Friðriksdóttir. “They’ve got money here in Switzerland,” she replies as we enquire whether the cost of the call won’t ruin her. “We are in the process of creating the project. It is based on a folk-tale that involves a black spider, that’s all I can say for now. She tells us that she generally loves doing collaborations, the dialogue that they involve and the insight to be gained.

“Mixing artforms is important, you get a glimpse into another world, and a shred of understanding of it. Working with people such as [composer] Jóhann Jóhannsson or Gabríela is a great opportunity, and it opens many doors. I think I would die if I confined myself to the world of contemporary dancing. It can be such a limiting world, closed off and small. It is very healthy sometimes to explore the unknown and get distance from the small world of contemporary dance, at least for myself. You know what I mean?”

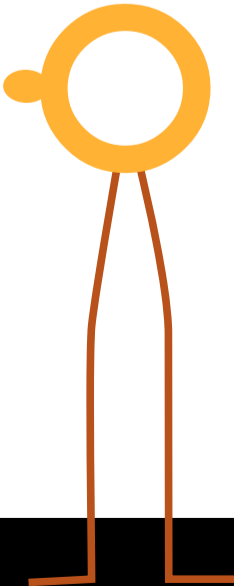
I JUST CALL IT ALL DANCING

Erna is right in stating that the world of contemporary dance is a small and closed-off one: You may not have heard a lot about her, but Erna is a revered figure in her field and has reached a level of respect and infamy within it that many strive for throughout their careers. And this is something her adventurousness and many collaborations have contributed to, and is getting her recognition and acclaim from outside of the artform’s sometimes limited field.

“Why did I want to dance? That’s an interesting question. It was something that happened very spontaneously, or naturally. It is an evolution I underwent, and should... maybe it’s just my fate that I wound up here. At some point, it become a big passion, contemporary dance was a way for me to express myself. There is something inside of a person that makes it try different things, I use dancing. It is always very basic, and I don’t know anything else. I don’t know how to sing, but I do that and other stuff that you wouldn’t call dance in my performances, and call it all dance. People are put together so differently, and everyone has different experiences, voices. I wound up here, with this one. I am very lucky to have done so, and thankful for it. Without this, I would have died. It saved my life.” 🐱



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Rauðarárstígur 8

ARTICLE

Esja is a Mountain of a Band

BY HAUKUR S MAGNÚSSON — PHOTO BY GAS


Truth be told, the concept of a supergroup isn't all that enticing. Oh sure, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young belted out some classics in their hey-day, and who could forget the musical stylings of Cream. But that was a different era – most of their successors in the field of supergroupdom have been decidedly un-super in every way. For the most part, supergroups are a bile, bloated and boring remnant of an era thankfully long gone.

And this is why we won't refer to Esja as a supergroup, even though they have the pedigree to back the "super" along with the unity to support "group". For even though Esja is the musical offspring of two bona fide Icelandic Music Icons – a situation that would normally spur a gargantuan clash (or stroking) of Egos – the band visibly puts a focused, positive energy into their creative efforts and channels their unbridled creative joy right back at any audience they confront.

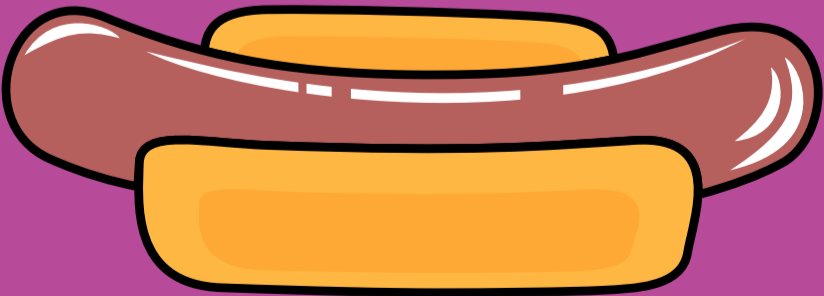
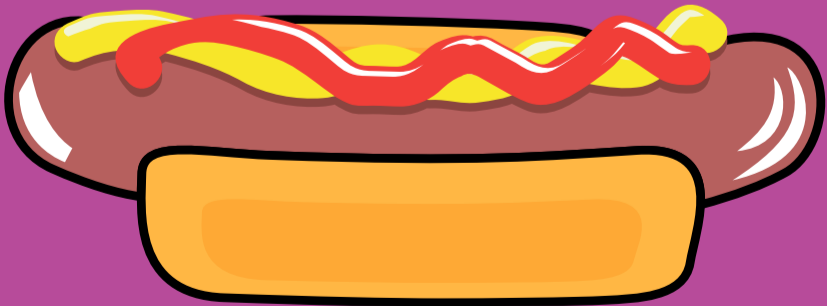
But of course. Daníel Ágúst (of Gusgus, Ný Dönsk and solo fame) and Krummi (Mínus, Jesus Christ Superstar) are professionals, and they have in their respective careers both displayed again and again a comprehensive understanding of what it takes to make and play great music. And the lesser known bandmembers – film-maker Frosti Gringó (drums, formerly of grindcore champions Klink), Halldór Björnsson (keys, also member of The End) and recent addition Bjarni (guitar, also in Mínus) – all rigidly talented men in their own right, add crucial elements to the mix, making the band a true live sensation. At least if you dig their style of gritty seventies rock.

A FRIENDSHIP EVOLVES

Loading out gear the morning after a packed release show at NASA, singer Krummi sounds hung over, tired and ecstatic about everything, still high from last night's show. "Esja was born of a singular passion, and out of coincidence for the most part. It's like it was meant to be. Daníel and I kept meeting at the Keflavík airport, on our way to do tours or work abroad. And a friendship was born, one that keeps growing," Krummi fondly reminisces.

"Then one day I stumbled into a studio he was working at, right next to Sirkús, and we started jamming, me on the guitar. There really was no turning back after that, and now we have an album that we are really proud of. We're already writing songs for the next one, this isn't a one-off. It's a full-time band, and we plan on playing as much as we can, remaining best friends and dressing smart." 

Esja's self-titled debut album is alvailable in record stores around the country.
www.myspace.com/esja



Different Town?

www.visitakureyri.is

BOOK REVIEWS



REYKJAVIK 64°08N 21°54W

Ami Sioux

REVIEWED BY STEVIE WARD

The title is long, confusing, and the author sounds like a bad ‘new wave’ singer from the 1980’s, but this inspired guide is for the more adventurous explorer who doesn’t need to do things the old fashioned way. This experimental and artistic creation focuses on the work of 50 Inhabitants of Reykjavik who were asked to hand draw 50 maps to 50 locations which were then used to take 50 corresponding photographs. From the attempted artistic to the completely obscure, this is like a portal into the mind of Reykjavik’s inhabitants – the intimate snapshot-like pictures proposing a game of eye spy to the reader, who upon opening the book immediately want to try to navigate the child-ish, almost ‘treasure map’ depictions. For a guide with no commercial guidance from Iceland’s inhabitants, you’ll never want to travel more.



WAKING UP IN ICELAND

Paul Sullivan

REVIEWED BY STEVIE WARD

From the picture to the page, this is a more traditional sort of guide. Travel writing is the preferred method of expression for many of the world’s cultured explorers and this mini-novel is the memoirs of Paul Sullivan. His guide is a detailed depiction of his explorations of Iceland’s music scene and the guide itself is written in the first person. With chapters on hidden people, close calls with natives and his encounters at the Airwaves festival, his follies are lavishly recreated in his text. It makes for a great pre-Iceland read, and something to get lost in on a plane – but it should probably not be considered the be all and end all on experiences in Iceland or an official guide, and more of a way to find out how Paul found the country. Considering he is the authority on music, having written for The Independent, The Wire, Dazed and Confused and BPM, this brand of travel writing hits and lands on Iceland’s art scene perfectly, satisfying readers of this kind of Wanderlust Literature.

CONCERT REVIEW BY SIGURDUR KJARTAN KRISTINSSON — PHOTO BY GAS



LADYBOY HALLI VALLI DRESSED TO IMPRESS.

The Night of the Transvestites



Shabby, boozy, rugged and mucky are good candidates to describe the mood at Kaffibarinn when I arrived on this Friday night. Æla decided to offer the audience vast amounts of free beer, which the crowd had obviously utilised to the max judging by the state of the guests. Kaffibarinn isn’t exactly a conventional concert venue for there is no detectable stage, nor any trace of anything that could pass as a decent bandstand. And so Æla decided to perform in front the inner bar which in my opinion was an inapt choice, mainly because there were only a dozen who could actually see the band members during their set, and their forte is definitely their stage performance. They all seem to suffer from an extreme costume fetish, which explains why the band was dressed in slutty nurse or hooker costumes, with the exception of the lead singer who was tastefully dressed in a shiny tuxedo.

They started out their set with a few energetic songs, immediately igniting the crowd. The lead singer, whose guitar plug was wireless allowing him to run freely around the bar, went

berserk as soon he realised that the baffling crowd encircling him would be an obstacle to his intended rampage. His clever solution to this problem was ripping his tux to shreds which revealed his true nature – a ladyboy dressed in a delicate Cinderella dress. The crowd’s amazement was probably in accordance with his longings, for after this surprising act no spectators had it in them to curb their enthusiasm.

Now when the coast was clear they began taking advantage of the audience’s unlimited attention and basically jerked off each other with raging tunes and wild solos. And when you saw how eager they were to amuse the attendants (as well as themselves) you kind of had to play along. And it was a blast, really. Everyone was grinning at the stage, and whether it was because of the clownishly dressed dimwits making fools of themselves on-stage or because they found their act actually crisp, everybody was at least having a good time. 🇮🇸

WHO

Æla

WHERE

Kaffibarinn

WHEN

Friday, August 15

THE VERDICT

The five ladyboys in Æla manifested that they sure can entertain

Licensing and registration of travel-related services

The Icelandic Tourist Board issues licences to tour operators and travel agents, as well as issuing registration to booking services and information centres.

Tour operators and travel agents are required to use a special logo approved by the Icelandic Tourist Board on all their advertisements and on their Internet website.

Booking services and information centres are entitled to use a Tourist Board logo on all their material. The logos below are recognised by the Icelandic Tourist Board.



List of licenced Tour Operators and Travel Agencies on: visiticeland.com

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SINDRI ELDON, UNDRESSED TO IMPRESS.

Thuggish, not Sluggish

It's normally nice to have four diverse bands on a bill – the assumption being that things will build up nicely for the main act. The atmosphere normally goes up with the attendance and often the quality gets better with each act. Not tonight, though. No chance. First up in Kaffi Amsterdam tonight, from Toronto, is Lindy Vopnfjord who sounds a lot like Ryan Adams and Hamilton Leithauser of The Walkmen. His whisky soaked voice draws close attention from the crowd. He is the only artist to do an encore and while this may be strange for an opening act, it's certainly warranted.

Next is a very assured performance from Kid Twist. They leave the clichés at home and crank up the bass. These chaps are psychedelic guitar heroes. They recall the melodies of Black Mountain and the ear-shredding clamour of Japanese band Boris. Kid Twist operate best without vocals and they have a strong dynamic on stage. The sound is wholesome as they blitzkrieg their way through the set sans audience interaction.

Vafasöm Síðmótun are just nondescript.

And then Slugs: things start to get slimy right away with Sindri Eldon, an obnoxious front-man, who after telling the crowd that he appreciates their applause, then asks them to shut the fuck up! It's simply preposterous and totally maddening. They begin decently though as his rowdiness is contained. Then, as the stage of intrigue surpasses, he strips to his pants and bull-charges his way into the crowd. It's perplexing.

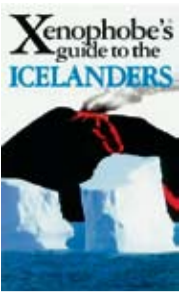
A couple of songs later and he causes another stampede, knocking a punter's pint over and head-butting an unsuspecting girl in the stomach, winding her in the process. He also squirts water at the audience, which I hope wasn't piss on our parade. Sindri's antics don't even equate to performance art. His Crunk music is forgettable and the overall experience memorable for all the wrong reasons. Someone should put some salt on these slugs. 🐌

WHO
Slugs

WHERE
Kaffi Amsterdam

WHEN
Saturday, August 16

THE VERDICT
Forgettable music, but memorable show for all the wrong reasons.



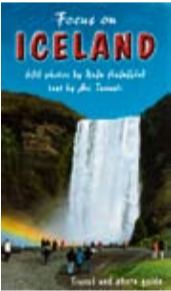
THE XENOPHOBES GUIDE TO THE ICELANDERS

Richard Sale

REVIEWED BY STEVIE WARD

The twelve songs on Activism, an album wracked with emotion and subtle diatribe, are arguably some of the best tracks to be released in Iceland this year. Ranging from the low-key acoustic composition of 'Hey Mom', which features banjo accompaniment by Ólóf Arnalds and poetic lyrics that bring a lump to your throat, to the Húsker Dü influenced scratchy brilliance of 'How Are You?', this is a record that's very well written (both lyrically and musically), highly engaging and mysterious enough to become a fixture on anyone's playlist for some time.

Perhaps the album's strongest point is its variety. Each song seems to follow an entirely separate aesthetic with a variety of instruments and influences, such as the layered vocals and glockenspiel on the distinctly Icelandic post-rock sounding 'I Try', marking the individual tracks in a way that demands your attention several times over.



FOCUS ON ICELAND

Rafn Hafnfjörð

REVIEWED BY STEVIE WARD

There is no reading required for this bad boy. Inspired by the 'point to what you want from the menu' McDonald's culture, this book basically shows you 'where' you will be going as opposed to 'what' you will be doing. Comprised of 600 beautiful photos of the Icelandic countryside in its prime, this is a basic travel and photo guide with useful add-ons such as a road map and site map for the budding driver and cyclist as well as explanations of place names and wildlife. No fuss or jargon, it reads like a definitive dictionary with a hard focus on wildlife and Iceland's natural beauty, which according to Focus's stunning snap-shots, is in abundance.



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ARTICLE

Great Moments in Icelandic History

Iceland wins the Cod Wars

BY MARCUS WALSH

I recently ate a delicious piece of cod in one of Reykjavík’s leading fish restaurants. All the while, I had a niggling awareness that my new adoptive country, Iceland, and my motherland, The Great British Empire, had fought no less than three wars over cod in the late twentieth century. As wars go, the Cod Wars aren’t that impressive or indeed war-like. Nothing was wiped off a map like in a game of battleships. Still, Britain lost all three episodes. We were out-manoeuvred by a nation we wrongly considered a minor threat. We took great pride in ousting Napoleon at Waterloo, creating carnage in the Falklands and single-handedly ridding Europe of Nazism, so why didn’t we blow up Icelandic boats in the cod wars?

It’s simple. In the late nineteenth century Iceland relied on fishing as its chief source of trade. Iceland trusted Denmark to police Icelandic waters as Britain frequently attempted to poach fish that didn’t belong to them. This continued right up until after the Second World War. The first cod war took place in 1958. Britain deployed trawlers and warship protection in Icelandic waters. HMS Grafton even displayed a Soviet flag as well as the Union Jack. The Icelanders and the Soviets were pissed off and Grafton was deservedly rammed and had to go home for repair. Both countries went to court. Any future matters were to go to The Hague. Iceland had the political upper hand as the Brits were sent home packing.

The second tiff was 1972–1973; Britain still went fishing for trouble. The Icelandic coast guard started cutting our nets, rammings took place and battleships commenced. No big violence took place as NATO intervened and sanctioned that British boats were not to fish more than 130,000 tons annually or within 50 nautical miles. This agreement ran until November 1975.

In the third and most brutal episode of the Cod Wars, Iceland flexed its muscles, claiming rights up to 200 miles from its coastline. Cod was creating a stink. Icelandic sources clapim taht three British ships were ordered to leave Icelandic waters by Coast Guard vessel Þór. Two of the ships rammed Þór, which was forced to fire ammunition. More rammings followed, and Þór was close to sinking and had to seek repairs. British sources disagree with this.

Either way, NATO intervened and sanctioned that 24 British trawlers, from a list of 93, were allowed inside the 200-mile limit at any one time. Only 50,000 tons of fish were to be caught annually by the Brits. After 6 months, Britain was not allowed to fish anymore, a triple victory overall for the Icelanders. The Brits had fish on their face. 🇮🇸

ARTICLE BY DESIREE ANDREWS — PHOTO BY GAS



THE NORDIC HOUSE, ALVAR AALTO’S REYKJVÍK MASTERPIECE OF SCANDINAVIAN MINIMALISM.

This Nordic Life

A closer look at the Nordic House in Reykjavík

Nordic House
Sturlugata 5
www.nordic.is
Gallery open 12:00–17:00 Tuesday-Sunday
Library open 12:00–17:00 daily

The Nordic House, located just south of Lake Tjörninn, is an icon of lovely modern architecture and Nordic culture in Reykjavík. The natural warmth of the soft wood and clean designs that define so much of the Nordic aesthetic, reflects the inviting mood of the house.

Constructed with the intent that it should be a place where people can come and share ideas, the house has an overall feeling that encourages its guest to linger. Once inside feel free to grab a cup of coffee and sit down to a game of chess or just spend a couple hours reading a Nordic newspaper.

Nordic countries commonly include the countries and territories of Iceland, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, The Faroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands. The main thing that ties all of these regions together is a shared Norse history and culture. The vision of the Nordic House, according to Ellen Marie Fodstad, the House’s Project Coordinator, is to highlight the similarities and celebrate the differences of these rich cultures.

The Nordic Council of Ministers started the Nordic House in 1968 with the hopes that it would act as international-community glue for the Nordic countries. They commissioned the acclaimed Finnish architect Alvar Aalto, often called the father of modernism, to design the building. The simple Icelandic landscape where the building rests serves as an ideal canvas for Aalto’s work. By using organic forms mixed with minimalist and pure designs, the building fits nicely into its environment and stands as a must-see for Icelandic architecture.

The centre houses a spacious library, café, exhibition hall, art and history museum, and conference space where it hosts lectures, concerts and film screenings.

“For me,” Ellen says, “the library is the heart of the house.” The two-story library is located in the middle of the building. The light wood floors and ceilings are lit naturally by the large skylights, and create a welcoming and relaxed environment. Like many places in Reykjavík, the internet is free but access to the wide variety of Nordic newspapers is a feature that is unique to the house. The extensive book collection is remarkable, stocked with an impressive array of books from several Nordic countries including children’s books. In fact, the majority of the bottom floor of the library is devoted to children’s

literature with flags from each Nordic country designating the book’s origin and language.

In addition to books, the library also offers a large range of multimedia including CDs and DVDs but the most impressive thing is Artotek, a program where works of Nordic art can be rented out for up to three months at a time. When this program is used to its full potential, it showcases each piece at several different homes a year, creating the effect of a veritable moving museum.

Throughout the year, the house schedules several events as a way of bringing the community together. This year, acting director Max Dager, is putting on events with the theme of sustainability and the environment. Starting the September 3 and running until the September 17, guest lectures and exhibits will be featured at the house. “We want to focus on what can be done by us as individuals in Iceland,” Max says.

Other events at the Nordic House include The Reykjavík arts festival, by-annual literature festival, and the Sequences art festival. The house is also a main venue for the Reykjavík International Film Festival. On October 7, they will host Amnesty International’s human rights seminar focusing on freedom of the press. They will also be a main location for the Airwaves music festival. 🇮🇸

“They put on such a beautiful meal for us. We had the most amazing freshest fish I’ve ever had in my life. It was all so perfectly cooked too...Beautiful!”
Jamie Oliver’s Diary



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Experience Viking-Age Reykjavík at the new Settlement Exhibition. The focus of the exhibition is an excavated longhouse site which dates from the 10th century AD. It includes relics of human habitation from about 871, the oldest such site found in Iceland.

Multimedia techniques bring Reykjavík’s past to life, providing visitors with insights into how people lived in the Viking Age, and what the Reykjavík environment looked like to the first settlers.



AIMING FOR THE STARS: RETRO STEFSON.

Pets of the Press

Retro Stefson on their forthcoming full-length and future plans

The youngsters in Retro Stefson popped upon the Icelandic music scene about three years ago and aroused quite an attention for their extreme musical stature compared to their young age.

Since then a lot has happened; they have performed in a few Airwaves festivals, and a lot of rumours about big labels being interested in them have been going around but finally they settled down with Kimi Records. They just finished recording their debut so Grapevine sat down with the bandleader Unnsteinn as well as their keyboardist Yngvi.

What is the reason for your youthful triumph?
“To tell you the truth it was our parents that created us, they sent us all to the same school. We

wanted to take place in the Samfés singing contest, but we didn’t qualify as our school’s feature but the whole Samfés battery was so fond of us that they let us perform at the dance following the competition.”

There is a whole bunch of relatively young bands that never get out of their garage, what is it that made you guys an exception?

Well, we aren’t exactly young anymore, of course we’ve existed for over three years, but we’re trying to wash that stamp of us. We were extremely competitive, which gave us quite an advantage. I mean, we played everywhere, anytime and didn’t make any demands.

Your forthcoming full-length, is it a summary of all your works over the years or does it only include recent stuff?

It’s about fifty-fifty. And the oldest pieces on the record are about three years old. But we recorded everything that we’d previously caught on tape to have genuine harmony on the record, except for a

single song, which we like so much, is the original version that we decided to keep it that way.

Árni +1, a celebrated DJ and a musician, recorded and mixed your record and is working his ass off mastering it right now. How did you end up with letting him take care of the whole thing?

He taught us Computer Science in our primary school, and later on we also fixed him a job in our community centre. The people that hung out at the centre were basically Retro Stefson so we established a bond immediately. To begin with there was a recording program run by the centre where he taught us to record music and so he was basically getting paid by the City for recording our stuff. And the next step had to be to serious things up a bit and so we did.

There has been a popular game amongst cool-cats going around in 101 called “How many members are there of Retro Stefson?”, could you possibly enlighten the bewildered crowd

of your exact number?

Well it varies between 7 and 13, so I guess the game is unwinnable. But seriously, we are most often seven but sometimes when we’re doing gigs we get help.

And over these years, has the gang gone through a lot of turnovers?

It has. Some people have switched positions and some have quit. Þórður, who used to play the drums, has completely moved over to playing the guitar which compelled us to get a new drummer, who is also the first one in the band not from Austurbæjarskóli. Not that I’m saying he’s bad though.

The rumours about you possibly signing up with Moshi Moshi around Airwaves ’07, were they factual at all?

You know, things tend to scale up in the media. It all started on Airwaves ’06 when they asked for a demo from us, which they liked, but we didn’t hear anything from then until the year after. Then we got an enquiry whether we wanted to play on the Moshi Moshi night at Airwaves, which we obviously did. After our set we talked to the M.M. promoters who told us they’d love to publish some singles by us and so on but none of it was ever confirmed. Then a journalist calls us up and asks whether the label had contacted us and whether they’d said anything about publishing us, but of course we had to answer these questions affirmatively although we stated that nothing had been confirmed. The next day we see the headline: “Retro Stefson Presumably Published by Moshi Moshi”. Kind of a slap to the face.

So you reckon you’re victims of the press?

No not at all. We like them a lot. You could even say that we’re pets of the press.

Do you all work on the composition together or is there a prodigy amongst you that does all the work?

I do most of the composing but it would actually be crap if it wouldn’t be for the band’s arrangements. I’m no dictator and there are a lot of licks in the tunes which I didn’t come near the fabrication of. You could say I mould the foundation but the others actually build the house.

You tend to mix languages together in your lyrics a lot, is that simply a gesture to be considered artsy or does it have a meaning?

A lot of us grew up overseas e.g. me and Logi grew up in Portugal and Yngvi is half-Norwegian. To begin with it was maybe because of some fright of singing in Icelandic because everything sounds kind of lame when you sing it but it evolved. One song named after my Cuban dog Luna was in Spanish for obvious reasons and the song Medalion [one of their hits] is based on a discovery of mine and Þórður of a cheese book with all the world’s cheeses. So the lyric is basically mumbo jumbo, for we simply recite cheese names.

You being all so multi-cultural and many, there has to be barbaric fights between you guys?

To tell you the truth it’s kind of unrealistic how peacefully we get along. Well, everyone except my brother Logi and me. We argue a lot but our quarrels are usually family-wise. Come to think of it that might be the cause of the whole peacefulness with the others, maybe we are so eager that there’s not any room for the others. 🐾

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Borgartuni 10-12
105 Reykjavík
www.velferdarsvid.is

The department of welfare gives information and advice about social entitlements and provides support in cases of social or personal problems for registered residents in Reykjavík. For general information about operations in the City of Reykjavík and additional information on e.g. specific housing benefits, pre-school applications or financial aid, you should contact service centers in your own neighbourhood:

- Vesturgarður, service centre for the residents of Vesturbær district, Hjardarhagi 45-47, tel. 411-1700
- Miðborg and Hlíðar, service centre for the residents of the city centre and the district of Hlíðar, Skulagata 21, tel. 411-1600
- Laugardalur and Háaleiti, service centre for the residents of the districts of Laugardalur and Háaleiti, Sidumuli 39, tel. 411-1500
- Breiðholt, service centre for the residents of Breiðholt, Alfabakki 12, tel. 411-1300
- Ábær and Grafarholt, service centre for the residents of the districts of Ábær and Grafarholt, Bæjarhals 1, tel. 411-1200
- Miðgarður, service centre for the residents of Grafarvogur and Kjalarnes, Langarími 21, tel. 411-1400



City of Reykjavík
Department of welfare

Borgartún 10-12
105 Reykjavík
Tel: 411 9000
www.reykjavik.is



The Northland

Two reporters' adventures at the top of the world



Letting Go in Mývatn

There's really only one thing to say upon driving or hiking through Mývatn – Wow. No matter how many volcanic wildernesses you've visited, Mývatn stands on its own as a place unlike any other. The lava formations span out on the horizon like obsidian mazes carved in the landscape. A dusting of green mixed amongst abundant ponds, gives the area a lushness the sparse wasteland would not otherwise have.

The Mývatn Nature Bath is the kind of place that a traveller feels lucky to have found and that should be kept a secret. Unlike many baths in Iceland, the uncorrupted natural setting is what makes the place so special. A panorama of tranquil pools and steam vents set the mood. Without huge crowds, it is easy to settle in and relax. The dramatic contrast of the electric-blue water and the dark shadows of the valley of lava below are heightened by the setting sun. The effect is stunning. In addition to the baths and steams rooms, massages are also available.

While the natural attractions are enough to satiate the wanderlust in most adventurers, the quaintness of the area makes for a quiet nightlife. The best hotspot for evening gatherings is at Restaurant Myllan. Open late, this low-key café attracts tourists like Mecca attracts pilgrims. They offer the ubiquitous local speciality Geysir Bread, a heavy bread baked within the geothermic heat from the ground and topped with smoked fish. Before you leave town be sure to check out the Vogafjós Cow Shed Café. This novel coffee shop offers a nice latte with a pleasant view of the lake on one side and the cow shed on the other. If you're lucky you can witness the cows being milked. In any case, keep an eye out for the sheep with the permanently cocked head. *DA*

Mývatn Nature Bath, www.jarlbodin.is
Accommodation provided by: Vogar Travel Service, 660 Mývatn
Tel: 464 4399, info@vogahraun.is

The Penis Museum

I asked 'Information' in Húsavík very politely how to find the Phallogological museum. The girl replied very audibly. "You will see a massive penis outside!" There is no way to avoid the humour that comes along with a penis museum and there is no reason I would want to.

Sigurður Hjartarson, the owner, is obviously in good humour and is visibly intelligent. The Declaration inside the museum says that ten years of intense sociological and psychological investigation have revealed that visitors to the Icelandic Phallogological Museum who truly appreciate its worth are made up of only those of above average IQ (intelligence quotient) and above the average HQ (Humour quotient).

The museum contains walking sticks, pen knives and frying pans – all shaped like or made from animal penises. The telephone is shaped like a penis. Even the curator's Christmas tie is made from tanned whale member. One of the more interesting displays is made from bull penis called a 'pizzle', used in Shakespearian times as a flogging instrument. It could also be stretched on wood to 'simulate the ladies'.

I marvelled at the 200 species of animal genitalia on display, which Hjartarson attributes to the many fisherman, farmers and zoologists who are willing to donate specimens, but also at all the tiny details, artwork and cartoons that are donated to the museum; a gift from artist Y Beelen from the Vagina Museum in Rotterdam hangs on the wall, as the two museums bonded in their humour. The folklore section holds specimens from Merman, Elf, Sea Bull and Ghost..

The museum has 3 prospective donors for human samples. American donor Stan Underwood has two doctors already commissioned to operate upon death. Well Stan won't use it. *SW*

The Penis Museum, Héðinsbraut 3a, 640 Húsavík
Open from 12:00 to 18:00 daily, Entrance: 500 ISK

Rafting into the Greenroom

"It's about letting go," Adventure Tours manager Björg commented, "Sometimes you can't control things – that's a very freeing thing." White Water Rafting is dangerous for the bravest of people, and as a novice I was scared but eager to learn. Dissatisfied to simply 'watch the trees go by,' we dry-suited up and were taken to The East River. Taught the moves and survival skills, we were deemed ready and placed into the water.

Rafting is never completely safe, but what is fun is the water, what is great is the ride. And if you fall in, then lucky you – you got more fun than anyone. Adventure Tours trained guides and safety-boaters were ready to swoop in if we ended up in any real danger.

The East River is the most entertaining in Europe. Although I was sheepish and slightly nervous, I soon realised we were in good hands. Once our guide found out we were prepared for action he delivered, letting us jump in and float along the water with ease. We practiced 'saving' each other and surfing the rapids by paddling backwards towards them, perfect for getting wet. Our team quickly bonded with various jokes and high-fives with oars, our guide performing wonderful leaps on the raft as we grew in confidence.

A 50/50 chance of ending up in the water was a treat for some, and a necessity for others 'Team Extreme' decided we wanted action, so we got it – on the heaviest rapid we were overturned. Finding out firsthand the nickname of the rapid, I was pulled down into the water and under the current for at least 30 seconds, the water making a 'Green Room' as I opened my eyes. "Sometimes you can't control things" she said, so I relaxed and let the water take me. True to her words I surfaced and was rescued by the others with smiles on our faces. Seems like I had more fun than anyone. *SW*


Adventure Tours
www.rafting.is, Tel.: 453 8383



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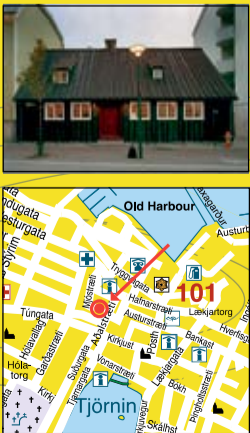
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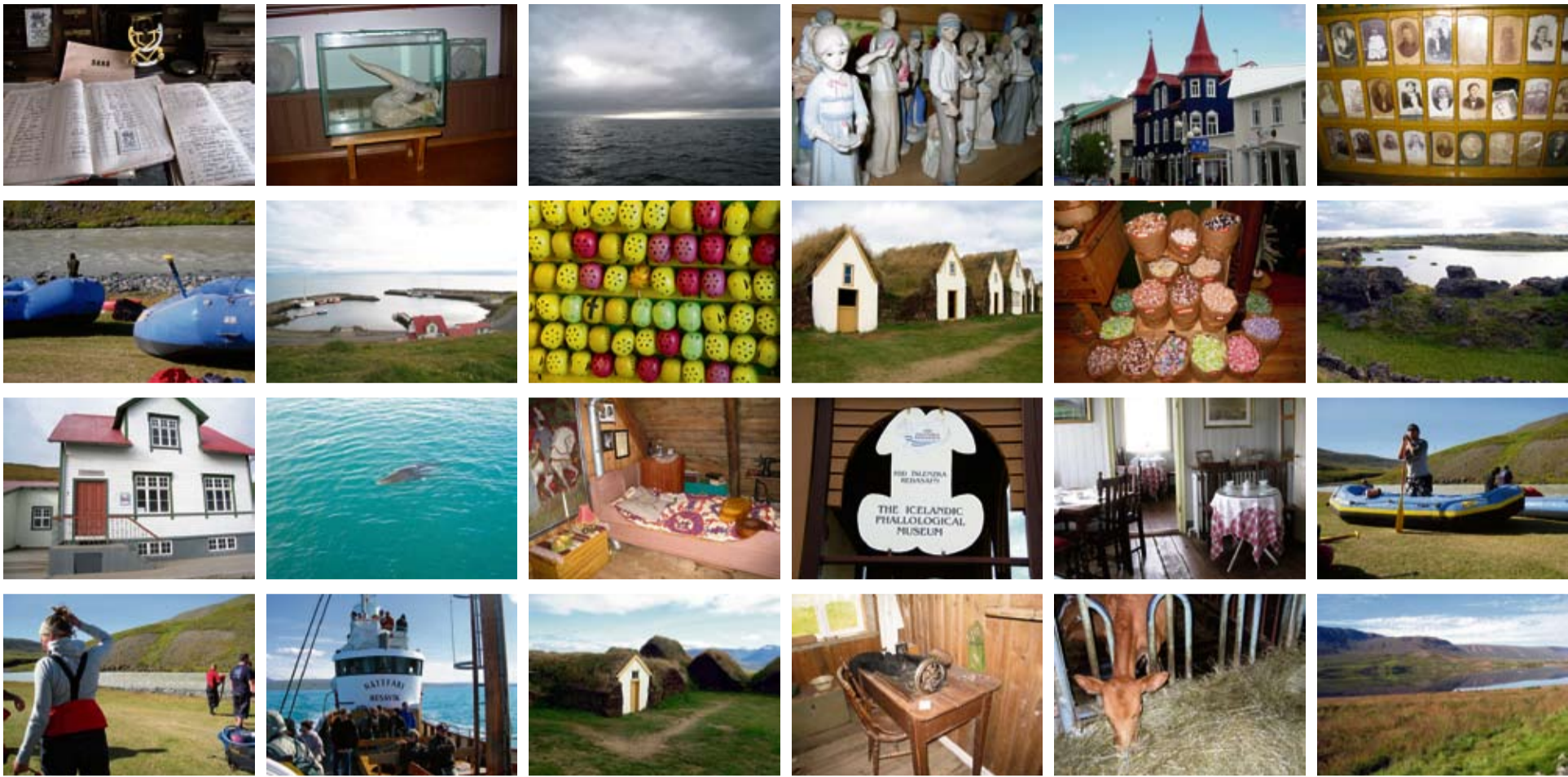


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Emigration Museum

With the harsh weather and sparse vegetation, people living in northern Iceland have never had it easy. When the volcano Askja erupted in the spring of 1875, the heavy ash fall and poisonous gases killed much of the livestock. This eruption, along with other extreme weather conditions, invading polar bears and poor harvests, triggered a large emigration from the island. By 1914, nearly one fifth of all Icelanders had left the country. They crossed the Atlantic toward the northern territories in North America ready to start a new life and face unknown challenges.

The Icelanders who stayed behind have not forgotten their ancestors who set sail over a century ago. In fact, Valgeir Þorvaldsson, an Icelandic native, started the Icelandic Emigration Centre in the picturesque harbour town of Hofsós in 1990 to celebrate and commemorate his North American bound countrymen. The museum consists of three buildings each housing a different exhibit ranging from an impressive history in photos to a reconstruction of the long voyage across the sea and life in the new world.

If you've got, or you think you have, Icelandic heritage, talk to Meredith Helgudóttir, a Canadian who has retraced her family's journey back to the north shores of Iceland. She has found a new home amongst old relatives and is now an active employee at the museum. Meredith can help you find family members using the museum's comprehensive record system. She, and other helpful staff members, can tell you when your family left and from what port, using the computer database that contains the names of all registered emigrants and visitors who have come searching for them. *DA*

The Icelandic Emigration Center, 566, Hofsós
Tel.: 453 7936, www.hofsos.is
Accommodation provided by:
Sunnuberg Guesthouse, Suðurbraut 8, 565 Hofsós
Tel.: 453 7310, www.hofsos.is, hofsos@hofsos.is

Christmas House

According to old, Icelandic myths, Mother Grýla and father Lep-palúði were ogres that would team up with the Yuletide Cat at Christmas to steal and eat naughty children. Their own offspring became the 13 Yuletide Lads (Santa Clauses) of Iceland. Their names; Pot Licker, Door Slammer and Sausage Stealer don't have a very joyous ring to them, but they did get the job done, which was mostly to scare rowdy children into good behaviour during the busy Xmas season. Whether it was the advent of modern psychology, better PR representatives or simple cooperation with their colleague from the Coca Cola company, today's version of the Yuletide Lads is all about positive reinforcement, bringing children gifts and the occasional apples. And the cat is kept on a leash.

About 15-minute drive outside Akureyri stands a house that celebrates Christmas year 'round. I stood outside, looking up at the 'Tree for Unborn Children.' I threw coins into the wishing well for good luck and ventured around the garden, past the wooden elf houses, the polyester Santa suit hanging on the line, and up the white turret where the world's largest advent calendar towered over me, it's wooden windows adorned with Steadfast Tin Soldiers, Pinocchio and other fables from youth.

Filled with tinsel and all the candy you could eat, this place is a wonder for Christmas shoppers and those who love the holiday. For others, it could certainly feel creepy – a museum of nutcrackers with carved wooden faces and inanimate Santa's with red laces. Slightly freaked by this find in the middle of summer, I realised that for kids it was probably a welcome diversion from a long journey. *SW*

Christmas House, 601 Akureyri, Tel.: 463 1433
Accommodation provided by:
Gula villan guesthouse
Brekkgata 8 & Þingvallastræti 14, 600 Akureyri
Tel.: 896 8464, www.gulavillan.is

Whale Watching

Whenever I find myself tired of taking the wrong exit on the Ring Road, eating gas-station food for every meal, involuntarily stopping the car to take the same picture of sheep that I have taken at an average interval of 50 kilometres, then I know it's high time to get to the sea. That is exactly what I did in Húsavík.

Whale watching is always a dubious event for me. While I love being on boats, I find the prospect of chasing a whale somewhat unsettling. I always think back to the first time I saw killer whales in the wild. Leaning off the boat's bow, along with dozens of other tourists snapping photos, I felt more like a member of the paparazzi than an observer of a natural wonder.

North Sailing in Húsavík offers a more pure, less invasive way to see whales. While there are still the bustling tourists trying to get their perfect shot, the company does not use radar to pinpoint the whales' location thereby ensuring a sighting. They use something potentially less reliable but also less prosaic: binoculars and luck, along with years of experience.

The company owns several beautifully renovated traditional oak fishing boats, including the Haukur, a 51-foot schooner I fell in love with on sight. I was not lucky enough to board that sailboat; I settled for the Náttfari, a more humble but still impressive fishing boat with an upper deck that was perfect for scanning the seas.

For the ease of viewing, the vessel was divided into a clock – the bow designated 12 o'clock, the stern 6 o'clock. When we spotted our first whale, a small minke, the tour guide yelled "Three o'clock," and everyone rushed over to the right side. The nautical romantic in me would have preferred "Whale off the starboard," but you can't always get what you want. *DA*

North Sailing, Hafnarstett 11, 640 Húsavík
www.northsailing.is



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Víkin
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www.sjominjasafn.is



Reykjavík Culture Night - The Pictorial

Photographer Valdís Thor joined the celebration

Viðey island

History - Nature - Art

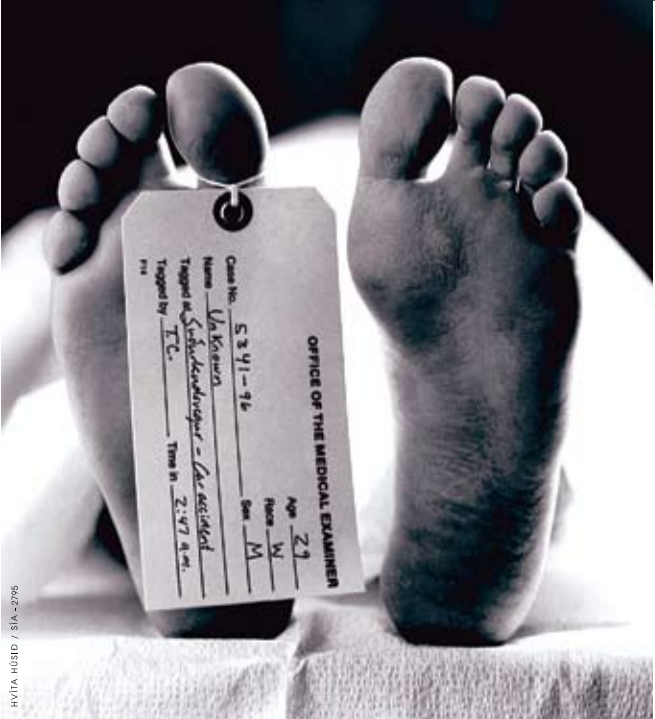


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DESTINATION

Fish and Ships

BY MARCUS WALSH — PHOTO BY GAS

Fittingly, Víkin, the Reykjavík Maritime Museum, is located in an old fish plant down by the harbour. As any maritime museum worthy of its name, it celebrates its nation at sea. The abbreviated version of Icelandic maritime history goes something like this: in the nineteenth century, Iceland was a very poor country and mainly used rowing boats for fishing. The industrial revolution brought the first fish trawlers to replace the rowing boats and increased fish exports. More trawlers were bought in the mid-twentieth-century from England. Then England and Iceland went to war over cod (see page 22) and Iceland built more fishing boats. The museum displays this history (obviously in a more detailed manner) prominently amongst its exhibits.

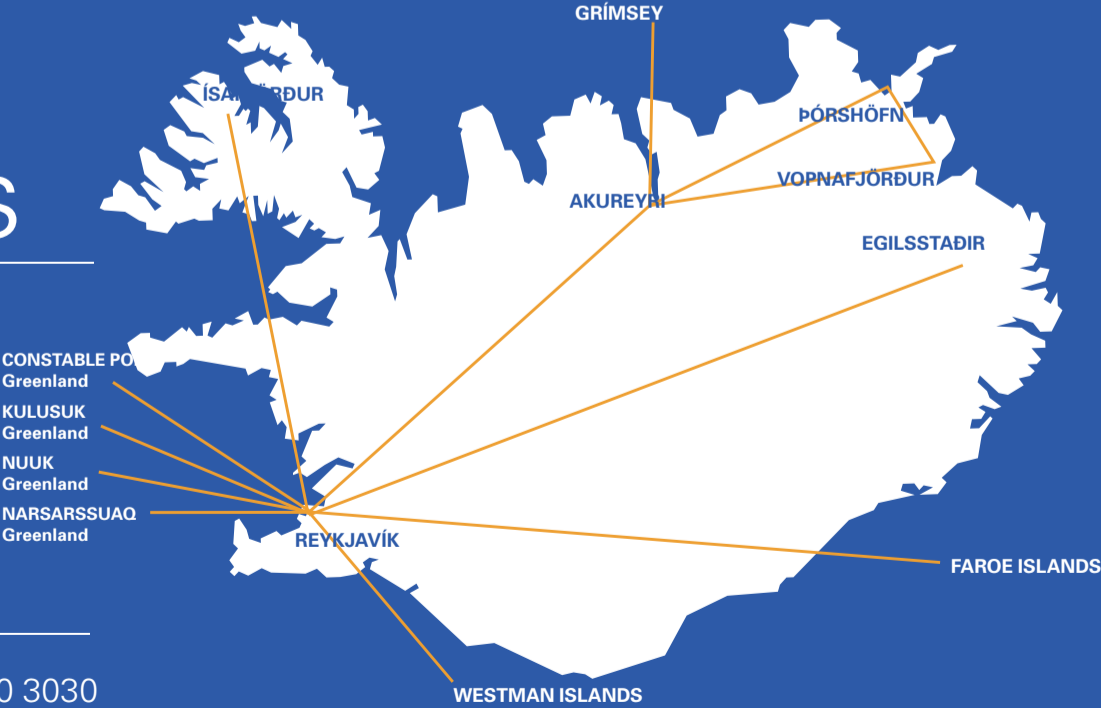
The highlight of the Maritime is a tour of Óðinn, a Danish built 910-tonne coast guard rescue vessel that was active in all three cod wars. During its span of active duty, Óðinn sailed over 200 rescue missions. An equally captivating exhibition is the stunning 3-d work of photographer Þorleifur Þorleifsson of the Reykjavík harbour. The museum also features a replica of the historic vessel Gullfoss, built in 1915 and the country's main transportation to the continent in the early twentieth century.

It is the little quirks within the exhibitions that make the trip more memorable. For example, on the engine telegraph of a trawler Iceland bought from England in the late 1940's, "dead slow" is used as a measure of velocity. An exhibition focused on the shark liver oil industry offers free capsules of shark liver oil, taken to heal wounds. A word of warning: don't bite straight into them. Also, the fish hanging over the exhibits do indeed smell, so it's probably better not to visit straight after lunch.

Other highlights include the sheer quantity of fishing paraphernalia whether marlin spikes, hemp nets, or bobbins. The wax models also create a lifelike backdrop to the encyclopaedic information boxes. The lasting impression though is the poignant fact that 142 ships weighing over 12 tons were lost in Icelandic waters from 1928–42. These boats are named on a map and this touched a personal nerve for me, born and raised just outside Grimsby and Hull in England, as both towns that have had their share of loss at sea. 🇮🇸



Air Iceland destinations



Air Iceland - Domestic flights / tel. 570 3030

DESTINATION


Reykjavik Zoo & Family Park

BY SVEINN BIRKIR BJÖRNSSON — PHOTO BY GAS

Being raised in a village of 200 people out in the country side has its peculiar perks. For one thing I did not have to experience nature through artificial recreations. I was able to interact with farm animals in their natural habitat – on the farm – instead of a petting zoo. That's why I can tell you that witnessing farm animals in the Reykjavík Family Park and Zoo is pretty much the same experience as witnessing a farm animal on a farm, since the zoo is more or less run like an actual farm. Which might be fitting in a way, as more and more farms are run like tourist destinations these days.

Another thing I can tell you is that the kids love it. Take it from me, I have three. For a child, there is no joy like petting a lamb, running around with the chickens or away from the bulls. And although they are not actually farm animals, the seals swimming around in the pool never fail to amaze the five-year olds.

The Zoo section was opened in 1990 and its main focus is Icelandic farm animals and several wild native species. Currently there are 19 animal species counting about 150 individuals live in the Zoo, emphasising variety in colours and variations. Here is a rundown: Horses, cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, foxes, minks, reindeers, seals, hens, chickens, turkey, pigeons, rabbits, guinea pigs, geese, ducks, dogs and cats.

In addition, the Zoo also hosts an aquarium, focusing on species from the North-Atlantic Ocean with over 20 fish species and other ocean creatures such as molluscs, crabs and echinoderms. The Science World has also become a popular part of the park where children can try various hands-on experiments. 

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TOP 5 CONCERTS IN ICELAND



Gísli Galdur, a.k.a. DJ Magic is a notorious DJ and a musician in Reykjavík known to fire up every venue he shows up at. It isn't easy following his enigmatic actions but these days he's finishing recording a full length with his fellow-flakes in Motion Boys, remixing Sigur Rós's latest single with Dj Sexy Lazer as a part of their "HumanWoman" project. Besides that he is establishing a electro-rockabilly phenomenon which has hitherto been extremely mysterious, but will soon be revealed.

www.myspace.com/galdur
www.myspace.com/motionboys

- 1

JIMI TENOR AT SIRKUS, 2006
A solo act where Jimi played the rhodes, the bass, several synths, the flute, the sax and accompanied the lot with some singing. Sirkus was completely packed like a box of sardines.
- 2

MÓRI AT GRANDROKK, 2002
Móri had recently published his full length (which is my opinion one of the greatest Icelandic hip-hop albums ever).. The sound was crappy which resulted in Móri attacking the soundman who he found to be the culprit.
- 3

SUCARCUBES, 2006
Great concert where each band member showed their true colors. I had never seen the Sugarcubes since a was a toddler so the whole thing was really amusing
- 4

TRABANT AT SIRKUS, 2007
Insane gig! Raggi performed on the bar as a tribute for his schoolfellows from The Homemaker School, Hlynur jerked off the guitar and I went crazy on the drums.
- 5

GUS GUS AT NASA
Biggi Veira and the President were as good as ever that particular night and somehow everything turned out to be spotless (as opposed to regularly with Gus Gus). When the pop idol Páll Óskar showed up and performed Need In Me I swear I thought the roof was gonna go off.

TOP 5 HANGOVER MEALS IN REYKJAVÍK



Hrafnhildur is a fashion designer raised in Reykjavík. She graduated from the Icelandic Academy of Art in 2004 and has since then designed for various scenes such as advertisements, theatre and design clothing for several musicians such as GusGus and Ólöf Arnalds. Hrafnhildur has lived in Petersburg and in Paris and recently established the label 'Hidden Goods.'

www.hiddengoods.com

- 1

VITABAR
A local bar boasting of the best burger in Reykjavík: the infamous Forget-me-not burger. The accompanying fries are crispy and extremely large so the meal's a genuine Hang-over killer.
- 2

DOMINOS
When the hangover is giving you the hardest time you can barely move out of the sofa. What better to do then but order in a pizza and in that case Dominos Classic never fails.
- 3

VOX LUNCH BUFFET
If you want to offer your hag-ridden body a treat then the lunch buffet at Vox is the first choice. It's a bit expensive but it's really gourmet. It offers both several greasy products as well as healthy ones.
- 4

ELDSMIÐJAN
The pizzas offered at Eldsmiðjan will never let you down! My favourite is the calzone and the pepperoni and cream cheese pizza. Crispy, brick-oven pizza, saturated with garlic sauce; does it get any better?
- 5

KRUA THAI
The Chicken Panang is one of Krua Thai's finest dishes, and extremely appropriate when you've overdosed on burgers and pizzas (which of course happens rarely).

TOP 5 ICELANDIC CELEBRITIES



Sigtryggur Berg Sigmarsson is a creature of horror mostly to himself. He was born in Akureyri in 1977 and has lived in Reykjavik, Hannover, Berlin, Vienna and Den Haag. His view on life comes out immediately when he has a canvas in his left hand and a brush filled with thick black Chinese ink in his right hand. The life of Sigmarsson is based on the delicate human balance of life and death on an ever-tipping scale towards an inevitable bleak death. He once said that the weight of space rides on his mind like a 4 headed horse, going different directions, tearing his tied down body apart.

www.myspace.com/stilluppsteypa

- 1

HRAFN GUNNLAUGSSON (FILM DIRECTOR)
This is the man who introduced me and many other Icelanders to the master director Ingmar Bergman and this is definitely the nearest to Bergman Icelandic film directors can get
- 2

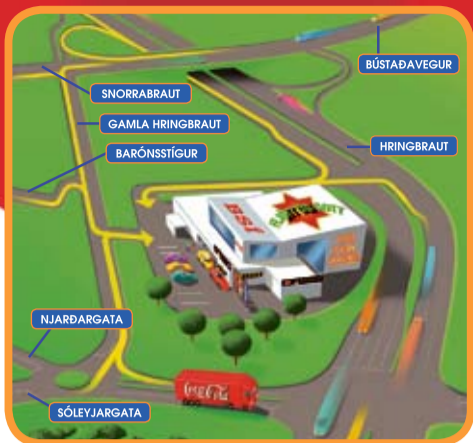
STEFAN JONSSON FRA MÖÐRUDAL A.K.A. STÓRVAL (ARTIST)
I remember seeing Stórval singing and selling his paintings out in the streets of downtown Reykjavik and his appearance had a very strong influence on me.
- 3

GUÐMUNDA ELÍASDOTTIR (OPERA SINGER & ACTRESS)
She's AMAZING! Her beautiful voice, face expressions and body movements are totally mind-blowing. She has influenced both my alter ego ("The Shivering Man") and me a lot.
- 4

VIGDIS FINNBOGADOTTIR (FORMER PRESIDENT OF ICELAND)
When asked to make this top 5 list, she was the first person to pop up in my mind. Which says it all about Vigdís Finnbogadóttir. For me she represents Iceland.
- 5

SNORRI ÁSMUNDSSON (ARTIST)
Snorri is not only my favorite Icelandic artist but also my dearest friend. He is the sanest person that I know. When I'm feeling down about something, what ever it is, Snorri will be the first one to hear about the problem.

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Lamb cutlets

THURSDAYS:

Lamb meat & broth
Lamb cutlets

FRIDAYS:

Lamb chops
Lamb cutlets

SATURDAYS:

Fried fish fillets
Lamb cutlets

Roast pork

SUNDAYS:

Roast pork
Lamb cutlets

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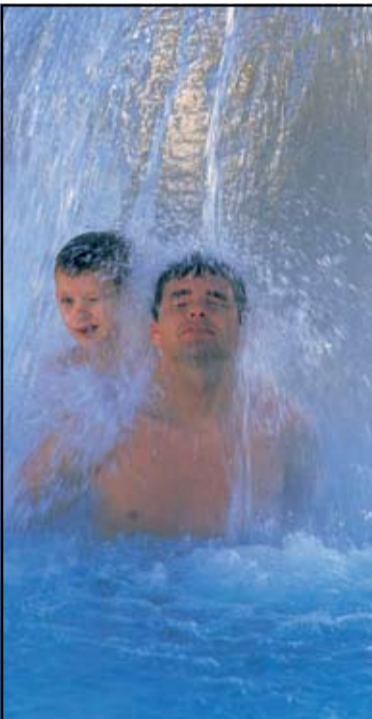
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Issue 13 — August 29 - September 11 2008

www.grapevine.is

Stuffed with stuff

In English, 'sour milk'; this acerbic yogurt-esque liquid takes a little getting used to, to say the least. It starts off innocently enough but then hits you with a pungent round-house kick to your stomach, guaranteed to knock your socks off if you mistake this for regular milk.

James Crugnale sampled Icelandic milk for journalistic purposes. He is still constipated.

PAGE 8

Skoffin seem to have no immediate function sans being super evil and really, really scary. It literally kills you just by looking at you. You don't get to run, you don't get to hide. You stumble into its line of sight and its curtains, pal.

Another Icelandic monster introduced.

PAGE 10

Of course, the Batman premise is flawed to begin with. If someone with Bruce Wayne's wealth really wanted to eradicate crime, he could do so with a host of social programs that would all be less cinematic than donning a cape and beating up bad guys.

Valur Gunnarsson dissects the pro-war propaganda of the Dark Knight.

PAGE 12

And then Slugs: things start to get slimy right away with Sindri Eldon, an obnoxious front-man, who after telling the crowd that he appreciates their applause, then asks them to shut the fuck up!

Marcus Walsh was outraged by the Slugs.

PAGE 37

I marvelled at the 200 species of animal genitalia on display.

Stevie Ward visited the Icelandic Phallological Museum.

PAGE 40

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The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE **INFO**



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

+ *Tindersticks at NASA · Reykjavík Jazz Festival · Rockabilly and Blues*

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL AND
ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND.

Issue 13 2008

www.grapevine.is

What:

The Icelandic Visual Arts Awards (B2)



Music TINDERSTICKS AT NASA

Tindersticks are a six-piece chamber pop outfit from Nottingham, England, who were supposed to have played their last concert eighteen months ago, but fortunately went back on that decision. Instead, they're about to kick off their European tour, right here. New album 'The Hungry Saw' is their seventh studio record and one of their most critically acclaimed to date. Harking back to their effortless oozy-soul style of the mid nineties, lead singer Stuart Ashton Staples sounds like Kurt Wagner of Lambchop fame, holding a laggard and reflective vocal that fits back-to-back with his spoken narratives. Tracks like new album closer

'Turns We Took' possess a mixture of speaking and singing that have seen Tindersticks establish a unique sound, recruiting an impressive cult following in the process.

Tindersticks will perform with a large canon of instruments, forming a grandiose orchestral make-up, with the band using Rhodes piano, glockenspiel, vibraphone, violin, trumpet, trombone, clarinet, bassoon, Hammond organ and more. The band will be eager to pour their hearts out in an honest, 1950s kind of way. However their way is not like Sinatra's way: expect smoky vocals, but not smoke and mirrors.

What:
Tindersticks
When:
September 11
Where:
NASA, Thorvaldsenstræti 2

1 E6



Art WATER CARRIER

Let's all celebrate the ancient art of the watercolour! Never before has a group so diverse joined in tandem to combine their talents of the brush and water. A team of eleven unconventional, individualist artists specialising in watercolour have all come together to assemble some of their best works simultaneously on display at the Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum, from August 22 until the end of the year. Multiple styles will be featured with "water soluble colours on canvas,

gouaches on paper, watercolours with embroidery and classic aquarelles." Themes include visions of "nature, studies of people and social situations, conceptual works, pure fantasies and even depictions seldom seen outside the pages of medical journals."

Where:
Reykjavík Art Museum
– Ásmundarsafn by Sigtún



Music ROCKABILLY AND BLUES ICELAND WIDE

Vax, know for their raw blues sound and inventive EP titles, will spend most of September on an Iceland-wide tour with The Reykjavík Rockabilly Band to celebrate a new release from the Rockabilly Band and an upcoming release from Vax. The tour will take them to no less than 14 towns around the country (and two shows in the Netherlands), with stops in Reykjanesbær (September 4), Ísafjörður (5), Flateyri (6), Sauðárkrúkur (11), Akureyri (12), Húsavík (13), Grindavík (16), Flúðir (17), Reykjavík (18), Kópavogur (19), Selfoss (20) and Þorlákshöfn (21). This is a unique opportunity to witness these two bands in as they bring their music to the people. If you are not up for going out of town, check them out at Organ for a grand display of their signature grooves and well-mixed beats on September 18.

Where:
Iceland-wide
When:
September



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Music & Entertainment

FRIDAY AUG 29

- **Amsterdam**
DJ Master 11PM
- **Café Cultura**
DJ Kári
- **Glaumbar**
Reykjavík Jazz Festival. Jam session, + DJ Valdi
When: 10PM
- **Hressó**
DJ Maggi and some live music
- **Kaffibarinn**
DJ Alfons X
When: 11:45
- **Organ**
Reykjavik Jazz Festival; Modern Jazz. Then DJ Ívar Pétur
When: 9PM
- **Frikirkjan**
Reykjavik Jazz Festival; Theo Bleckman
When: 8PM
- **Prikið**
Surprise Night við Franz & Kristó followed by Gísli Galdur/Dj Rósa
- **Q-bar**
DJ Peter Parker
- **Tunglið**
DJ Arnar Hugarástand
11:45PM
- **Vegamót**
DJ Jónas

SATURDAY AUG 30

- **Amsterdam**
The houseband including Bergur & Pétur. 11PM
- **Café Cultura**
Party Zone 1st Volume
- **Glaumbar**
DJ Valdi
When: 10PM
- **Hressó**
DJ Maggi and some live music
- **Kaffibarinn**
DJ Sexy Lazer
When: 11:45PM
- **Nasa**
Reykjavik Jazz Festival; Closing

- Party.
When: 11PM
- **Háskólabíó**
Reykjavik Jazz Festival; Music of Björk
When: 4PM
- **Nordic House**
Reykjavik Jazz Festival; Athletic Big Band Music
When: 7PM
- **Domo**
Hera in Concert
When: 9PM
- **Prikið**
Houseband followed by Danni Deluxe
- **Tunglið**
BMP Reykjavík
11:45PM
- **Vegamót**
DJ Danni Deluxe

SUNDAY AUG 31

- **Gljúfrasteinn**
Summer's last concert; Cello player Gunnar Kvaran with pianist Haukur Guðlaugsson
When: 4PM
Admission: 500ISK
- **Prikið**
Hang-Over Cinema. Popcorn and Coke available

MONDAY SEPT 1

- **Prikið**
Open-mice night from 10PM

WEDNESDAY SEPT 3

- **Kaffibarinn**
Bedroom Community's night
When: 8PM
- **Nasa**
French-Icelandic band Klezmer Kaos and local band Múgsefjun
When: 8PM
Admission: 2500ISK
Buy Tickets: www.midi.is
- **Organ**
Retro Stefson in concert + guests
When: 9PM
- **Paddy's (Keflavik)**
Bands /Ela, Tommygun Preachers, Hellvar, Klaus and LePenn in Concert
When: 9PM

THURSDAY SEPT 4

- **Café Cultura**
Mystic MC
- **Glaumbar**
Live Music; Beat box, funk, soul & hip hop.
When: 11PM
- **Organ**
Viðurstyggð in concert + guests
When: 9PM
- **Hafnarborg (Hafnarfjörður)**
Lunchtime concert; Gissur Páll Gissurarson tenor.
When: 11:30AM
- **Vegamót**
DJ Jónas

FRIDAY SEPT 5

- **Amsterdam**
DJ Master
- **Café Cultura**
Birthday Celebration with Árni E
- **Glaumbar**
Miller Time: DJ Valdi
When: 10PM
- **Hressó**
DJ Maggi and some live music
- **Kaffibarinn**
DJ Jack Schidt
When: 11:45PM
- **Nasa**
Local legend Megas, and his band Senubjófarnir
When: 9PM
- **Tunglið**
DJ's Barcode Crew
11:45PM
- **Vegamót**
DJ Dóri

SATURDAY SEPT 6

- **Amsterdam**
DJ Master
- **Café Cultura**
DJ Árni Sveins
- **Glaumbar**
DJ Lurkur
When: 10PM
- **Hressó**
DJ Maggi and some live music
- **Kaffibarinn**
DJ Magic & DJ Alfons X
When: 10PM
- **Nasa**
DJ Lucca
When: 11PM
- **Tunglið**
Thinking Dancemusic
11:45PM
- **Vegamót**
Dj Benni B-Ruff

Music & Entertainment | Venue finder

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

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

Apótek
Austurstræti 16 | **E5**
Sporting a chic and pristine interior with a blend of modern minimalism and ornate baroque, a decent spot with eager service and an international menu.

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

Bar 11
Laugavegur 11 | **G6**
A happening Rock hangout right on Laugavegur, brings in the Iceland rock scene whether on the jukebox or in person mainly on Tuesdays but throughout the week.

Belly's
Hafnarstræti 18a | **E5**
Belly's deserves praise for having the cheapest bar prices around. Good for anyone looking for a deal, there are enough tables for everyone and TVs for sport | watching.

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

Café Cultura
Hverfisgata 18 | **G6**
Situating in the inter-cultural centre, Cultura is a café/bar with a cosmopolitan feel. The menu features all sorts of international dishes, alongside the staple salad and sandwich.

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

Café Victor
Hafnarstræti 1-3| **D4**
A hangout for older foreigners, Victor attracts a diverse crowd, both in age and origin, as a rule that extends to the musicians that play there.

Celtic Cross
Hverfisgata 26 | **H6**

Arguably the most authentic Irish pub in town, a very lively space with live music every night, sometimes two bands playing at once.

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

Domo
Þingholtstræti 5 | **F6**
The elegantly decorated Domo serves delicious French-Asian cuisine, excellent sushi and has a great wine list. A sure choice.

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

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

Grand Rokk
Smíðjustígur | **G6**
As its Viking theme accurately displays, this hardcore chess hangout is no place for the lily | livered. Take the

pub quiz on Fridays at 17.30, the winner gets a free case of beer!

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

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

Kaffi Hjómálind
Laugavegur 21 | **G6**
This organic, free-trade café prides itself not only on great food and coffee but being a strong cultural center, hosting live music as well as lectures and poetry nights.

Kaffibarinn
Bergstraðastræti 1 | **F6**
A popular place to grab a drink after work, this daytime coffee joint roils with nighttime activity on weekends with live DJs. Parties often pound until dawn.

NASA
Þorvaldsenstræti 2 | **E6**
The cornerstone of Reykjavik nightlife, NASA has multiple

bars and hosts some of Reykjavik's best bands. Shows go on all night long on weekends.

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

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

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

Organ
Hafnarstræti 1-3 | **E4**
This trendy bar and concert venue presents a wide range of international and local musicians from all levels of renown. Shows 4 times a week, lasting late on weekends.

Prikið
Bankastræti | **F5**
Part of the Reykjavik bar scene for decades, this café/bar has a fairly cheap menu and attracts a mix of stu-

dents and old regulars. R&B and Hip-Hop plays on weekends.

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

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

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

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

Vegamót
Vegamótastígur 4 | **G6**
Vegamót's kitchen is open until 22.00 daily and sports an appealing lunch menu. Come for a tasty brunch on weekends. If you like Óliver, try Vegamót and vice versa.

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WEDNESDAY SEPT 10

- **Café Cultura**
Raggae Night

THURSDAY SEPT 11

- **Café Cultura**
Biggi í Maus
- **Glaumbar**
Live Music; Beat box, funk, soul & hip hop.
When: 11PM
- **Kaffibarinn**
DJ Yamaho
When: 10PM
- **Nasa**
Tindersticks in concert
When: 9PM
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- **Organ**
Triband (GER) in concert
9PM
- **Vegamót**
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Art

- **101 Gallery**
Aug 22 – Oct 5
ZEDRIK - Instalments by Sigga Björg Sigurðardóttir
- **ASÍ Art Museum**
Aug 30 – Sept 21
Sólveig Aðalsteinsdóttir exhibits various pieces all linked to time and space. You can find drawings on paper, wood sculptures as well as photos.
- **The Culture House**
Permanent exhibitions:
Medieval Manuscripts; The Library Room.
Current exhibitions:
Surtsey – Genesis
The exhibition traces the

- emergence and evolution of the island Surtsey until the present day and predicts its geographical and ecological development over the next 120 years.
From Beyond the Oceans – Translations and original writings by Helgi Hálfðanarson
The thematic exhibition currently on view in the Library Room is dedicated to Helgi Hálfðanarson's translations and original writings. The Late View – Halldór Laxness' Photographs
Nobel Laureate and cosmopolitan Halldór Laxness was better known for his writing but also proved to be a good photographer. This is an exhibition of his works.
Exhibition Series
Ásta Ólafsdóttir displays her artwork at the Culture Shop.
- **The Einar Jónsson Museum**
Permanent exhibition:
The work of sculptor Einar Jónsson.
- **Gallery StartArt**
Aug 28 – Sept 24
Six solo exhibitions by Anna Eyjólfsdóttir, Magnús Pálsson, Magnea Ásmundsdóttir, Ásdís Spano, Harpa Dögg Kjartansdóttir, Didda Hjartadóttir Leaman as well as START ART artists.
- **Gallery Ágúst**
Aug 16 – Sept 27
Exhibition by Katrín Elvarsdóttir
- **Gallery Fold**
Current exhibition: Gallery Fold's summer exhibition. Paintings by Ásgrímur Jónsson, Jón Stefánsson, Jóhannes S. Kjarval, Finnur Jónsson, Þorvaldur Skúlason, Jóhann Briem and Nína Tryggvadóttir
- **Gallery Kling & Bang**
Aug 23 – Sept 9
Ásdís Sif Gunnarsdóttir exhibits Sept 9 – Sept 28
The Orange Fire that you showed me in Hljómskálagarðurinn
Exhibition by Ásdís Sif Gunnarsdóttir
- **Gallery Turpentine**
Current Exhibition:
Paintings by Stórval
- **Gel Gallery**
Aug 23 – Sept 11
Man and Wife. Ester Ýr and

- Jóhann Örn research the feeling when something brakes, which can both be sad and exhilarating
- **Gerðuberg Cultural Centre**
May 3 – Sept 7
Between Mountain and Shore: Exhibition of landscape paintings from popular-artist couple Michael Guðvarðarson and Ósk Guðmundsdóttir
May 3 – Sept 7
Magical Beings from the Folk Tales of Iceland: Drawings from Jón Baldur Hlíðberg
4 March – 7 Sept
A Date with Collectors III: All of the exhibition pieces are connected with music in one way or another!
- **Living Art Museum**
Aug 16 – Sept 29
Tillit – rücksicht – regards
Exhibition by Hlynur Hallson
- **The National Film Archive of Iceland**
The National Film Archive of Iceland screens old movie classics and masterpieces twice a week for 500 ISK per ticket.
- **The National Gallery of Iceland**
July 10 – Sept 28
Exhibition: Highlight of Icelandic Art
- **The National Museum**
Permanent exhibition:
The Making of a Nation
June 6 – Jan 21
Over the Ocean and Home: Icelandic artefacts from Sweden.
May 16 – Sept 14
Endurkast (Reflection): Cooperative photography exhibition between eight Icelandic photographers.
May 16 – Sept 14
In the Mist: Exhibition by French photographer Thomas Humery.
- **The Numismatic Museum**
Permanent exhibition:
The Central Bank of Iceland and the National Museum of Iceland jointly operate a numismatic collection consisting of Icelandic notes and coins.
- **Reykjavík 871 +/- 2**
Permanent exhibition:
The Settlement Exhibition
- **Reykjavík Art Gallery**
Current exhibition:

Art | Venue finder

- 101 Gallery**
Hverfisgata 18A | **F6**
Thu–Sat 14–17 and by appointment
www.101hotel.is/101hotel/101gallery/
Located in the 101 Hotel, features a broad selection of international and local contemporary art.
- Artótek**
Tryggvagata 15 | **D5**
Mon 10–21, Tue–Thu 10–19, Fri 11–19, Sat and Sun 13–17
www.sim.is/Index/Islandska/Artotek
An Icelandic art exhibition space and art dealer. Pieces are available for purchase or lease.
- ASÍ Art Museum**
Freyugata 41 | **G10**
Tue–Sun 13–17
Run by the ASÍ labour union, features mostly contemporary Icelandic art. Free entry.
- Árbæjarsafn**
Kistuhylur 4
An open-air museum featuring arts-and-crafts fairs and exhibitions in the summer.
- The Culture House**
Hverfisgata 15 | **F6**
Open daily 11–17
www.thjodmenning.is
A Museum of Icelandic cultural history, with an ongoing exhibition of the original manuscripts of the sagas and eddas.
- Dwarf Gallery**
Grundartígur 21 | **H8**
Opening Hours: Fri and Sat 18–20
www.this.is/birta
An independently run basement Gallery, Gallery Dwarf hosts exhibitions which speak straight to the
- hearts of the “cute” generation.
- The Einar Jónsson Museum**
Eiríksgröta | **G9**
Tue–Sun 14–17
www.skulptur.is
Features a permanent exhibition on the sculptor Einar Jónsson as well as temporary exhibits.
- Fótógrafi**
Skólavörðustígur 4a | **F7**
www.fotografi.is
Features photographic exhibitions by local photographers.
- Gallery 100°**
Bæjarháls 1
www.or.is/Forsida/Gallery100/
Open weekdays from 08:30–16:00
An art museum run by the Orkuveita Reykjavíkur energy corporation. Features contemporary art by Icelandic and foreign artists.
- Gallery Auga fyrir Auga**
Hverfisgata 35 | **G7**
Independently run art museum featuring Icelandic art.
- Gallery StartArt**
Laugavegur 12B | **G7**
Tue–Sat 1–17
www.startart.is
Contemporary Icelandic and foreign art. Admission is free and the gallery is run without any government funding.
- Gallery Ágúst**
Baldursgröta 12 | **F9**
Wed–Sat 12–17
www.galleriagust.is
Galleri Ágúst is a contemporary art gallery in the centre of Reykjavík. With an

- ambitious programme of exhibitions, it also presents and sells artwork of Icelandic and international artists.
- Gallery Fold**
Rauðarárstígur 14–16 | **J9**
Mon–Fri 10–18 / Sat 11–16 / Sun 14–16
www.myndlist.is
More of an art auction than just a gallery, Fold also evaluates and exhibits art.
- Gallery Ibiza Bunker**
Þingholtsstræti 31 | **F7**
Open Fridays 17–20
www.myspace.com/ibizabunker
This gallery is actually a project by one of Hitt Húsið's creative summer groups. Art by the young folks, for the young folks.
- Gallery Kling & Bang**
Laugavegur 23 | **G7**
Thurs–Sun from 14–18
this.is/klingogbang/
Exhibits upcoming and established contemporary artists as well as hosting screenings, lectures and performances.
- Gallery Turpentine**
Ingólfsstræti 5 | **F7**
Tue–Fri 12–18 / Sat 11–16
www.turpentine.is
Houses a collection of Icelandic contemporary artwork as well as works from old Icelandic masters both for display and sale.
- Gel Gallery**
Hverfisgata 37 | **H7**
Mon–Fri 13–18 / Sat 11–16 / Sun 14–16
www.myspace.com/gallerigel
Both an art gallery and a barber shop. Way cool.
- Gerðuberg Cultural Centre**
Gerðuberg 3–5
Mon–Thu 11–17 / Wed 11–21 / Thu–Fri 11–17 / Sat–Sun 13–16
www.gerduberg.is
Located in Breiðholt, the Gerðuberg cultural centre hosts both exhibitions and events.
- Hitt Húsið**
– **Gallery Tukt**
Pósthússtræti 3–5 | **E6**
www.hitthusid.is
Initially thought of as a hobby centre to keep the youth from drinking, Hitt húsið is still operational and organises events as well as hosting art exhibitions in their Gallery – Gallery Tukt.
- i8 Gallery**
Klapparárstígur 33 | **G7**
Tue–Fri 11–17 / Sat 13–17 and by appointment.
www.i8.is
Represents work by an eclectic mix of Icelandic and international contemporary artists.
- Living Art Museum**
Vatnsstígur 3 – **G7**
Wed, Fri–Sun 13–17 / Thu 13–22.
www.nylo.is
A non-profit gallery that organises 8–10 larger exhibitions every year as well as other cultural events.
- Lost Horse Gallery**
Skólástræti 1 | **F6**
Weekends from 13–19 and by appointment on weekdays.
Located in a renovated stable off Laugavegur, features work by local artists.
- The National Film Archive**
Hvaleyjarbraut 13
www.kvikmyndasafn.is
The National Film

- Archive of Iceland screens old movie classics and masterpieces twice a week for 500 ISK per ticket.
- The National Gallery of Iceland**
Frikirkjuvegur 7 | **E8**
Tue–Sun 11–17
www.listasafn.is
Houses the national art collection and is the centre of research and documentation of Icelandic art.
- The National Museum**
Suðurgata 41 | **C9**
Open daily 10–17
natmus.is/
Established in 1863, this museum features exhibits on Icelandic cultural heritage.
- The Nordic House**
Sturlugata 5 | **C11**
Tue–Sun 12–17
www.nordice.is/
Explores and promotes Scandinavian culture with regular lectures, films and exhibitions.
- The Numismatic Museum**
Einholt 4 | **K9**
Open Mon–Fri 13:30–15:30.
Presents a cultural history of Iceland through analysis of collected coins, medals and books.
- Reykjavík 871 +/- 2**
Aðalstræti 17 | **D6**
Open daily 10–17
Museum on the founding of Reykjavík. Located in the oldest house in the city. Tours in English on Mondays and Saturdays at 14.00
- Reykjavík Art Gallery**
Skúlagata 28 | **H6**
Tuesday through Sunday 14–18
The city's public art
- gallery features works by Icelandic artists.
- Reykjavík Art Museum**
Open daily 10–16
www.listasafnreykjavikur.is
Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum
Sigtún Hafnarhús
Tryggvagata 17 | **E5**
Kjarvalsstaðir
Flókagata | **K11**
Specialising in contemporary art by local and international artists. Free entrance.
- Reykjavík City Theatre**
Listabrátt 3
Presenting Icelandic music and dance performances as well as dramatic theatre, produces six new shows each year.
- Reykjavík Maritime Museum**
Grandagarður 8 | **C3**
With a fishing trawler-turned-exhibit space, educates on the maritime and fishing traditions of Iceland.
- Reykjavík Museum of Photography**
Tryggvagata 16 | **D5**
Weekdays 12–19 / Sat–Sun 13–17
www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is
Features work by local and international photographers, as well as an archive on the history of photography.
- Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum**
Laugarnestangi 70
Features a permanent exhibition of sculptor Sigurjón Ólafsson's works.

Art

ICELANDIC VISUAL ARTS AWARDS

As a part of Akureyri's annual wake on August 30 an exhibition, with the works of the artists nominated for the Icelandic Visual Arts Awards this year, will be opened at 3PM. This is the third time that the Visual Art Medal is granted but its purpose can be grasped in three elements: firstly to draw to light the spectacular contribution by Icelandic

artists to the phenomenon, secondly to encourage increased knowledge and accessibility of the public in the field and thirdly to motivate improved opportunities for work in the realm in Iceland. A total of six artists were granted a nomination this year so the selection of artworks will be vast.

Where:
Akureyri Museum of Art
When:
August 30



Art

REYJKAVIK JAZZ FESTIVAL

Culture night may have just passed but that doesn't mean that the groove has to stop. The Reykjavik Jazz Festival has returned yet again so there is ample cause for celebration. On Friday there is a Jazz Quiz at 20:00 in the old lónó theatre by the city pond. The joy will continue with Modern Jazz at Organ on Hafnarstræti 1-3, from 23:00. On Saturday at 16:00, Háskólabíó theatre will host an interesting event where the Reykjavik Big Band – The Björkestra – will perform the music of Björk in jazz

arrangements, conducted by Travis Sullivan. The Nordic House offers the North Atlantic Big Band Music at 21:00. At the same time Háskólabíó is the venue for jazz legends Dr. Brushes and Mr. Taste. Finally NASA hosts the "Jazz Festival Closer! Jazz Party of the year!" At 23:00.

When:
August 29 and 30



Music

KLEZMER AT NASA

Klezmer Kaos have been playing on festivals all around Europe in the last few months and finally they'll allow Icelanders as well as others to witness their spectacular set Their music is described as European music with a dash of the Middle-East and it was one of only 25 bands who were chosen to perform at the International Jewish Music Festival in Amsterdam this spring. The band members are five and are as different as they are many. Together they have created a unique Klezmer sound which characterizes all their music. The energy they establish during their performances manifests in a wild dance of even the shyest by-passers so gear up and check them out at Nasa September 3.

What:
Klezmer Kaos
When:
September 3
Where:
NASA, Thorvaldsenstræti 2

1 E6

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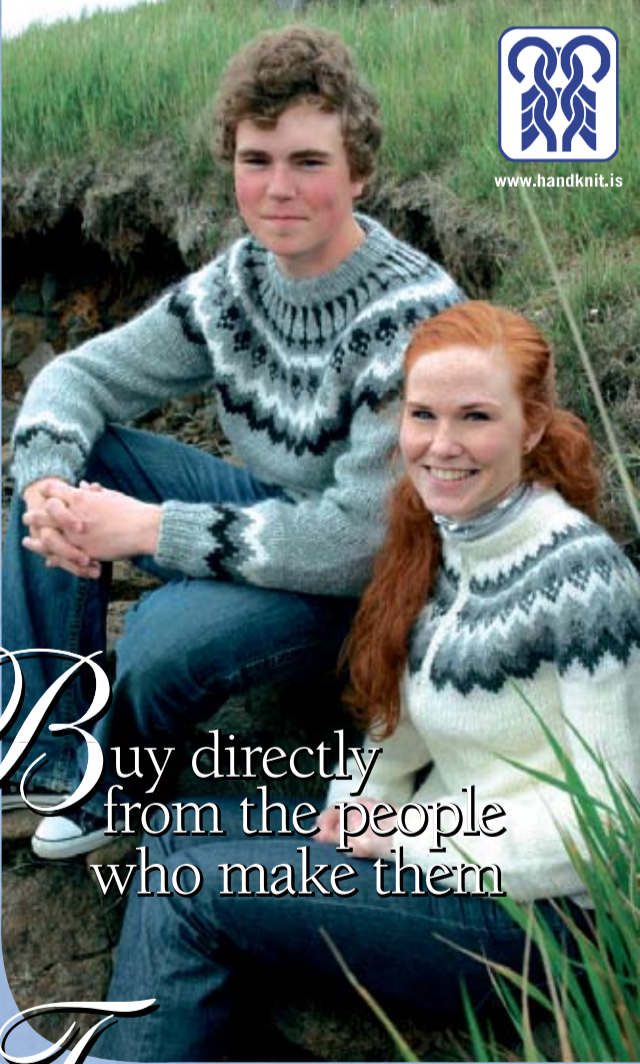
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- Magnús Tómasson, Pétur Már Pétursson and Tolli
- **Reykjavík Art Museum**
– **Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum**
Permanent Exhibition
The Shape of Line
A new retrospective of works by Ásmundur Sveinsson. The exhibition focuses on abstract works from 1945 onwards.
 - **Reykjavík Art Museum**
– **Hafnarhús**
Sept 18 – Nov 2
Libia Castro and Ólafur Ólafsson. The two artists have worked together since the late 1990s, building up a strong body of work which focuses on social issues and the sharing of life experiences. Their work has a strong political core and gives voice to people on the margins of our society, migrants and asylum seekers.
Sept 18 – Jan 11
Private Exhibition by Ingibjörg Jónsdóttir
 - **Reykjavík Art Museum**
– **Kjarvalsstaðir**
18 May – 31 Aug
Dreams of the Sublime and Nowhere in Contemporary Icelandic Art:
This exhibition includes many new works of photography
- and glacial rivers.
- **GalleriBOX**
Aug 30 – Sept 9
Siggi Eggerts
 - **Veggverk**
Current exhibition:
Painting by Bridget Kennedy
 - **Kunstraum Wohnraum (Home gallery)**
July 5 – 20 Sept
Huginn Þór Arason exhibition
 - **Skaftfell**
June 7 – Sept 14
Audiovision: Various artists exhibit at the west-wall. In this series of exhibitions the curators choose together visual artists and sound artists as a pair. Curators are Ingólfur Arnarsson and Elísabet Indra Ragnarsdóttir. On July 19, Ólöf Helga Helgadóttir and Kira Kíra open their exhibition.
Aug 30 – Dec 31
“Passing by” a film by Darri Lorenzen but Evil Madness composed the music accompanying the film.
Shivering Man by Sigtryggur Berg Sigmarsson
August 9 – Sept 7
The Eternal Moment by Ásdís Sif Gunnarsdóttir
 - **LÁ Art Museum**
Current Exhibition: Exhibition on the works of visual artist Magnús Kjartansson.

Movies

- **Tropic Thunder**
Sambíóin Álfabakka, Sambíóin Keflavík, Laugarásbíó, Borgarbíó
- **Sveitabréðskaup**
Sambíóin Álfabakka, Háskólabíó, Sambíóin Selfossi, Sambíóin Akureyri, Sambíóin Keflavík
- **Star Wars – Clone Wars**
Sambíóin Álfabakka, Sambíóin Kringlan
- **The Rocker**
Háskólabíó, Borgarbíó
- **Skropp Út**
Háskólabíó, Sambíóin Selfossi
- **Mamma Mia!**
Háskólabíó, Sambíóin Álfabakki, Borgarbíó, Regnboginn, Sambíóin Keflavík, Sambíóin Selfossi
- **Make It Happen**
Regnboginn
- **The Dark Knight**
Sambíóin Álfabakka, Sambíóin Kringlan, Sambíóin Akureyri,
- **WALL-E**
Sambíóin Álfabakka, Sambíóin Kringlan, Sambíóin Akureyri
- **Get Smart**
Sambíóin Álfabakka, Sambíóin Kringlan, Laugarásbíó
- **The Mummy:**
Tomb of the Dragon Emperor
Sambíóin Álfabakka, Sambíóin Kringlan, Laugarásbíó, Sambíóin Selfossi
- **X-Files: I Want to Believe**
Sambíóin Selfossi, Háskólabíó, Sambíóin Kringlunni, Borgarbíó, Regnboginn

Events

- **Reykjavik Tango Festival**
Sat–Sun August 30 & 31
Get prepared to get your happy feet on as the Reykjavik Tango Festival rolls into town! Dance shoes can be purchased at Ástund, located at Háaleitisbraut 68. On August 30 and 31, there will be tango workshops at Kramhusid and Idno at 11.30–12.30, 13.00–14.30, 15.00–16.30 and 17.00–18.30.
- **Monthly Breakbeat and Drum & Bass Night at Bar 22**
Thursday September 4
Laugavegur 22 is the location to get down to some serious beats. Drum and bass, jungle, breakbeat and all the rest will be provided so you can move your feet from 22:00 at Bar 22. Forget the pretension of house and trance, this monthly night always takes place on the first Thursday and is a legendary Reykjavik institution in its own right to get down and dirty.

OUTSIDE REYKJAVÍK

- **Hafnarborg**
Aug 30 – Sept 29
Force and Tenderness : A retrospective exhibition of Sigrún Ólafsdóttir's sculptures and drawings from 1996–2008.
- **The Icelandic Settlement Centre**
Permanent exhibitions:
The Settlement of Iceland; The Saga of Egill Skalla-Grímsson
Current theatre productions:
Brák – a monologue by Brynhildur Guðjónsdóttir
Mr. Skallagrímsson – a monologue by Benedikt Erlingsson
- **Vatnasafn / Library of Water**
Permanent exhibition:
Roni Horn installation. She has replaced stacks of books with glass columns containing water gathered from Iceland's glaciers

Music

ACOUSTIC MELODICA FESTIVAL

The Undercover Music Lovers, a sister organisation of the International Troubadour Conspiracy, is hosting the Acoustic Melodica Festival Saturday 30 and Sunday the 31, August. The festival will be a “Grass roots music haven” according to Svavar Kristinsson, the festival’s organiser.

It promises to be an evening of mellow acoustic sounds in the intimate setting of the newly opened Cafe Rosenberg. Bands from across the world, including Owls from the Swamp from Melbourne, Tobenstock from Hamburg and Kid Decker from the UK, are coming especially for the event. There will also be several local bands performing.

The Undercover Music Lovers is a

word-of-mouth based group committed to increasing solidarity between local independent artists as well as musicians from around the globe. They are interested in increasing communication and creating a supportive community for people who want to make music.

Where:
Café Rosenberg,
Klapparstigur 27

When:
16:00–23:00 Saturday 30 and
Sunday 31, August
After party on Saturday

2 G6



Art

FORCE AND TENDERNESS

Sigrún Ólafsdóttir, a Reykjavik native who now lives in Saarbrücken, Germany will open a retrospective exhibition on 30th of August and 15:00 and running through the 29th of September 2008 at Hafnarfjordur Institute of Culture and Fine Art.

The instament will feature several of Ólafsdóttir’s sculptures and drawings focusing on work she did from 1996-2008. Using simple raw material (e.g. steel, aluminum, wood,) her three dimensional work can fill large spaces the size of buildings or be constructed in delicate and refined smallness. Either way the line between her art and the space in which it exists is all part of the

work.

Dr. Richard W. Gassen, Director of the Wilhelm Hack Museum says, that Ólafsdóttir’s imaginative designs have “breathed a new air into contemporary sculpture. With simple methods she creates imaginative art works with various aesthetical aspects which are completely distinctive.”

Where
Hafnarfjordur Institute of Culture and Fine Art
Strandgata 34

When:
30th August – 29th September



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Laugavegur 22

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Dental emergency: 575 0505

AA: 551 2010

Information: 118

Telegrams: 146

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Iceland Refund,

Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 564 6400

www.icelandrefund.com

Opening Hours

Bars and clubs:

According to regulations bars may be open until 01:00 on weekdays and 05:30 on weekends.

Shops:

Mon-Fri 10-18, Sat 10-16, Sun closed.

The shopping centres Kringlan and Smáralind as well as most supermarkets and tourist shops have longer opening hours.

Swimming pools:

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

The State owned ÁTVR liquor stores:

Mon-Thu 11-18, Fri 11-19, Sat 11-18.

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

Tourist Information

Icelandic Travel Market

Bankastræti 2, Tel: 510 5700,

www.kleif.is

Information on day tours, accommodations, car rental and everything else you need to know when travelling in Iceland.

Tourist Information Centre

Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 590 1550,

www.visitreykjavik.is

Offers information for tourists as well as providing internet access, booking service, a phone centre, money exchange service, tax refund and selling the Reykjavík Tourist Card.

The Reykjavík Tourist Card gives admission to city busses, various museums, Reykjavík swimming pools, The Family Park and Reykjavík Zoo, The Culture House and the National and University Library.

Getting Around

Public Transport

The only public transport system in Reykjavík is the bus.

Most busses run every 20 minutes and price per fare is 280 ISK for adults and 100 ISK for children.

Complete route map at: www.bus.is.

Tel: 540 2700

Busses run from 07:00-24:00 on weekdays and 10:00-24:00 on weekends

Taxi

Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir,

Tel: 553 3500 or 588 5522

BSR, Tel: 561 0000

For disabled travellers:

Reykjavík Group Travel Service,

Brunastaðir 3, Tel: 587 8030,

www.randburg.com/is/reykjavik_group_travel_service/

Airlines

Air Iceland,

Reykjavíkurflygvollur,

Tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is

Air Vestmannaeyjar,

Tel: 481 3255, www.eyjaflug.is

Bus Terminal

BSÍ, Vatnsmýrarvegur 10,

Tel: 562 1011, www.bsi.is

Flybus

Busses run daily from the BSÍ Bus Terminal to Keflavík International Airport in connection with all departing flights.

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G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
				Reykjavík Center City Map	What's this thing? <div>1</div> <p>These things are pretty useful, check it out: Every venue that's mentioned in our info section gets a little marker like this, which will help you locate it on our map. Say you want to try out "Lystin" after reading our review - no problem, sir, just look up the corresponding icon on the map!</p>		

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Waiter: _____

Name: _____

Table nr. _____ Starter nr. _____ Main course nr. _____

How would you like your steak:

☐ Bleu
☐ Rare
☐ Medium rare
☐ Medium
☐ Medium well
☐ Well done

Your choice of potato:

☐ French fries
☐ Baked potato with butter
☐ Baked potato, sour cream & chives

Your choice of butter:

☐ Garlic butter

Your choice of sauce:

☐ Bernaise sauce
☐ Pepper sauce

Extra:

☐ Hereford salad
☐ Ceasar salad

HEREFORD

S T E I K H Ú S

Laugavegur 53b tel. 5 11 33 50

B10 | The Reykjavík Grapevine | Issue 13 2008

Eating

Food
LYSTIN

Reviewed by **Sigurður Kjartan Kristinnsson** — Photo by **Valdís Thor**

I have to admit that I was a little sceptical when I was assigned this review, for the premises that currently house this fine restaurant had lodged many unsavoury bars before. To turn things around the present owner has performed a complete makeover on the place and the renovations sure are successful. As soon as we walked through the door, the owner greeted us and made us feel at home. He informed us that we would have a tasting menu which he had great interest in offering more, but the menu is perpetually a subject to change. The menu is a fusion of sorts between several cuisine cultures. Everything used in the cookery is bought fresh in the morning and if they run out of stocks they simply cannot receive any more visitors – extremely genuine and homey.

We started out with a shot of a sherry-like wine and subsequently numerous dishes appeared on our table. The tasting menu we were served contained mostly seafood and the ti-

ger shrimps that were the backbone of the first aperitif could easily be described as impeccable. Following the shrimp triumph they gave us a taste of the rather unorthodox dish of tea-boiled catfish along with some kind of potato compound sprinkled with onion sauce. The owner, and our waiter for the night, allowed us to try several kinds of wine to accompany the meal. Every wine he offered seemed to be affiliated with some personal account of his which he filled us in on while simultaneously pouring it in the glasses. After having finalised the experience with goat-cheese salad, homemade gnocchi and some juicy veal shanks, the owner informed us, over a cup of outstanding macchiato, of several specials that were going on these days, e.g. a four-course meal for two with a fine wine selection for merely ISK 10.000 and a certain ‘Wine-Flight’ where you get four glasses of different wines for a lousy ISK 1800. That’s nice. 🍷

Where:
**Laugarvegur 73
101 Reykjavík
Tel.: 5675978**

3 18

How much:
1500 – 5000 ISK
What we think:

Food & Drink | Venue finder

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

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

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

Austurlandahradlestin Hverfisgata 64A | **H7**
Though a bit expensive for take-away, it is well worth it for a spicy bite of this Indian cuisine. A few tables to the side for those who choose to dine in.

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

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

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

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

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

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

fine spot for evening dining as well.

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

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

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

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

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

the last detail, ensuring a relaxing evening.

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

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

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

Grái Kötturinn Hverfisgata 16A | **G7**
Legendary for its early opening ours, the Gray Cat serves amazing breakfasts and coffee that packs a wallop. A splendid way to start you off on your day.

Great Wall Restaurant Vesturgata 6-8 | **D5**
This Chinese restaurant features a staggering 100+ dishes in traditional Szechuan,

Peking and Cantonese styles. Great service and good food make this one a fine choice.

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

Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar (“Bullan”) Geirsgata 1 | **D5**
Considered by some to be the best real hamburger in Reykjavík, “Bullan” does serve some mysteriously delicious burgers, guaranteed to take the edge off any hangover.

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

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

Hótel Holt Bergstaðarstræti 37 | **F7**

Housing Iceland’s most renowned restaurant, The Gallery, an evening here is an unforgettable experience. Delicious French-inspired cuisine and fine wines await.

Humarshúsið Ammtmanstígur 1 | **E7**
One of the oldest restaurants in the country, the lobster house is known of course for its lobster and also its impressive cognac lounge. Fine intimate dining.

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

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

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

Food

RAUÐARÁ STEAKHOUSE

Reviewed by **Sveinn Birkir Björnsson** – Photo by **Valdís Thor**

The most positive part of the Rauðará experience is not really the food itself, but the positively comfortable settings it is served in. Located inside an old brewery where beer was manufactured during the Great Icelandic Beer Prohibition of the last century, a part of the dining area is set inside a giant fermentation tank. The thick walls and the high windows of this old industrial complex breed a relaxing atmosphere when the candles are lit. Another positive part of the experience is the service. Granted, it was a quiet night when we sat down for dinner at Rauðará, but our waiter was an extremely comfortable fella who never intruded but was always there at the right time. He also recommended an excellent red wine to go with the show, a bottle of Peter Lehman's Mentor, not an obvious choice for a steak but surprisingly frisky and fresh. But settings and service aside, it was not all positive. We each decided to go with a different three-course menu,

but they turned out to be no match in the quality department. While my Reindeer Special was a treat from start to finish, my wife's Lobster Special was something of a disappointment. The grey duck breast appetizer I was served was stunningly good, but the lobster tails she was offered proved overcooked and crumbling apart. It would be easy to write this off as a forgetful oversight in the kitchen, but the entrées were just as mismatched. My reindeer medallions were just a hint beyond perfect, but the filet mignon that she got had a very unpleasant grainy texture.

For a restaurant of this calibre and price range, the shortcomings of the lobster special are not easily overlooked. I expected better consistency. Luckily the desserts arrived to our rescue. I have come to believe that for a woman there is no greater pleasure than chocolate cake, so the evening was saved. 🍷

Where:
Rauðarárstígur 37
105 Reykjavík
Tel.: 562 6766

4 J9

How much:
5000–10,000 ISK

What we think:



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

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

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

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

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

becomes a happening and diverse bar.

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

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

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

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

O Sushi
Lækjargata 2A | **E6**
Also called "The Train", O Sushi's most intriguing feature is a conveyor belt that runs around the entire

restaurant delivering a buffet of authentic sushi straight to your table.

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

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

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

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

Sægreifinn
Verbuð 8, Geirsgata | **D5**
Right next to the harbor, Sægreifinn fish shop is like none other

in the country. With a diverse fish selection, exquisite lobster soup and good service, an absolute must-try.

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

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

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

Sólón
Bankastræti 7a | **F6**
Truly a jack-of-all trades establishment. By night a decent restaurant, by day a café/bistro and on Friday and Saturday nights a nightclub. Art exhibitions on the walls to top it off.

Sushibarinn
Laugavegur 2 | **F7**
Deceptively ordinary

the summertime. The lamb comes especially recommended.

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

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

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

Vor
Laugavegur 24 | **G7**
Though perhaps a typical off-lobby restaurant/bar/café, don't let it fool you! It's run by an award-winning chef and has a tip-top menu | a wonderful culinary experience.



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restaurant Eyrarbakka



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SHOPPING

Stylist: Erna Bergmann — Models: Eva & Geiri — Photographer: GAS



She wears:
Hat: 66°North - 66°North
Shirt: Vintage - Rokk og rósir
Sweater: Gallery Túnsberg - The Viking
Shorts: Marc by Marc Jacobs - Kronkron
Socks: Bernhard Wilhelm - Belleville
Boots: Marc by Marc Jacobs - Kronkron

He wears:
Hat: Henscell Hat co. - Veidihornið
Jacket: Siv Stöldal - Kronkron
Jeans: All Saints - All Saints
Hiking boots: LaSportiva - 66°Norður

Props:
Binoculars: Binocular - Veidihornið
Fishing pole: Shimano - Intersport
Lunchbox: Vintage - Friða frænka
Thermos: Vintage - Friða frænka
Mushroom: Kisan

Shopping | Venue finder

12 Tónar
Skólavörðustígur 15 | **G8**
A record label as well as a store, all the best new Icelandic music on CDs or live on Fridays at 5 PM.

Aftur
Laugavegur 23 | **G7**
Aftur's internationally acclaimed label is proudly displayed here in their shop/studio.

Álafoss
Laugavegur 1 | **F7**
The downtown outlet for famous makers of traditional Icelandic woolens.

Belleville
Laugavegur 25 | **G7**
Stuffed with trendy streetwear designs as well as funky magazines and media.

Blue Lagoon Store

Laugavegur 15 | **G7**
All the natural skincare products from the famous geothermal spa at their outlet here.

Brim
Laugurvegur 71 | **H7**
Enormous surf wear, skate wear, and snowboard shop.

Börn Náttúrunnar
Skólavörðustígur 17a | **G8**
The basement children's toy store sells clothes and toys only made of organic products as well as books about childcare and parenthood.

Cintamani
Laugavegur 11 | **F7**
Featuring quality Icelandic outdoor gear, you can even book an excursion on the spot.

Dead

Laugavegur 29 | **G7**
Artist Jón Sæmundur Auðarson's own hand-printed Rock and Roll label, Dead, plus others.

Dogma
Laugavegur 32 | **H7**
Dogma offers street clothing with interesting prints. Hooded sweaters and T-shirts made by both Icelandic and foreign designers can be found.

Fígúra
Skólavörðustígur | **G8**
This shop features Icelandic designer wear, everything from street clothes to party dresses.

Friða Frænka
Vesturgata 3 | **D5**
A real treasure chest of antique furniture and vintage accoutrements

to perk up your apartment.

G-Star Raw
Laugavegur 86 | **I8**
A store for the Dutch jeans brand, an edgy collection with innovative details and washes.

Galleri Sautjón
Laugavegur 91 | **I8**
Stocking many hip labels, a unisex store offering casual business wear to evening dress wear.

Gilbert
Laugavegur 62 | **H8**
Watchmaker Gilbert Guðjónsson has sold watches and clocks on Laugavegur for over 40 years. Recently, Gilbert designed his own line of wristwatches.

Glamúr
Laugavegur 41 | **H7**
A flashy vintage cloth-

ing shop with everything from necklaces to fur coats to kimonos.

Green Apple
Laugavegur 20 | **G7**
The tiny shop combines massage and other relaxation products with organic products.

Gyllti Kötturinn
Austurstræti 8 | **E6**
One of a few second hand shops that have popped up in recent year. Gyllti Kötturinn also offers some pieces by locals.

Handþrjóna-sambandið
Lækjargata 2A | **E6**
All sorts of hand knit woollen clothing as well as fine yarns and knitting supplies.

Iða
Lækjargata 2A | **E6**

A great source for all kinds of reading material, with restaurants on the second floor.

Kisan
Laugavegur 7 | **F7**
An interesting mix of items from all around the world you won't find anywhere else.

Kisuberjatréð
Vesturgata 4 | **D5**
A lovely gallery/gift shop run by ten artists and designers where they sell their products.

Kolaportið
Tryggvagata 19 | **E5**
Open on weekends, you can get a bargain on almost anything at this indoor flea market.

Kraum
Aðalstræti 10 | **D6**
Featuring the best in contemporary Icelandic design of everyday

items of any kind.

Kronkron
Laugavegi 63B | **I8**
This hip new shop stocks the latest trends in everything from socks to sweaters.

KVK
Laugavegur 27 | **G7**
Small yet stuffed designer shop KVK, which stocks a nice selection of local designs.

Liborius
Laugavegur 7 | **F7**
One of a kind, very high-end shop featuring the latest, crispest designs for both sexes.

Marimekko
Laugavegur 56 | **H8**
Finnish designer brand Marimekko has found its spot on Laugavegur. The Marimekko concept store stocks

a wide selection of the colourfully printed designer products.

Mál og Menning
Laugavegur 18 | **G7**
A multi-level store with games, books, souvenirs and a bustling café on the top floor.

Nakti Apinn
Bankastræti 14 | **F7**
Offers an amazing array of colourful designer wear as well as contemporary media.

Nexus
Hverfisgata 103 | **I8**
The biggest comic book and gaming store in Reykjavík has something for everyone.

Noland
Laugavegur 32 | **H7**
A new skate shop offering fresh tees and sneakers from Krew, Supra and more.

Rokk og Rósir
Laugavegur 17 | **G7**
Second-hand clothing for the fairer sex at a reasonable price.

Skarhúsið
Laugavegur 12 | **F7**
Glittery accessory shop stuffed with cheap jewellery, bags or other small items.

Skífan
Laugavegur 26 | **G7**
Selection of CDs, DVDs and computer games as well as some Icelandic films with English subtitles.

Spúitnik
Laugavegur 32 | **G7**
One of the best second-hand shops in the country, with recycled clothes at a range of prices.

Systur
Laugavegur 70 | **H7**

For whatever women's lingerie needs you might have, this is the store to satisfy them.

Trilogia
Laugavegur 7 | **F7**
A collection of trendy designer wear fills the shop, summery dresses, sweaters and skirts.

The Viking
Hafnarstræti 3 | **E5**
This large tourist shop sells all sorts of smart souvenirs to bring back home.

Þorsteinn Bergmann
Skólavörðustígur 36 | **G8**
Since the 1940s this small store has offered a huge selections of household supplies for a laughable low price.

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Sundays 16:00-22:30

Practical Info

Services

Post Office

Post offices are located around the city as well as in the countryside. The downtown post office is at Pósthússtræti 3-5. For a full list and info on opening hours visit www.posturinn.is. Stamps are also sold in bookstores, gas stations, some grocery stores and tourist shops.

Embassies and Consulates

United States,

Laufásvegur 21,
Tel: 562 9100

United Kingdom,

Laufásvegur 31,
Tel: 550 5100

Russia,

Garðastræti 33,
Tel: 551 5156

China,

Viðímélur 29,
Tel: 552 6751

For a full list visit Ministry for Foreign Affairs: www.mfa.is/diplomatic-missions/icelandic-missions/

Internet Access

Most coffeehouses have wireless Internet access.

Computers with Internet connections are available at:

Ráðhúskaffi City Hall,
Tjarnargata 11

BSÍ Bus Terminal,
Vatnsmýrarvegur 10

Ground Zero,
Vallarstræti 10

The Reykjavík City Library,
Tryggvagata 15

The National and University Library,
Arngrímsgata 3

Tourist Information Centre,
Aðalstræti 2

Icelandic Travel Market,
Bankastræti 2

Laundry Service

HI Hostel,
Sundlaugarvegur 34,
Tel: 553 8110, www.hostel.is

Úðafoss,

Vitastígur 13,
Tel: 551 2301, www.udafoss.is

Cultural Centres and Tourist Offices

The Intercultural Centre

The Intercultural Centre throws occasional cultural events and conferences but its main purpose is to be an information and counselling centre and serve as an advocate for the rights of immigrants in Iceland. Hverfisgata 18, Tel: 530 9300 www.ahus.is

The Icelandic Tourist Board

Lækjargata 3, Tel: 535 5500, www.visiticeland.com
All information needed before travelling in Iceland.

Nordic House

Sturlugata 5, Tel: 551 7030, www.nordice.is
The Nordic cultural centre organises various cultural events, conferences and exhibitions. All major tourist spots in Reykjavík also offer brochures, maps and information for travellers.

Transportation

Rent a Bike

Borgarhjól,

Hverfisgata 50,
Tel: 551 5653, www.borgarhjol.net

HI Hostel,

Sundlaugarvegur 34,
Tel: 553 8110, www.hostel.is

Tourist Information Centre,

Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 590 1550, www.visitreykjavik.is

Car Rentals

Átak Car Rental,

Smíðjuvegur 1,
Tel: 554 6040

ALP,

Dugguvogur 10, Tel: 562 6060

Avis,

Knarravogi 2, Tel: 591 4000

Eurocar,

Hjallahraun 9,
Tel: 565 3800

A.G Car Rental,

Tangarhófi 8-12.
Tel: 587 5544

Atlas Car Rental,

Dalshraun 9,
Tel: 565 3800

Berg Car Rental,

Tangarhófi 8,
Tel: 577 6050

Hertz,

Flugvallavegur, Tel: 522 4400

Useful Information

Where to Learn Icelandic as a Foreign Language

Icelandic on the Internet,
www.vefskoli.is

Mímir Continuing Education,

Skeifán 8, Tel: 580 1800, www.mimir.is

Námsflokkar Reykjavíkur,

Fríkirkjuvegur 1, Tel: 551 2992

Fjölmenning,

Laugavegur 59, Tel: 511 1319, www.fjolmenning.is

The Icelandic College of Engineering and Technology,

Höfðabakki 9, Tel: 577 1400, www.thi.is

Iðnskólinn í Reykjavík,

Skólavörðuholti, Tel: 552 6240, www.ir.is

The University of Iceland –

Department of Continuing Education, Dunhagi 7, Tel: 525 4924, www.endurmenntun.is

Language School Lingva,

The University of Iceland, at Sturlugata. Tel: 561 0351, www.lingva.is

Religious Movements

The national church in Iceland is the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Masses are generally held on Sundays at 11:00. Service in English is at Hallgrímskirkja every last Saturday each month, starting at 14:00. The Roman Catholic Church also has masses in English and Polish.

Other religious movements in Reykjavík are for example:

The Muslim Association of Iceland,
Ármúli 38

Ásatrú Association,
Grandagarði 8

Bahá'í,

Álfabakka 12

The Church of Evangelism,

Hlíðasmári 9

The Icelandic Buddhist Movement,

Víghólastígur 21

Reykjavík Free Lutheran Church,
Fríkirkjuvegur 5

Pentecostal Assembly,
Hátún 2

Roman Catholic Church,
Hávallagata 14

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Ásabraut 2

Jehovah's Witnesses,
Sogavegur 71

Seventh-Day Adventists,
Suðurhlíð 36

Zen Buddhism in Iceland,
Reykjavíkurvegur 31

Independent Church,
Háteigsvegur 101

The Russian Orthodox Church in Iceland,
Sólvallagata 10

The Cross,
Hlíðasmári 5-7

Trade Unions

The Icelandic Federation of Labour,
Sættún 1, Tel: 535 5600, www.asi.is

The Federation of State and Municipal employees,
Grettingsgata 89,

Tel: 525 8300, www.bsrb.is

The Association of Academics,

Borgartún 6, Tel: 581 2090, www.bhm.is

Efling,

Sættún 1, Tel: 510 7500, www.efling.is

The Commercial Workers' Union,
Kringlan 7, Tel: 510 1700, www.vr.is

Union of Public Servants,

Grettingsgata 89, Tel: 525 8340, www.sfr.is

Useful Websites

www.visitreykjavik.is

The official tourist website of Reykjavík

www.gayice.is

Information about the gay scene in Iceland

www.fjolmenningarsetur.is

The Multicultural Centre

www.hostel.is

Hostel International in Iceland

www.vinnumalastofnun.is

Public employment services

www.gulalinnan.is

The yellow pages

www.leigulistinn.is

Rent a flat

www.ja.is

Icelandic telephone directory

Where to Get ...

Work and residence permit: The Directorate of Immigration, Skógarhlíð 6, Tel: 510 5400, www.utl.is.

Insurance and benefits: The State Social Security Institute, Laugavegur 114-116, Tel: 560 4400, www.tr.is

Icelandic citizenship: Unless you come from a Nordic country, foreign citizens have to have had an unrestricted residence permit in Iceland for at least seven years in order to get an Icelandic citizenship although some exceptions exist to that general rule. Applications are at the Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs, Skuggasund, Tel: 545 9000, www.domsmalaraduneyti.is

Unemployment benefits: Directorate of Labour, Public Employment Service, Tryggvagata 17, Tel: 515 4800, www.vinnumalastofnun.is

Icelandic social security number (kennitala): National Register, Borgartún 24, Tel: 569 2900, www.thjodskra.is

Driver's license: Applications at police stations. (Those who have a foreign license don't need an Icelandic one for the first six months.)

Tax card: Tax office, Laugavegur 166, Tel: 563 1100, www.rsk.is

Social Service: Information and service is provided by district service centres in Reykjavík. To locate the service centre in your neighbourhood see: www.reykjavik.is

Classifieds

Classified ads are free for individuals! If you want to place a classified ad, email class@grapevine.is



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Qualified English teacher (native British speaker) available for private lessons. Masters Degree Applied Linguistics and TESOL qualified (University of Cambridge). Call Russell 849 7337 or e-mail: russellaldersson@hotmail.com for further details



Tourist Information Centre South Iceland

Sunnumörk
810 Hveragerði
E-mail:
tourinfo@hveragerdi.is

TEL: 483-4601, www.southiceland.is

Accommodation wanted:

My name is Karolina, I'm 20 years old and I'm a student. I was coming on the Iceland for two months and I looking for a job. Last holiday I was working in the room service and I was a babysitter. I speak English well. e-mail: karolin_a4@wp.pl

Married couple, early 30's visiting from Toronto seek accommodation for Fri August 22 + Sat 23 of August in Reykjavík. compensation \$\$\$ Pls. email 5deadlyrecords@gmail.com for discussion.



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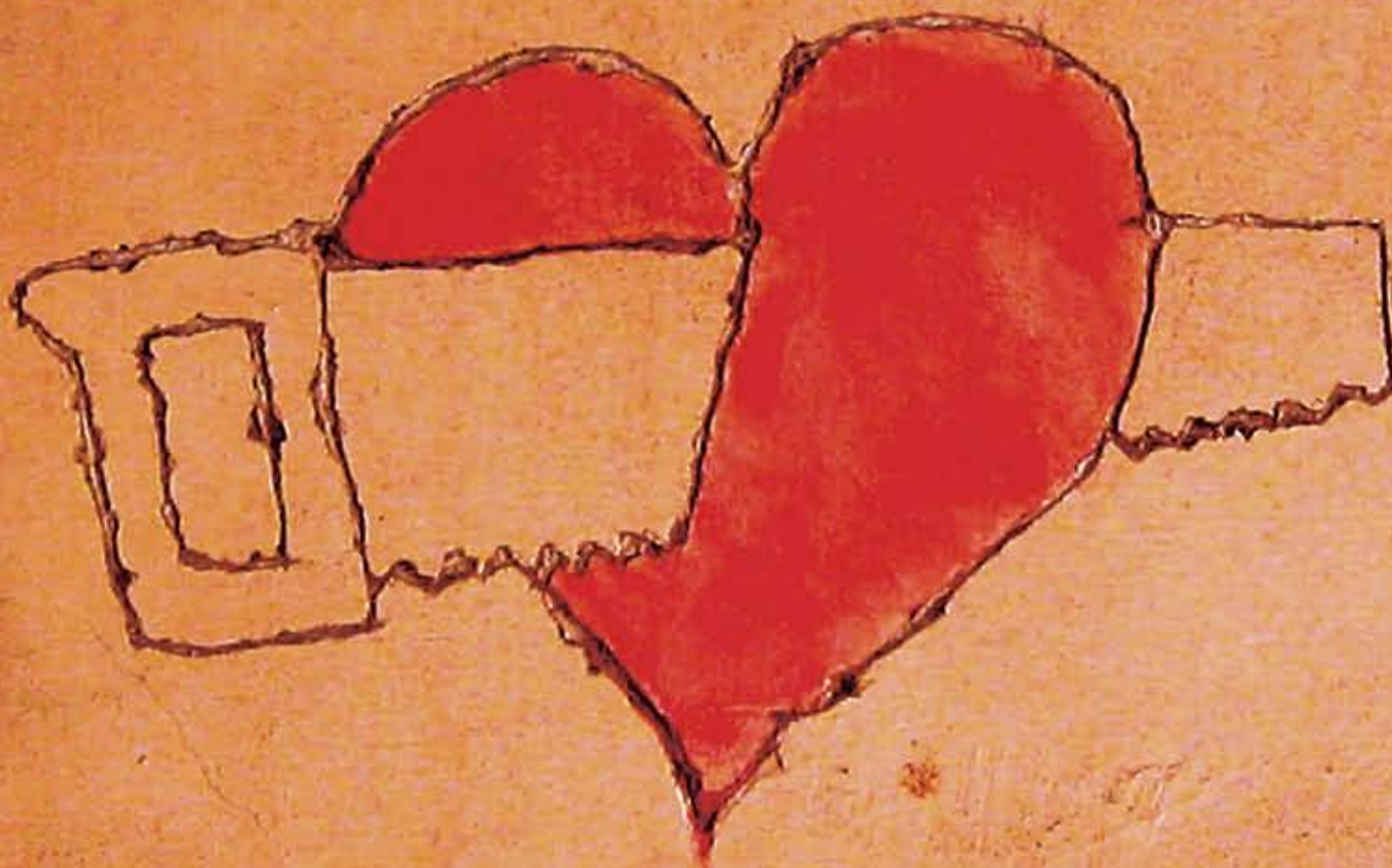
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