COUNTESS MALAISE is unlike anything you’ll find in Icelandic hip-hop, and it’s time to give your tribute
Go Easy On The Gryla Myth & Don’t Make Pipe Bombs

Oh my, time flies when you’re having fun! Christmas is upon us. Now is the time where Icelanders cook their traditional glazed ham or pick pellets out of the ptarmigan. Some of us try to teach the kids something about some hippie called Jesus. Others teach them about the old heathen traditions that Icelandic Christmas was built upon. But we all make sure to dress our kids up so the Christmas Cat (‘Jólablóturinn’) doesn’t come around and eat them one by one. You can never be too careful when it comes to that monster.

The Yule Lads are about to hit the town with their bags full of presents. We have thirteen lads, so no need to panic. But lock your doors, and draw the curtains—you don’t want to invite the Christmas version of the Peeping Tom, Window Peeper (‘Þjóðskjáppur’) to take a gander at your goods. And nobody wants to meet Meat Hook (‘Kjötkrókur’) in a dark hallway. Yet, visit your kids and leave a small package in their shoes for thirteen days straight. It’s cooler than it sounds. Just don’t make pipe bombs. So, from us at Reykjavík Grapevine, Merry Christmas and Happy (and safe) New Year. VG
BE WARM BE WELL

ICELANDIC DESIGN SINCE 1972
What Are Icelanders Talking About?

The headlines exploding in the comments sections

Words: Andie Fontaine  Photos: Andie Fontaine & Art Bicnick

The single most important story of the past month has been the Fishrot Files, or as they call it in Iceland, the Samherji case. 30,000 documents provided by WikiLeaks—and subsequently reported on by BSV, Stundin, The Namibian and Al Jazeera—showed that Iceland’s largest fishing company, Samherji, bribed Namibian officials in order to secure massive fishing quotas. Making matters more shady, Samherji then funneled much of the proceeds from their haul into a shell company registered in the Marshall Islands, a tax haven. Since this story broke, the differences between how Namibian and Icelandic officials have responded have been striking. And by that we mean that while Namibian authorities have been slapping handcuffs on Namibian authorities, and local ingredients for Iceland, for episode two of the series, “Please mention that she has already been nominated for Best Engineer Album in the classical genre for her album ‘Aequa,’ while Hildur narred Album for her composition for Iceland’s most historical buildings. and local ingredients for Iceland, for episode two of the series, “Please mention that she has already been nominated for Best Engineer Album in the classical genre for her album ‘Aequa,’ while Hildur has been nominated for Best Engineer Album in the classical genre for her album ‘Aequa,’ while Hildur has been nominated for Best Engineer Album in the classical genre for her album ‘Aequa,’ while Hildur has been nominated for Best Engineer Album in the classical genre for her album ‘Aequa,’ while Hildur has been nominated for Best Engineer Album in the classical genre for her album ‘Aequa,’ while Hildur has been 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Ruling Coalition Decreases By One

Left-Green MP announces departure from parliamentary party

Andrés Ingi Jónsson, a member of Parliament who was elected as a Left-Green MP in 2017, announced on November 27th that he would be leaving the party. The news should come as a surprise to precisely no one—both he and another Left-Green MP, Rósa Björk Brynjólfsdóttir, have been critical of the party leadership ever since the Left-Greens agreed to enter into a coalition with the Independence Party, something many prominent Left-Greens promised would never happen in the run-up to the elections.

In an announcement about his departure, Andrés expressed frustration with how the party has compromised much of what it ostensibly stands for. “Admittedly, we have had some achievements, but often compromises have fallen far short of our ideals, as shown in a government bill on foreigners last spring,” he wrote in part. “Urgent action to combat disaster relief has not gone as far as I think necessary and self-evident in a government led by a green movement.”

The majority shrinks

As in many countries with a parliamentary representative democracy, Iceland’s government is comprised of a majority coalition—in this case, the Left-Greens, the Independence Party and the Progressive Party. Such coalitions usually (but not always) depend on holding a majority of seats to maintain the confidence of parliament.

Iceland’s Parliament has 63 seats, and the current ruling coalition held 35 of them. With Andrés’ departure, that majority is now at 34, which still gives the coalition government a comfortable five-seat hold on the government, but nonetheless reflects poorly on the coalition’s ability to show a united front.

So what’s next?

It bears mentioning that there is a difference between leaving the parliamentary party and leaving the parliament altogether. Andrés has expressed no intent of no longer being a Left-Green politician; he simply will not be a part of the party’s seats in Parliament.

For now, he will simply be an independent MP—effectively a member of the opposition, but free to vote his conscience on bills and proposals from any party, as should be expected of any politician of good faith.

Christmas lights and traditions bring much-needed warmth to the cold Icelandic winters. But before Christianity arrived in the country, Icelanders were pagans. We asked Hilmur Ólafsson, the head chiefman of the Ásatrú Society—a pagan religious group that honours the Old Norse pantheon—how the pagans celebrated the holidays.

“Do you celebrate Yule?” is a question I have been asked many times. The implication is that of course do you celebrate Christmas? But I have usually risen to the occasion by offering the hopeful individual who asked this an unwanted history lesson. I would usually reel off the various winter solstice celebrations in the pagan world starting with the Roman Saturnalia, then the celebrations of Sol Invictus and Mithras, a Persian deity popular among Roman soldiers whose birthday was celebrated on the December 25th. I would then move towards the Middle Ages, which was an important event, which we can glean from other sources. How did we have well-stocked with food and drink for the occasion and this was an important transition from one solar cycle to the next. I feel Jól/hól is a feast that reverbuates with all traditions and is about sharing, communion, and celebrating birth and rebirth. As a liminal event, it is a good time to take stock of your life and make realistic oaths and promises about the future.

Food of Iceland

“Carb Season”—or Christmas, or the winter holidays, or whatever you’d like to call it—is fast approaching. It’s time for laufabrauð, or Icelandic “leaf bread,” to do a Jesus-esque comeback and remind Icelandic homes that it is once again time for frantic consumerism and way too much family time. Much tradition surrounds the making of these deep-fried bread disks. In December, families all around Iceland get together to make the thin cakes that are then sliced and carved with sometimes intricate patterns—think paper snowflakes—and deep-fried in sunflower oil or more traditionally, lamb fat. Though the patterns decorate the seasonal delicacy can resemble tree leaves, that is not the source of the bread’s name. The leaf bread is actually named after its thickness, or more appropriately, its thinness.

The first references to laufabrauð are from the 18th century, a time when the average Icelandic household had very little access to flour, salt, or sugar, especially during the winter. Therefore, in order to stretch what they had, the Icelanders made the bread very thin so that they could cook as much leaf bread as possible. Truly, an incredible miracle of multiplication.

So if you’re in Iceland for the holidays and a foreigner, like me, make sure to drop in on your closest Icelandic family for a cooking session. From my research, I’ve found that the most important ingredient in laufabrauð is love and care.

It’s just buy it at your local bakery IP.
Coming from a pure lineage of 1,100 years, Icelandic Lamb grazes freely in wild pastures, acquiring delicate flavors of berries and Arctic herbs. An integral aspect of our heritage and true to a tradition dating back to the Viking Age, premium quality Icelandic Lamb offers a taste experience beyond compare.

www.icelandiclamb.is
The surrounding houses are all occupied by chronic wish-o-holics. The Reykjavík Grapevine - 2019

PLAYLIST

“Nú Koma Jólin”

Jófriður Ósvífirsdóttir, Iceland’s first nun and recluse. The surrounding houses are all occupied by chronic wish-o-holics.

“SPÜNK - Barnalaug”

SONS - Reckoning

“SPO” - Daughters of Reykjavík

Grapevine Playlist

JOF - My Work

This is an almost-uncomfortable estimate release by Jófriður “My Work” is emotional lament about pain, regret, despair and growing up with lyrics like, “I’m mother would you cry if I told you the things I have done, tortured my death and drove my bloody to a writing.” Don’t play at a party, but definitely in your room when you want to sob.

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THE HALLGRÍMSKIRKJA FRIENDS OF THE ARTS SOCIETY 38TH SEASON
THE HALLGRÍMSKIRKJA CHRISTMAS MUSIC FESTIVAL 2019

MESSIAH by HÄNDEL

SATURDAY DEC. 7th at 6 pm and SUNDAY DEC. 8th at 4 pm

Lovely festive Christmas mood in the beautifully decorated church!

At this years annual and ever popular Christmas Concerto of the Hallgrimskirkja Motet Choir, the choir together with the outstanding Hallgrimskirkja International Baroque Orchestra and a stunning ensemble of soloists will be performing Handel’s glorious oratorio Messiah, conducted by the Music Director of Hallgrimskirkja, Hörður Áskelsson. A live performance of Messiah is always a festive event which no music lover can afford to miss.

Performers:
Hallgrímskirkja Motet Choir
Hallgrímskirkja International Baroque Orchestra

Conductor:
Hörður Áskelsson

Concertmaster:
Tuomo Suni

Soloists:
Herdís Anna Jónasdóttir, Soprano
David Erler, Countertenor
Martin Vanberg, Tenor
Jóhann Kristinsson, Bass

CHRISTMAS CONCERTO AT NOON WITH SCHOLA CANTORUM

The chamber choir Schola cantorum performs diverse choral and christmas music. Hot chocolate after the concert.

Performers: Schola cantorum, kammerkór Hallgrímskirju and soloists from the choir.
Conductor: Hörður Áskelsson

Admission: 3,000 ISK

FRIDAY DEC. 20th at 12 am

FESTIVE SOUNDS AT NEW YEARS EVE

Two trumpets and organ

The highly popular New Years event returns with festive music for two trumpets and organ. Two exceptional young Icelandic trumpet players visit from New York and Paris to start the New Year festivities with the Klaís organ.

Performers: Baldvin Oddsson, trumpet, Jóhann Nardeu, trumpet and Björn Steinar Sólbergsson, organ.
Admission: 3,500 / 4,000 ISK

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Halgrimskirkja International Baroque Orchestra
In mid-November, Wikileaks dropped a bombshell of a story: the Fishrot Files, over 30,000 documents detailing how Samherji, Iceland’s largest fishing company, bribed Namibian officials to gain access to a massive fishing quota, and then subsequently squandered away the proceeds into a bank account owned by a shell company in the tax haven of the Marshall Islands.

This story—widely reported by Sudōn, Kvikkur, Al-Jazeera, and The Namibian—catalysed responses in both countries, but the differences in these cases between how Iceland and Namibia have responded so far say a lot about the countries.

So what exactly happened?

The story was brought to light thanks in large part to whistleblower Johannes Stefánsson, the former managing director and CEO of Samherji in Namibia who left the company in 2016. By his account, he was the frontman for the paying of bribes, but eventually became wracked with guilt about “robbing the Namibian people” and how Samherji does not hesitate “to use bribes and break the law so that they can take as much money as they can out of the country and leave nothing behind but burnt soil and money in the pockets of a corrupt political elite.”

Strong words, but we should have in mind that Samherji’s other dubious practices have been a matter of public record for years now: journalist Ingi Freyr Vilhjálmsen was reporting in 2012 that Samherji was plundering African fishing stocks—mostly off the coasts of Morocco, Western Sahara, Mauritania and Namibia—snatching up quotas that African companies have paid, and taking all the profits out of the local economies.

What makes the Fishrot Files revelations special is that now we have evidence that Samherji secured their Namibian quotas not by outbidding African fishing companies but through directly bribing the Namibian politicians responsible for awarding quotas.

Money in, money out

The Fishrot Documents show that Samherji paid some $10.00 million USD in bribes to several Namibian officials, including (now former) Minister of Fishing Bernhard Sacks, (now former) Justice Minister and former attorney general Sacky Shanghala, and James Hatuikulipi, an investor and (now) chair of Fishcor, Namibia’s state-owned company which distributes fishing quotas. These bribes were, of course, not listed as “bribes” in Samherji’s accounts, but rather “consultation fees” and “facilitation fees.”

The payments were very even, especially considering the $3.5 million USD to a company known as Tundavala Investments Limited in Dubai—which happens to be owned by James. The payments originated from Erja Seaddress Limited, a Samherji holding company in Cyprus.

Once the cash from these quotas came in, Samherji did their best to ensure that they could hang onto as much of it as possible. Many of these proceeds were funnelled to the Marshall Islands, a tax haven, and put in a bank account there of a shell company called Cape Cod FS. While Norwegian financial services company DNB NOR (now DNB) ended up closing that account because they could find no information on the actual beneficial owner of Cape Cod FS, Samherji had been using that account for about seven-and-a-half years prior and continued to be a major client of DNB NOR.

The Namibian response

There has been a stark contrast between how Namibian and Icelandic authorities have responded to the news. Within hours of the story breaking, Namibian President Hage Geingob announced that he would fire both Bernhard Sack and Sacky. Shortly thereafter, they both resigned. James also vacated his post, and, at the time of writing, it is unclear whether he will be arrested for their arrest. In fact, six arrests in all have been made at the time of this writing.

It is important to note that it is an election year in Namibia—ballots were cast on November 27th—which may have inspired President Geingob’s swift response. The Namibian people took to the streets the same day the news broke, demanding the president’s resignation.

Further, the editorial staff of The Namibian issued a statement of their own, arguing that “no amount of firing of ministers and convicting top officials will fix the looting of state resources, unless loopholes in the system are also closed,” and that the looters are getting more and more sophisticated to enrich themselves at the expense of many Namibians.

This paper has also been continuously reporting on how Samherji and other colonialists have effectively been taking food out of the mouths of Namibians. This swift and unequivocal response stands in stark contrast to Iceland’s response; it also underscores the reprehensible blame-shifting some Icelandic politicians have engaged in.

The Icelandic response

In Iceland, the Fishrot Files have underscored just how great an ideological gap there is between the government and the general populace. A demonstration held November 23rd in front of Parliament, attracting some 4,000 people, illustrates well the grievances that many Icelanders have with the situation, as a major theme of the demonstration demanded the resignation of Minister of Fisheries Kristján Póirí Júlíusson.

Kristján used to be on Samherji’s board, and is life-long friends with Samherji CEO Póirí. While Samherji’s records show that he was completely uninvolved in the demonstration and sees no reason to vacate his post. And there’s little reason for him to feel otherwise, considering that even Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdóttir has defended him and asked his critics to back off.

Some people have been和发展, but we can do what we can get to the bottom of this. I think that isn’t.DNB’s own interests.

Nonetheless, Kjerstin has been just as adamant about DNB’s resources as its own, and claims that DNB’s DNB’s sources. DNB’s sources as its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that DNB’s sources are its own, and claims that
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Blue Lagoon geothermal seawater is unlike any other water on the planet. Born deep underground where fresh water and ocean water converge in volcanic aquifers, this natural marvel possesses silica, algae, and minerals. These elements give the water its cleansing, healing, nourishing powers—bringing radiance to the mind and body. Discover the water. Experience the wonder.

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In the Icelandic rap scene, there’s Countess Malaise and there’s everyone else. Since the dark monarch debuted three years ago with her hit “Goth Bitch,” the Countess has been an elusive figure in the community. Rarely dropping tracks or playing live, the rapper, real name Dýrrfinna Benita Basalan, has projected an aura of mystery. With the sporadic release of songs that were aggressive, honest, dark, but still turnt as hell, fans have spent the last few years waiting with bated breath for her first release.

This Halloween, she finally dropped her debut effort ‘HYSTERÍA,’ and it quickly took every “goth bitch” in the city by storm. With its rabid release of sex, anger, trauma, and more, it is unlike anything the city has seen. She followed it up with a packed release show at Prikið, where the chanteuse, clad in black vinyl pants, stood on a box and screamed her truth at a fanatical crowd. Now, just one month later, the artist has been nominated for a Krauður award.

I meet Dýrrfinna in the Kling & Bang gallery at the Marshall House, where she’s hard at work on the joint exhibition ‘Lucky Me?,’ which she’s doing in collaboration with fashion designer Darren Mark and visual artist Melanie Ubaldo. The three are all Icelandic artists of Filipino descent, and the exhibit itself dives into the unusual psyche created by straddling those two worlds. They call themselves the Lucky 3 collective.

‘Lucky Me?’ will open in a week and the room is currently in a state of pre-installation chaos. Navigating the gallery, Dýrrfinna points at the scattered piles of material and explains exactly what everything will be. In one corner the trio will build a makeshift basketball court. In another, they’ll erect a south asian-style bodega. A separate room will house a karaoke parlour—an iconic pastime for those of Filipino origin.

She was defended by another mixed-race classmate, but the incident was just one of many where Dýrrfinna was targeted for being different. “They used to call me names, like monkey, sumo, or rice. They even called me the n-word,” she says, before stopping to pull up her sleeves, revealing a scribble of a tattoo I can’t quite make out. “I got ‘Rice’ tattooed on me, but it’s upside down, so I can see it and no one else.”

She laughs, maybe in discomfort, maybe in pride, but it’s clear that this dissonance created the Countess who now sits in front of me. Talk to Dýrrfinna for five minutes and you’ll see what growing up straddling two worlds created in her. She’s tough. Known around town for speaking up about injustice and mental health, she takes up space and is unapologetic about it. At the same time, though, she’s vulnerable, emotional, and honest. She wears...
be interesting

The positive response she received to the album alleviated many of Dýrfinna’s worries about whether or not she did have a right to use her voice. “A lot of people seem to like it and that was really fun,” she says. “HYSTERÍA is a story about a person trying to figure shit out. It’s a sad and happy story.”

Dýrfinna shrugs. “It’s funny, when I’m on stage, people say I’m this intimidating badass bitch that knows what she’s talking about, but inside I am thinking, ‘am I going to fall? Did I forget the lyrics? Do something interesting? Don’t be fucking boring! Do something, I don’t know, inspirational!’ It’s an unexpected burst of silliness from the artist, who has, until now, been pretty serious.

“But at some point, I see a face in the crowd and I just see some sort of love in their face, or an emotion that I relate to, and it gives me strength.”

mental illness

It’s that comfort in her ability to be both a bad bitch and a soft, emotional being that has made Dýrfinna’s fans so dedicated. At the ‘HYSTERÍA’ release concert, the songstress alternated between rapping nasty verses about getting eaten out to pausing and yelling at the crowd, “Let’s give it up for mental illness!” The callout subse-

quently garnered pounding applause.

“It helps when people talk about mental illness. Then it gets easier for yourself and others to accept it,” she says, referring to that moment. I then tell her that the performance was no doubt the highlight of my Iceland Airwaves experience. She instantly gets (as you’d expect) mortified. “Best? Wow, that’s funny,” she says. “Ok, I’m trying to take the compliment.” She grins. “Alright, I’ll take the compliment.”

know my name

The title “Countess Malaise” was a play on the comic book character Modesty Blaise. Her longtime friend and collaborator Lord Pusswhip thought of it. “He rhymed back Countess Malaise and I said, what does Malaise mean?” Then I looked it up and I was like, yeah, that’s me!” she smirks.

The name fit Dýrfinna, body and soul. “In the beginning, I didn’t have an agenda, I just had a plan to say, ‘Hey, this is me. Know my name,’” she explains, the tough side of her person-

ality coming out in full force. “I always wanted to make music but I was scared and some days I still am. Every artist has doubts about themselves. You wonder, is my stuff worthy? Do I have the right to use my voice? Is this a waste of time? Is this just another struggle that I am putting on of myself? Because art is a struggle.”

mental space

And for Dýrfinna, the release of ‘HYSTERÍA’ did come with a unique and tragic struggle. The album came out just days after the death of her father. “My father had just died on the 31st. I was just like… she trails off. At this moment, I pause the recorder and wait to see if she wants to continue. It’s been just three weeks since his passing when we talk, and to push her to talk about such a tragedy for a magazine article seems insensitive.

While her pause is loaded, she none-

theless has one more thing to say about the event. “I wanted to promote the album more, but it was hard to do when I was planning a funeral,” she explains. “It was hard to find the mental space and time.”

We take a moment to talk about trivial matters before refocusing and returning to the interview.

her heart on her sleeve and opens up instantly about her difficulties, whether they relate to trauma, pain, or being bullied. She is, without being cheesy, inspirational.

But don’t tell her that; she’ll get embarrassed. The girl can’t take a compliment.

“Wow, tough. It’s my personality, I guess,” she says, shrugging, deflect-

ing the acclaim. “I don’t know, I guess everything that you do is the real you. You show yourself in your actions.” She pauses, and then takes a deep breath. “To be honest, I always wanted to be just tough and not be affected by things, but now I’m like, ‘yeah, I don’t have to be just one thing. I feel batshit crazy sometimes but now I’m ok with that. I’m at peace with being both.”

While Dýrfinna has found her fanbase in the city, in the context of the Iceland-

ic-hip-hop community, she still feels separate. “I feel like I’m the Bjöøk of hip-hop. I am not really associated with them,” she admits. “I have so much love for my friends in the scene, but I still feel like an outsider. If I were vibing with anyone, it would be the underground. There’s a lot of love there, but—and this is going to sound super narcissistic—I feel like something else.”

But then, if not the rappers, who does she feel affiliated with? “It’s all about belonging somewhere. But where do I feel like I belong?” she asks herself. “When I’m in a P.O.C. [people of colour] queer space then I feel like I belong. When I’m with other freaks that are actually freaks. When I’m with actual fashion icons. Then I’m at home,” she says, smiling. “Those are my people, and they aren’t just in the hip-hop scene, they’re from graphic design, DJ-ing, visual art, and more. I like the complexity. The mix. It’s goulash!” A sense of belonging may have eluded Dýrfinna in her childhood, but it seems she’s found it now.

The goth bitches

After the exhibit at Kling & Bang, Dýrfinna will start working on a music video for “Tired Of This Shit,” which is, admittedly, my personal favourite song of hers. I joke that I’m just a fangirl, a Malaise-t. “No, you’re a goth bitch!” she says, laughing. “I was thinking about this the other day. Mariah Carey’s fans are lambs. Did you know this? Megan Thee Stallion has the hotties. So I thought, if my fans are something, I guess they would be goth bitches. But I would really love if a fan could tell me what they would say instead.” She leans into the microphone. “So, if my fans have a name for themselves, let me know.”

Dýrfinna’s got to get back to setting up the exhibition, so I quickly ask her for some last words on the album. “I would say…” she trails off, before a big smirk takes over her face. “Just listen to the album. Put it on repeat. Don’t even read this article, just stream it.”
More info at jolathorpid.is

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Laugavegur 30, 101 Reykjavik - www.facebook.com/DillonWhiskeyBar
You Only Christmas Once

Granir
December 14th - 20:00 - Gamla Bíó - $1,500 ISK

The King of silly lyrics, the Queen of analogue to a planet like Mars," he explains. "I'm working on equipment for Humans: The Moon on Earth at the Reykjavik Museum of Photography. The exhibit is small, with but a few photographs..."

There is only one way to prepare for Christmas and honour the dark Icelandic December, and that is by listening to grinding death metal and head banging rock 'n' roll, all while screaming your lungs out and spilling beer on yourself. If this description sounds appealing, don't miss the excellent Horrible Youth & Óværa party at Ólafur Jónsson's, Cosmonauts.

Before man simultaneously took one small step and one giant leap, more than 30 astronauts travelled to Iceland to train for the unique challenges they might face on a lunar walk. It was this unique and oft-forgotten piece of history that inspired Bristol-based photographer Matthew Broadhead to cross the Atlantic for his new exhibition, "Space for Humans: The Moon on Earth" at the Reykjavik Museum of Photography.

One Google search term

"I had specific criterium that I wanted in a new project. I was interested in astronomy and geology and I wanted something fresh," Matthew relays. He talks in a point-by-point manner, stoically, almost like he's giving a presentation. "I thought maybe I should be a bit ambitious so I literally did a search term on Google---astronomy geology Iceland---and one of the first things that came up was the Exploration Museum in Húsavík."

Randy astronaut enthusiast Ólafur Hnifull Örlygsson, the Exploration Museum in Húsavík. "It also looks quite futuristic, but I think I was just in awe of the technology in Iceland and that felt quite relevant to the endeavour to get people into space," he explains. "So in a way, it fits into the same sequence."

To relay these emotions, Matthew endeavoured to capture each component of the landscape individually. "By isolating certain aspects of a landscape, you can imagine it as the moon or as an analogue to a planet like Mars," he explains. "So there's a romantic, literary aspect as well."

1960s to today

Upon arrival, Iceland's otherworldly exterior and its history in the space race instantly captivated the photographer, and also made him reflect on his own relationship with the pale blue dot.

"There was this particular emphasis that our own planet isn't fascinating enough and space exploration maybe was setting a precedent for forgetting about our own planet a little," he explains. "Like, oh we found some other habitable planet so we've forgotten our own. I felt really strongly about Earth being Mother Earth."

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1960s to today

The exhibit is small, with but a few photos peppering the walls, contrasting sharply with each other. For example, on one wall, a portrait of Órlygur's famous Apollo 11 spacesuit hangs sandwiched between the desolate Grjótagjá lava cave and bustling Krafla Geothermal Power Plant.

"Every single photo has a story to me," Matthew says, pointing to the space suit portrait. Órlygur's spacesuit is emblematic," he adds softly. He then gestures to the lava cave. "You wouldn't be able to tell because there aren't any astronauts in this picture, but I saw a snapshot from the 1960s, a photograph of astronauts just sitting on this ridge. The first time I came to Iceland I couldn't find it, but I did the second." He pauses, turning to the third in this triptych..."This geothermal power station is a slight sidestep from the core concept, but I think I was just in awe of the technology in Iceland and that felt quite relevant to the endeavour to get people into space," he explains. "So in a way, it fits into the same sequence."

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At the start of 2020, after ten wildly successful years in the limelight, the infamous Icelandic metal band Skálmöld (meaning ‘Age Of The Sword’) will rest for an indeterminate time period. Founded in 2009, Skálmöld began as a hobby-band, but when their debut album ‘Baldur’ was released, they unexpectedly and rapidly gained international attention, subsequently putting Icelandic metal on the map. They’ve since released four equally strong albums, each centred on Norse mythology and Icelandic folk tales. Now, with their imminent hiatus announced, fans from all over the world will fly to Iceland this month to catch three final performances at Gamla Bíó, with special guests Finntroll and Blóðmör. But, as guitarist þráinn Árni Baldvinsson assured us, this isn’t the end.

On tapping into a gap
“When we started in 2009, we never thought this would happen. We thought that you couldn’t do heavy metal in Iceland. All we wanted was to make one album that we could be proud of and then die,” þráinn laughs. þráinn is tall, with thick blonde hair hanging down to his hips. A warm smile forms on his face as he remembers ‘Baldur’.

“It was expensive, so we took out a loan and used our bassist’s house as collateral. There was no plan. Reality quickly defied their expectations. With ‘Baldur’, Skálmöld tapped into a musical gap that many underestimated. Not even record labels were aware of the opportunity in the metal niche. “Nobody in Iceland wanted to release the album so we signed with the Faroese record label Tutl. Within a week, 1,000 copies were sold out. Before we knew it, we got a record deal with Napalm Records and were touring with bands like Finntroll,” þráinn recalls.

A decade of fun
Now, ten years later, as þráinn explains, the band gets recognised while grocery shopping. However, international fame was nowhere near the most rewarding part of their career.

“Our tours and the shows with the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra in 2013 and 2018 were definitely highlights for the band,” þráinn says. “But when I look back, my very favourite moments were when the boys were together and had fun.” þráinn chuckles when he realises that he’s referring to six grown men playing in a metal band as “boys.”

“We always have great parties on the tour bus. One time we listened to Iron Maiden for 7 hours straight. And we have these little traditions. When we play in Kraków, our keyboard player (Gunnar Ben) and I always go to the same place to get beer.”

The band also enjoys the songwriting process. “It’s so special because everyone contributes,” þón Geir, our drummer, is for example good at listening to the bigger picture of every song. We take this machine and it just flies,” þráinn explains.

The lyrics are written by bassist Snæbjörn, with the strict rule that they reference or reflect ancient Icelandic poetry, which consists of different motifs. “Sléttubönd is one of the most difficult motifs, there you write a poem and when you’re at the last word, you start going backward and the meaning of the rhyme changes,” þráinn explains.

With their roots in Norse mythology and Icelandic folk tales, all Skálmöld’s albums can be considered concept albums. “We basically write new stories without harming the integrity of the mythology.
On the edge of a break, Skálmöld guitarist Þráinn reflects on an eventful decade:

That’s really cool if you look at how tales are supposed to be evolving,” Þráinn explains. However, the meaning often exceeds the realms of story-telling. “When my mother died, Snæbjörn honoured her by using her name for one of the characters in ‘Börn Loka’, Þráinn looks at his big hands and then shakes his head in a laugh. “The character was then, of course, brutally killed. It’s a piece of art that’s very well presented and respectfully done.”

Genre nonsense

Though strictly dedicated to Norse mythology, Skálmöld, since its inception, refused to be reduced to a “Viking Metal” band. The label has a kitschy connotation in the metal community. “We never tried to categories ourselves as such. I hate it when people say: ‘I don’t like Viking Metal, so I’m not going to check out this band,’” Þráinn explains. “But I’m guilty of it as well. A couple of years ago I said: ‘I don’t listen to jazz.’”

For the same reason, you will never see Skálmöld wearing Viking costumes—one of the defining attributes of a Viking Metal band. “I remember when we made the first album, the record company said we would have to wear fur and swords and shit. But we said ‘no.’”

A strong bond

Skálmöld has come a long way but they always stayed true to themselves. “We decided even before the first tour, that there would be nothing that would destroy what we had; friendship would always come first.”

Playing on the international stage comes at a price, however, and the band has had to carefully assess how much they are willing to pay for fame.

“I love touring. But doing four tours a year was getting to be too much. I have two daughters and it was difficult to be away from them. Most of the band members were on the same page and we decided to go on a break for at least a year, maybe two. It’s important for us to gain some perspective and be appreciative of what we have done so far,” Práinn summarises. “You know, we have played in Paris eight times but I’ve never seen the Eiffel Tower.”

Práinn emphasises that the forthcoming break is temporary. “We’re not breaking up. There will be more Skálmöld albums. Also, a lot of things are going to happen while we are taking a break. Our live albums will be released and a book about the band is being written by Joel McIver.”

Stay tuned and fear not, Ragnarök isn’t here yet.
If there's anything Iceland loves, it's taking Christmas to the next level. And hell no—we’re not talking about the Yule Lads or some Christmas concert, we’re talking about cheesy star-studded Christmas concerts, pop-up ice skating rinks, and, of course, those iconic Icelandic Christmas buffets, which you can learn more about on page 34.

Here’s how you can Christmas like an Icelander.

**Celebrate (Before The Yule Cat Eats You)**

**How to Christmas like an Icelander**

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen & Valur Grettisson  Photo: Art Bicnick

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Here’s how you can Christmas like an Icelander.

With a spin around Reykjavík’s beloved annual Ingólfstorg skating rink. Bring your kids, lover, or adrenaline-junkie Grandma and take over the city’s central square on some razor-sharp shoes. Grab a Hlölli afterwards for a true Reykjavík afternoon. **HJC**

**Julévenner Emmsjó Gauta 2019**

Dec. 22nd & 23rd - 18.00, 20.00, 23.00 - Húsakólabúð - 4.990-6.990 ISK

There are so many cheesy Icelandic Christmas concerts—where local celebrities gather to perform songs, skits, and more—that we couldn’t possibly name them all. Our personal favourite is curated by Iceland’s hip-hop prince Emmsjó Gauti. It’s a fresh take on the trope featuring young pop stars like Briet and Aon Can along with old favourites like the Flamboyant Páll Oskar. There’s a special family show on the 23rd at 16:00, which we imagine will be the talking point at all the Gin Xer parties. **VG**

**Heiðmörk Christmas Market**

Weekends until December 22nd - 12.00-17.00 - Reykjavík - Free!

Nearly every Icelandic venue/store has its own version of a holiday market, but the one in the old hunting lodge at Ellinhótt is a not-to-miss experience. On a frozen lake in a gorgeous forest, sit the kids into a family-sized wooden lodge at Ellinhótt and let it snow. **VG**

**Christmas Screening: Love Actually**

Dec. 23rd - 20:00 - Bíó Paradís - 1,001-1,600 ISK

The best way to find out if your friend or partner isn’t a psycho-path is the good old did-you-feel-anything test when Liam Neeson’s son, Sam, runs through the airport to confess his love to his American crush. If the partner feels nothing, run and hide. Anyhow, Bíó Paradís hosts a ton of special Christmas screenings each year, but let’s be real: ‘Love Actually’ is not only the best Christmas movie ever. Do you feel it in your fingers? Do you feel it in your toes? Because Christmas is all around us, so c’mon and feel it in your toes? Because Christmas is all around us, so c’mon and let it snow. **VG**

**Baggláttur**

Dec. 6th, 7th, 8th, 13, 14, 15th, 19th, 20th, 21st - 17:00, 21:00 - Háskólabúð - 9.593 ISK

Ok, this concert is literally as Icelandic as you can get. Warning: it will be in Icelandic, but we think the show is crazy enough that even foreigners will have fun. The light-hearted comedy band Baggláttur essentially invented the Icelandic Christmas concert a decade ago and are still the freshest act around. If you’re into Icelandic dad-humor—think ballads from the perspective of Gýla’s long-suffering husband Leppalúði—you’ll find it here. **HJC**

**Woman at 1000 Degrees**

Hallgrimur Helgason’s subject matters are so varied that it wasn’t for his询or and exuberant prose style it might be difficult to see his books as belonging within the same oeuvre. In this horror novel, a woman and foul-mouthed octogenarian narrates her life from the islands of Iceland, living as a bedridden invalid in a suburban garage. As she spends her time catholishing gullible men in distant lands with pictures of Icelandic beauty queens, her only companions is a five legged gynadog, her final means of maintaining control over her fate. **HJ**
In Your Pocket

December 6th—January 9th

Perfect Day

A face of the downtown scene tells us how to spend a perfect day in Reykjavik

On a perfect day, the neighbours would love to hear me sing my heart out to Safri Duo

In the heat of the night

I drive safely, but only after I pick up a bagel from Kaffihúna with sun-dried tomato cream cheese. So, I really love that sun-dried tomato cream cheese.

Early evening

I head home with my girls and make some nachos. In a food coma, we all lie on the tiny sofa and talk. Before turning into total blobs, we push the neighbours to open some music and start preparing for a night to remember.

In the heat of the night

Later in the evening, we’re ready to go dancing, looking fabulous. It’s like Sex and the City Reykjavik Edition, as we stroll down Laugavegur. We head to Kiki and become best friends with the DJ. He plays all the songs we ask for and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses off all night to Rihanna, Darude, Scooter, and we dance our asses of...
1. Fjallaikon
Hafnarstræti 1-3

Rammed after the female personification of Iceland, Fjallaikon is located smack-bang in the middle of downtown and caters to locals and tourists alike. For the Icelandic-cuisine-curious, there is a platter of whale, lamb and puffin, all presented beautifully. For those who are just looking for a great selection of fresh fish, fish and vegetarian options, Fjallaikon does these to perfection as well.

2. Block Burger
Skalavörðustígur B

Block Burger is an office favourite. You can see their white paper to-go bags stacked on workers’ desks. Modelled heavily on the American chain Shake Shack in presentation. Block is reasonably priced (for Reykjavik) and has quick service. It’s a lunchtime spot worth checking out.

3. Matur og Drykkur
Grandagarður 2

In how many ways can we say, “eat here”? Is it the whole cool crowd you should get, or perhaps the double-smoked dried lamb, or the creamy halibut soup? Whatever you get, rest assured it’ll have roots in Icelandic culinary history, elevated to fine dining standards. And do not leave without trying the fried-to-order Kleinur.

4. Sandholt
Laugavegur 36

Well-known for its sourdough bread. Sandholt has consistently delivered great baked goods since its inception. The laminated pastries are hands down the best in Iceland; try the buttery croissants or seasonal Danish pastries, locally known as “vinarbrauð” with rhubarb and raspberries, or the classic, vanilla custard.

5. Le Kock 2.0
Tryggvagata 14

In the ground floor of a new hotel, it’s a large space with three components: the Le Kock diner serving burgers, fish and chips, and comfort food favourites, a cocktail bar called Tail, and a second branch of Dog, Le Kock’s sister bakery. The music policy can be shaky—unless you like Status Quo—but the all-day happy hour has 1,500 ISK cocktails and 800 ISK beers.

6. Ramen Momo
Tryggvagata 18

Iceland’s first Ramen bar has upped their broth game with a silky stick Tonkotsu. They have a choice of noodles and broths catering to food intolerances and kids, and a popular ‘Ramen of the Month’. We suggest getting the Ramen Tonkotsu with their perfectly cooked soy curded eggs.

7. Public House Gastropub
Laugavegur 28

What happens when Icelandic ingredients are tended to with Japanese flair? Public House Gastropub only gives out-of-the-ordinary, satisfying answers. The duck thigh in a sauce served with ginger sauce and the crispy shrimp dumplings with srimachi mayo are to die for. Come early and enjoy happy hour while you can’t ever want to leave.

8. Messinn
Lækjargata 6b

Messinn may be modelled on the well-known Westfjords restaurant Tjurtuvík, but it’s now no doubt a Reykjavik restaurant of choice. What keeps us coming back is how the food keeps getting better every time we dine there. Our favourites include their savoury plugðflaðir, velvety grafxa, and a perfectly seared trout with honey and almonds.

9. Sea Baron
Begrísgata 4a

Some say the langoustine soup recipe has changed a little since the eponymous “Sea Baron” himself passed away, but this harbourside diner is as popular as ever anyway. It’s a warming cup of soup, and a melt-in-the-mouth fresh fish kebab, still smoky from the coals.

10. Pylsuhúsíð
Ingólfsstígur

One of the many post-jam options in town for those looking to put a tasty end to a fun night out, the Hot Dog House is a solid place for a quick snack. If you feel too inebriated by life to experiment, a classic one “with everything” will do the trick.

11. Curious
Hafnarstræti 4

Watch out, hungry—there’s a new queer bar on the scene, and it’s decked out in tropical apparel. Serving up cocktails, coffee and—starting in August—a vegan cafe. Curious is a one-stop-shop for whatever scene you belong to. Werk.

12. Brávó
Laugavegur 22

Oh, bravo, Brávó, for having the best happy hour in this fair city. With its colourful Fiji lights and a playlist of comfortable pillows, Brávó feels like a children’s bedroom tart for adults. If you get lucky and grab a table, or even just a single seat, then it’s the happiest place on earth.

13. Loft Hostel
Banksstræti 7a

Loft stands many heads and shoulders above most of the all fresco drinking spots in Reykjavik, not least because it’s on the roof of the Loft Hostel and has a balcony that looks over downtown. Before the evening-time entertainment begins, it’s the perfect place to catch some late-afternoon sun.

14. Kaffibarinn
Borgarstaðarstræti 1

With a saloon-like atmosphere in the daytime, when dogs and kids run around amongst the disharmonious local crowd and groups of confused tourists, Kaffibarinn turns into an all-out party during the small hours of the weekend. Whether you’re holiday day-drinking or getting messy, it never falls to amuse.

15. Gaukurinn
Tryggvagata 22

If you prefer your music grungy, raw and weird, then Gaukurinn is your place. With dim lights, leather sofas and a gender neutral bathroom, it’s become the perfect hangout for the unorthodox Reykjavíkingar, so if you’re locking in your mind-peeps to drink with, here you go.

16. Session Bar
Fógetagarður

Session Bar is a minimalist craft-beer-focused drinking den housed in a former hair salon in the heart of downtown. There are sixteen beers on tap; both Icelandic and international, and they have a focus on keeping the prices affordable, in contrast to Reykjavik’s generally pricey craft bar.

17. Papakú Reykjavík
Klappastígur 38

Formerly Brávó Innana, Papakú Reykjavík is Reykjavik’s only beach bar, and it’s truly a breath of fresh air for the otherwise dreary downtown scene. It sits in a no-dive bar, but a club with a pool table, piano, darts board, a spacious bar, a tiny dance floor, and a sofa-come of sorts that all aim to make you bust a move.

18. American Bar
Austurstræti 8

Football fans will rejoice in seeing the row of screens perennially tuned on sports channels above the bar, while troubadours aficionados will find in American Bar a great spot to listen to classic country music. Grab a rib from the adjacent Dirty Burgers & Ribs and be happy.

19. Kvatnýra III
Laugavegur 49

This minimalist, Bauhaus-esque spot took the Icelandic fashion...
scene by storm upon opening in 2018, with its eclectic streetwear selection. They have designers that no one else has.

20. Fischer
Fischersund
More art installation than regular store, the “Sigur Rós shop” is an aesthetic environment with a soothing soundtrack, sweet smells floating in the air, and a natural, earthy colour palette. They sell a range of amazing things, from hand-picked tea, to artworks and records.

21. IBA Zimsen
Vesturgata 2a
This peaceful spot is equal parts cafe and bookstore, so you can get a coffee and a snack while you leaf through your purchases. Everything there is interesting. If the magazines fail, people-watching never does.

22. 12 Tómar
Skólagrarsafnustigur 15
This city-centre record store is something of an institution, offering the unique experience of having the store staff talk about your music taste. Then sit you down with a coffee, some headphones, and a pile of Icelandic records.

23. Farmers And Friends
Hólmabúð 2 b Laugavegur 37
If you want to pick up an Icelandic sweater, peruse the Farmers Market outlet. Their wares combine Nordic style with a fresh aesthetic, providing you with a modern take on traditional pieces.

24. CNTMP
Laugavegur 12b
This sleek and minimal streetwear boutique occupies an enviable spot on the main Laugavegur strip. An acronym for “contemporary,” the shop’s name describes its concept – the store will sell limited garments by streetwear brands.

25. Spútnik
Laugavegur 28b
This well-curated clothing emporium is more like a secondhand clothing boutique than a charity shop. It’s expensive but it’s all imported stuff you won’t find anywhere else. They’re also very particular with their selection: after sorting through for over a decade, and the service is congenial without being overbearing. People are loyal to their favourite hairdresser, meaning some of them have long waiting lists, but pop in and try your luck.

Headed up by the owners of beloved clothing store Hurra Reyjavík, Yuzu is an artisanal burger shop with an eastern twist. Stop by for their lunch deal, which features a choice of burgers, with fries and spiced mayonnaise for 1,990 ISK. They’ve also got a kimchi chicken burger—not part of the lunch deal—which sounds deliciously intriguing. Real-talk: Yuzu’s condiments converted their selection: after sorting through maybe six shirts, they’ll determine that just one is truly good enough.

26. Raðheta Ólafurinn
Skólabíóstigur 8
In a sense Raðheta Ólafurinn is a Reykjavík classic. It’s been around for over a decade, and the service is congenial without being overbearing. People are loyal to their favourite hairdresser, meaning some of them have long waiting lists, but pop in and try your luck.

Your Bottle Table for New Years Eve Party at americanbar@americanbar.is

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REYKJAVIK
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look like you have time to shop at KEF airport. So why not spend those hours shopping tax- and duty-free holiday gifts for your loved ones back home?

Or just something for yourself. No one needs to know.

Take a look at wheninkef.com and make your wish list.
Stream ‘Minn almáttugur’ on Spotify. GDMA—the duo of Gabríel Werner Guðmundsson and Dagur Snær Elísson—serve up eclectic, inspiring hip-hop, perfect for parties or long drives through the winter snow. To learn more, we sat down with the artists to chat about their newest album, ‘Minn almáttugur,’ track by track.

‘Minn almáttugur’ (‘My Almight’) is about not giving a damn what the haters say and always believing in yourself. If our music can influence younger fans and we can deliver some message to them with a good vibe, then our goal is achieved.

Dínamít (‘TNT’):
Our main mission here is to show our haters that we don’t care. The concept of ‘Minn Almáttugar’ is being different and most of our songs are very unalike. Some people like it, others don’t. People will always hate if you’re doing better than them. It’s always fun to hear people talking negatively about the things/music you are making because then you know they are watching and listening. Keep doing you, baby!

Breyta mér (‘Change Me’):
Don’t trust anyone who tries to change you. You are who you are and you should know your own value. Don’t be a people pleaser and take pride in your personality. If people can’t take you as you are, move on. They are not worth your time.

Peninga (‘Money’):
“Peninga” is about how we are focused more on working hard than on partying every weekend. It’s no secret that we like money, and sometimes you have to sacrifice nights out with friends to follow your dreams.

Seint eftir 12 (‘Late After Twelve’):
This song is about the balance between our lives and music criticism. We know that people will talk behind our backs but sometimes things can change those who hate into those who love.

Gleyma þér (‘Forget About You’):
History. The past. Yesterday. If the past hurts, if there are events that have affected you emotionally, deal with them and move forward! You don’t heal by staying in the past. It may take time, but so be it.

Ég veit þú veist (‘I Know You Know’):
Sometimes it’s ok to get lost and not know what path you’re taking in life. Not feeling enough, feeling down—depression and anxiety should not be taboos. It’s ok to talk about your emotions. It doesn’t make you weak!

It’s up to you to define the hook and the bridge. It could be talking about God, your ex-girl/boyfriend, or even yourself. It never seems to have the same meaning twice. It depends on how you’re feeling each time you listen to it.

Skiptir ekki máli (‘Does Not Matter’):
It doesn’t matter where you’re from, who you are, or where you are going, this song reminds you to take care of yourself. Put yourself first, keep your head held high, and don’t lose yourself in doubt. Success does not happen overnight. It’s like a rollercoaster of emotions. Be yourself always and forever!

Kominn með nóg (“I Have Had Enough”):
The song was added as a little spice. It’s a good party song with a nice drop. The lyrics are a bit silly—it’s about how we want this girl to leave us alone because we are not interested in flirting with her. We like the vibe of it.

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen  Photo: Nicola Lamburov

**TRACK BY TRACK**

‘Minn almáttugur’ by GDMA

Forget the haters and find your success

Our kitchen is open
17:00–23:00 sun.–thu.
17:00–24:00 fri.–sat.

Sushi Social
Pingholtstæti 8 • 101 Reykjavík
Tel. 568 6600 • sushi.is

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LOCALS

ICELANDIC
SEAFOOD
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The best of Icelandic produce with a nod to Japan and South America. Modern Icelandic flavours, share plates and award winning cocktails.
It’s impossible to talk about this year in Icelandic music without first mentioning one name: Hildur Guonadóttir, and her work on the HBO miniseries ‘Chernobyl’. Hildur’s ability to transform the silent and invisible—nuclear radiation—into savage, eerie frequencies is a feat. I’ll never forget the unsettling chills the moment the fireman grasped the graphite—I’m getting chills thinking about it! Other than that, 2019 was another great year in Icelandic music. As 2019 draws to an end, we asked The Grapevine’s critics pick the best of 2019

The Greatest Hits

The Grapevine’s critics pick the best of 2019

Words: The Grapevine Music Review Team

This year was a diverse one. The big- gest standout, in my opinion, was the incredible collective success of Icelandic classical music. This was exemplified in the compilation album ‘Concurrence’ by the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, which was conducted by the classical superstar, and former Grapevine cover star Daniel Bjarnason. There, you’ll find amazing work by artists like María Huld Markmann, Vikingur Ólafsson and Anna Povvaldóttir, who was recently nominated for a Grammy. When it comes to electronic music, Berlin-based techno-star Bjarki is an absolute standout with his album, ‘Happy Earthday.’ Sin Fang enjoyed a thrilling comeback in 2019 with his boys and melodicholic album ‘Sad Party’, and Mr. Silla re- leased a fantastic effort ‘Hands On Hands,’ which unfortunately slid under the radar but should have been one of the year’s biggest hits. VG

There are two albums this year that completely won my heart. First, I would like to mention Andavald’s absolutely breathtaking and devastat- ing debut album ‘Under Skuggabjárlí’. The insanely well-composed tremolo-picked guitar harmonies provide a fitting background for the vocals of pure despair. It’s authentic and gorgeous. The second album that deserves full attention is K.óla’s ‘Allt orvuldsdóttir’. Every track on this album is a hit. They are incredibly well-written, well-produced and authentic pop hits that never get boring, no matter how often you listen. And believe me, because I have listened the s*** out of them. PW &

Two Icelandic women are amongst those nominated for the 2020 Grammy Awards, setting a historic precedent for Icelandic music. Anna Povvaldóttir has been nominated for Best Engineered Album, Classical, for her album ‘Aequa.’ Hildur Guonadóttir has been nominated for Best Score Soundtrack for Visual Media for her composition of the ‘Chernobyl’ score. It bears mentioning that she has already secured an Emmy win for the score for episode two of the series. “Please Remain Calm.” Will two Ice- landic women go home with Grammy awards on January 26th? Only time will tell, but we’re rooting for them both. MH

This was undoubtedly a defining year for Post-drefting. The young D.I.T. (“do it together”) music and art col- lective has been pumping out more- new music this past year than you can shake a stick at, with standout re- leases by the likes of Šafflin, GRIDA, sideproject, bagdad brothers, We Are Not Romantic, K.óla and many more. They also dominated the un- derground live scene and drew at- tention from international media. On another note, as the resurgence of dark music keeps booming, KaLaan Mikla and their synth-producer Solving Matthísson have kept soar- ing, opening for The Cure, touring extensively through North America and Europe, and securing their place in the modern goth canon. RB

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Our Picks

The Reykjavík Grapevine is sure about something: it’s that 2019 was the year of misery. While the Misère had long been a favourite in the local metal/hardcore scene, this year, they burst into the mainstream with the release of their debut effort ‘Misère’ as well as a slew of memorable live performances, including a particularly raucous set at the Reykjavík Art Museum during Iceland Airwaves. Spreading the message of acceptance, mental health, sobriety, veganism, and more, they’re truly the most wholesome and the edgiest band around. There’s a bit of debate in the office as to whether or not Búðir is the most energetic person ever born or has a serious caffeine problem. Regardless, the R&B crooner knows how to put on a show.

Concerts & Nightlife

Events listed are all live performances and DJs. Venues are listed by day. For complete listings and detailed information on venues visit grapevine.is/happenings.

Send your listings to: listings@grapevine.is.

Friday December 6th

- Post-drifting: Korter i Flug / Stimir / Tóskar Carlson Jonnoston Masacre & Órsta 20:00 Hressó
- Karaoke Party! 21:00 Saukurinn
- Elvis Christmas Concert 20:30 Harpa
- Heimrævik & Simón Kihndam 22:00 Kaftabinn
- Bragi Ólafsson 22:00 Stúdentakjallarinn
- Bagdúttur 2019 17:00, 21:00 Húsabakki

Saturday December 7th

- Flæarry / Guðmundur Arnalds & áaliæinn 21:00 Magni
- DJ Motherfunker 21:00 Hressó
- Elvis Christmas Concert 20:30 Harpa
- DJ CasaReva 22:00 Kaftabinn
- Bagdúttur 2019 17:00, 21:00 Húsabakki

Sunday December 8th

- A Band Called Dus Christmas Show 18:00 Þjóðhúsið
- Reykjavík Chamber Orchestra Christmas Concert 16:00 Harpa
- Sunday Jazz 20:00 Bryggjan Brúðhúsið
- Elvis Christmas Concert 20:30 Harpa
- Bagdúttur 2019 17:00, 21:00 Húsabakki

Monday December 9th

- White Lies 20:30 Harpa
- Monday Night Jazz 21:00 Írfrétt
- DJ Porstein Fjørd 22:00 Kaftabinn

Tuesday December 10th

- Karaoke Party! 20:00, 21:00 Húsabakki
- Ón misræi 21:00 Skála
- Horrible Youth & Óvara
- Hipsumhaps Dec. 19th - 22:00 - Bryggjan Brúðhúsið
- Can’t think just feel #12 December 13th - 20:00 - Loft / Frétt
- Hipsumhaps: NÓ
- Ón misræi 21:00, 22:00 Kaftabinn

Friday December 13th

- Christmas At The Iceland Symphony 14:00, 16:00 Harpa
- Stubbii & Óttir Christmas Concert 19:30 Harpa
- DJ Margir 22:00 Kaftabinn
- Hipsumhaps 21:00 Stúdentakjallarinn
- Daffi Frey Christmas Show 22:00 Hard Rock Café
- Bagdúttur 2019 17:00, 21:00 Húsabakki

Saturday December 14th

- Kira Aðalís Release Show 20:00 Bryggjan Brúðhúsið
- Leonard Cohen & Óskinnick Christmas Concert 14:00, 16:00 Harpa
- Bagdúttur 2019 17:00, 21:00 Húsabakki

Monday December 17th

- Sigurður Guðmundsson & Sigurður Thorláksson 20:00 Harpa
- Karaoke Party! 21:00 Saukurinn
- Jazz Night 20:30 Jak Hostel
- DJ Kjörk 22:00 Kaftabinn

Tuesday December 18th

- Thugs Need Hugs 2 22:00 Příběh
- Don Lockwood Band 21:00 Bryggjan Brúðhúsið
- Party Karaoke With DJ Pabbi x Sonur Sæll 22:00 Kaftabinn

Wednesday December 19th

- Ón misræi 21:00, 22:00 Kaftabinn

Thursday December 20th

- Christmas Festival: 24/7, Yung Migo 20:00 Bryggjan Brúðhúsið
- DJ Motherfunker 21:00 Hressó
- DJ KGB 22:00 Kaftabinn
- Bagdúttur 2019 17:00, 21:00 Húsabakki

Friday December 21st

- DJ Intr0beatz 22:00 Kaftabinn
- Bagdúttur 2019 17:00, 21:00 Húsabakki

Saturday December 22nd

- DJ Z 22:00 Kaftabinn

Sunday December 23rd

- Ón misræi 21:00, 22:00 Kaftabinn

Monday December 24th

- Christmas at the Reykjavík Art Museum 14:00, 16:00 Harpa
- Stubbii & Óttir Christmas Concert 19:30 Harpa
- DJ Margir 22:00 Kaftabinn
- Hipsumhaps 21:00 Stúdentakjallarinn
- Daffi Frey Christmas Show 22:00 Hard Rock Café
- Bagdúttur 2019 17:00, 21:00 Húsabakki

Tuesday December 25th

- Hipsumhaps 22:00 Bryggjan Brúðhúsið
- KLIMM Ó Mighty Bear 22:00 Saukurinn
- DJ Helgi PartyZone

Wednesday December 26th

- Ón misræi 21:00, 22:00 Kaftabinn

Thursday December 27th

- DJ Motherfunker 21:00 Hressó
- DJ KGB 22:00 Kaftabinn

Friday December 28th

- DJ Frímann 22:00 Kaftabinn
- Bagdúttur 2019 17:00, 21:00 Húsabakki

Saturday December 29th

- Brain Police 22:00 Hard Rock Café
- DJ Rugalg og gneimskipi / Singapore Sling & More 22:00 Saukurinn
- Glóstar Iceland Club Night 21:00 Hressó
- DJ BGB 22:00 Kaftabinn
- GB Blues 22:00 Bryggjan Brúðhúsið

Sunday December 30th

- Búðir 21:00 Bryggjan Brúðhúsið

Monday December 30th

- New Year’s Eve 2020
- Monday Night Jazz 21:00 Hressó

Tuesday December 31st

- New Year’s Day 2020
- Saturday January 4th
- MMRð 22:00 Saukurinn

Sunday January 5th

- Reykjavík Big Band: The Golden Age Of Swing 20:00 Harpa

Monday January 6th

- Monday Night Jazz 21:00 Hressó

Tuesday January 7th

- Sunday Jazz 20:00 Bryggjan Brúðhúsið

Wednesday January 8th

- Icelandic Symphony Orchestra: Wiinemme Favourities 19:30 Harpa
- Karaoke Party! 21:00 Saukurinn
- DJ Helgi PartyZone 20:30 Jak Hostel
Freyja Eilíf opens new Reykjavík gallery

Words: a rawlings  
Photo: Art Bicnick

Come Into Exsistenz

“Perceptive art is made out of the integration of reality with hand movements whose intentions recreate reality,” gallery director Freyja Eilíf explains. “The intention I have for Exsistenz is that it will be a creation for its own self.”

She sits in the studio section of Exsistenz, the Museum of Perceptive Art, adjacent to the gallery’s entrance. Upon entering the cosy, plant-populated gallery, one faces options:

1) Turn left to sit on snake-adorned stools in Freyja Eilíf’s art studio.
2) Turn left and walk deeper into the museum to discover a group show of curious non-entity entities by Kathy Clark or impossible car headrests by Pór Sigurþorson.
3) Turn right to enter the Flesh Room, a cotton-candy pink monstrous extravaganza of a relaxation room.
4) Do not venture left or right, but instead stare straight ahead to consider the menu of existential services available on location.

Welcome to this charming Exsistenz.

Out with the old

Exsistenz has replaced Freyja Eilíf’s former gallery, Ekkisens, in its home on Bergstaðastræti. Ekkisens was initially started in 2014 as a way to showcase artwork by recent art-school graduates. “I felt like the ground work I had laid out for Ekkisens had run its course,” Freyja Eilíf says, “I felt it did so after the first three years, but instead of closing it, I kept it running while I was puzzling out what to do next.”

Spectacular vernacular

“I drew a snake intuitively two to three years ago,” Freyja Eilíf remarks. “That snake turned out to be the logo for this museum and studio.”

Conversation with Freyja Eilíf is populated with these spectacular animals—pregnant elephants, burrowing rodents, and—yes—her emblematic snake. To visit Freyja Eilíf’s gallery-cum-museum-cum-studio-cum-healing-centre is to be immersed in a psychedelic womb tucked behind the grey residential streets of Iceland’s capital.

Of elephants and moles

The aforementioned pregnant elephant in the room is an image Freyja conjures to describe the protracted birth of Exsistenz. “It happened very slowly,” she explains. “Even though I knew exactly what I wanted to do, it was still a bit of a journey. I feel like I’m a blind star-nosed mole trying to perceive reality—get my way through and find the answers. I’m still figuring out what I’m doing here.”

Non-entity entities and other fabulous beasts

For Exsistenz, Freyja Eilíf is inviting guest curators to populate the space with group shows. The inaugural group show is curated by Johanne Christiansen (DK) and Serena Swanson (UK), featuring ten artists. She has bowed out of the curatorial process herself, opting instead to integrate her studio into an adjacent room of the gallery.

“I am a weird curator; I cannot make a show without including myself,” she confesses. “It just feels really bad to me. My status is somehow artist and director of the museum. I’m not sure I am a curator unless I can include myself.”

Humanimalia

As for the existential services, Freyja Eilíf offers interested clients healing sessions in the Flesh Room. The services feature fantastical names and descriptions for the esoteric arts—from energy work to past-life integration to Tarot.

Other multimodal healing options, she explains, “I have configured my practice with teachers, so it’s no hoo-goo-hoo-goo. While it’s coded and presented in an artistic way, it’s real stuff. It’s deep work.”

The integration of creative practice with the healing arts, as well as artist’s studio with gallery and performance venue, makes for an otherworldly encounter of the curative and curatorial kind. Of this alchemical blend, Freyja Eilíf concludes, “I still host events and exhibitions, and I make my own practice. It’s like following bread crumbs on the earth. I’m bradding many things together as one.”

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Our Picks

**Lucky Me!**

Until January 12th - Kling 8 Bang

‘Lucky Me!’ mixes all the mediums you can think of into a nostalgic interpretation of Filipino culture by three Icelandic artists of Filipino origin. Fashion designer Darren Mark, multi-disciplinary artist Dyrrfina Benita Baezler (a.k.a. a new cover star Countess Malaise), and visual artist Mela-
niek Ubaldol come from very different backgrounds in the real world, but have shared experiences of racism and poverty in this country. The exhibit space features everything from a basketball court—which you are, of course, invited to play on—to a dedicated karaoke room. It’s a stunning multi-media experience with the goal to inspire other marginalized groups to go public with their art. And if you ever need a purpose, that’s a great one. IPVAC

December 6th—January 9th

**Japanese Film Days 2019**

December 5th—10th: Big Paradiso

These days are dedicated to Japanese film with a focus on the art form of anime. As a thoughtful and expressive Christmas gift, test your seaweed friends about it. While we wouldn’t recommend showing up in your cut ears, hey, there probably isn’t a better occasion. IP

**The Icelandic Love Corporation: Water And Blood**

Until March 1 - National Gallery Of Iceland

In preparation for this video work, the Icelandic Love Corporation took a trip to psychosis to make contact with deceased artist Ólafur Ólafsson. He probably said “Do away, I’m getting too restless!”

**Art Market Ásmundarsalur**

December 7th—30th - Ásmundar-
salur

One venue, 150 artists, 23 amazing days to pick up the perfect holiday gifts. Art markets used to be a standard Icelandic Christmas tradition and are now being revived. We hope they’ll bring something back next year.

Our Picks

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

Send your lists to: listings@grapevine.is

### Opening

**Kiss The Day Goodbye**

Charles Atlas is a video artist and film director who was a pioneer in developing media dance, or as they call it, dance for camera. While the tour has not been released for this exhibition yet, we assume it’ll be spectacular.

- Runs December 12th, 2019
- Runs until February 1st, 2020

### Ongoing

**National Gallery Of Iceland**

**Treasures Of A Nation**

A selection of over 80 works chosen from the national gallery’s collection displays the evolution of art since the 13th century.

- Runs December 31st, 2019
- Runs until February 1, 2020

**Violin Power 1**

In this autonomous work, observe Stanza’s development as an artist, from playing the violin in her youth and dancing in later years, to singing into the Beatles “Let It Be” as a stisical, mature artist.

- Runs until December 31st, 2019
- Runs until February 1, 2020

**Seljóney**

Come see this retrospective of Jóhanna Kristín Fragnadottir’s (1953-1991), who made a splash in the Icelandic art scene in the early 1980s. Jóhanna Kristín’s expressive, poetic works were received with enthusiasm, and critics were united in their praise of the young artist, whose work was considered mature and refined.

- Runs until January 26th, 2019

**ENAR JÓNSÓN MUSEUM**

Permanent Exhibition

The museum contains close to 300 artworks including a beautiful garden with 20 bronze casts of the artist’s sculptures.

**REYKJAVÍK CITY MUSEUM**

Settlement Exhibition

As Vikings run meta digital technology, this exhibition provides insight into Reykjavik’s farms at the time of the first settlers.

**REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - ÁSUNDURSANFÓR**

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These days are dedicated to Japanese film with a focus on the art form of anime. As a thoughtful and expressive Christmas gift, test your seaweed friends about it. While we wouldn’t recommend showing up in your cut ears, hey, there probably isn’t a better occasion. IP

**The Icelandic Love Corporation: Water And Blood**

Until March 1 - National Gallery Of Iceland

In preparation for this video work, the Icelandic Love Corporation took a trip to psychosis to make contact with deceased artist Ólafur Ólafsson. He probably said “Do away, I’m getting too restless!”

**Art Market Ásmundarsalur**

December 7th—30th - Ásmundarsalur

One venue, 150 artists, 23 amazing days to pick up the perfect holiday gifts. Art markets used to be a standard Icelandic Christmas tradition and are now being revived. We hope they’ll bring something back next year.
The City Across the Bay

‘Agnes Joy’ explores teenage life in far-off suburbia

Words: Valur Gunnarsson

“Despite living in a virtual Reykjavík suburb, in Akranes, they might as well be on the other side of the country.”

The seductive next door neighbour

The film shuttles between Agnes and her mother Rannveig, wonderfully portrayed by Katla Poegeirsdottir, who does a memorable dance during a solo drinking bout. While the film seems at times unclear as to who is the main protagonist, both actresses manage to hold our attention during their respective screen times.

In ‘Agnes Joy,’ for once, it is the male characters who seem underdeveloped. Hreinn, played by Björn Hlynur Haraldsson, is the handsome new next-door neighbour who chiefly serves the plot function of seducing both mother and daughter, a fact he’s rather less concerned about than Dustin Hoffman in ‘The Graduate.’

Dorritsinn Bachmann, one of the country’s finest actors, gets even less to do as the deadbeat Einar who hardly musters up enough energy to get angry with this new neighbour when the affairs come to light. The two do get one scene together when Hreinn gets Einar to read a script with him and gets out-acted—a sly nod to the audience perhaps, but we could have done with more of this. Watching actors act as actors can be intriguing, as both Edward Norton and Leonardo DiCaprio have shown recently.

Almost comically Icelandic setting

The film thankfully avoids being too heavy-handed. When someone praises Agnes for her Icelandic skills it is awkward but not mean spirited. Things get worse when she is thrown for a prostitute in Reykjavik, but her heritage is only mentioned in the reverse in Akranes, as in the opening scene when she is throwing up yesterday’s Opal liquor while wearing a traditional Icelandic costume, an almost comically Icelandic costume, an almost comically Icelandic setting.

Various subplots could have been better explored, such as the relationship between Rannveig and her mother, and not least the family company’s intention to hire foreign workers at less pay to stay afloat. The film could have been better developed, such as the relationship between Rannveig and her mother, and not least the family company’s intention to hire foreign workers at less pay to stay in tune with the times. This is easily thwarted but could have been a movie in itself. ‘Agnes Joy’ is a competent second film from a talented filmmaker, but it lacks the oomph to make it extraordinary.
Various Events

Friday December 6th
'The Holiday' Christmas Party!
20:00 Bíó Paradís
Not So Secret Friday Show
21:00 The Secret Cellar

Saturday December 7th
Tuttiomas Burlesque Show
21:00 Sakuurinn
'Harry Potter & The Chamber of Secrets' Christmas Screening!
15:00, 21:00 Bíó Paradís

Sunday December 8th
Black Sundays: 'The Breakfast Club'
20:00 Bíó Paradís
Party Bingo With Sigga Kling
21:00 Sæta Svíni

Monday December 9th
Soulflow: Women & Queer Comedy
21:00 Gaukurinn

Tuesday December 10th
Gógó Starr: Drag Pub Quiz!
21:00 Fjallkonan
Funniest Four: Comedy Show
21:00 The Secret Cellar

Wednesday December 11th
Golden Mic Stand-Up Comedy
21:00 The Secret Cellar

Thursday December 12th
Rick & Morty Squanch Quiz
20:00 The Secret Cellar
'Love Actually' Holiday Screening
19:30 Bíó Paradís

Friday December 13th
'National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation' Christmas Screening
20:00 Bíó Paradís
Drag-Súgur Holiday Drag Show
21:00 Sakuurinn

Saturday December 14th
'Harry Potter & The Prisoner Of Azkaban' Christmas Screening!
15:00, 21:00 Bíó Paradís

Sunday December 15th
Black Sundays: 'Brazil'
20:00 Bíó Paradís
Party Bingo With Sigga Kling
21:00 Sæta Svíni

Monday December 16th
Soulflow: Women & Queer Comedy
21:00 Gaukurinn

Tuesday December 17th
Funniest Four: Comedy Show
21:00 The Secret Cellar
Gógó Starr: Drag Pub Quiz!
21:00 Fjallkonan

Wednesday December 18th
Golden Mic Stand-Up Comedy
21:00 The Secret Cellar

Thursday December 19th
My Voices Have Tourettes
21:00 The Secret Cellar

Friday December 20th
Christmas Party!: 'Elf' Screening
20:00 Bíó Paradís
Not So Secret Friday Show
21:00 The Secret Cellar

Saturday December 21st
Saturday Night Showcase
21:00 The Secret Cellar

Sunday December 22nd
Party Bingo With Sigga Kling
21:00 Sæta Svíni

Monday December 23rd
Soulflow: Women & Queer Comedy
21:00 Gaukurinn

Wednesday December 25th
Golden Mic Stand-Up Comedy
21:00 The Secret Cellar

Thursday January 2nd
My Voices Have Tourettes
21:00 The Secret Cellar

Friday January 3rd
Friday Party!: 'The Bodyguard'
20:00 Bíó Paradís

Saturday January 4th
Saturday Night Showcase
21:00 The Secret Cellar

Sunday January 5th
Black Sundays: 'Easy Rider'
20:00 Bíó Paradís
Burlesque Xmas Show
21:00 Gaukurinn
Black Sundays: 'Alien' Screening
20:00 Bíó Paradís

Monday January 6th
Soulflow: Women & Queer Comedy
21:00 Gaukurinn

Tuesday January 7th
Gógó Starr: Drag Pub Quiz!
21:00 Fjallkonan

Wednesday January 8th
Golden Mic Stand-Up Comedy
21:00 The Secret Cellar

Thursday January 9th
My Voices Have Tourettes
21:00 The Secret Cellar

THE HOME OF DESIGN & CRAFT BY 470 ICELANDERS

We strive to find, nourish and lift Icelandic craftsmen so that our guests can give them the closest beauty, joy and part of Iceland. Rammagerðin is the home of Icelandic crafts.

TASTE THE BEST OF ICELAND

ICELANDIC GOURMET FEAST

Starts with a shot of the infamous Icelandic spirit Brennivín
Followed by 7 delicious tapas
• Smoked puffin with blueberry “brennivín” sauce
• Icelandic Arctic Char with peppers-salsa
• Lobster tails baked in garlic
• Pan-fried line caught blue ling with lobster sauce
• Icelandic lamb with beer-butterscotch sauce
• Minke Whale with cranberry & malt sauce
And for dessert
• White chocolate “Skyr” mousse with passion coulis

8,990 KR.

LATE NIGHT DINING

Our kitchen is open until 23:30 on weekdays and 01:00 on weekends
Making of an artist

Writer Einar Márd Guðmundsson has been publishing books for nearly forty years. He wrote the critically acclaimed novel ‘Angels of the Universe,’ as well as the screenplay for that movie. His work has been translated into over 20 languages. He has always seen his writing as a form of social engagement. He always looked for new answers, so poetry and writing became all mixed together. Telling stories, finding some meaning with all the things around us.

The storytelling gene

At the beginning of the 20th century, my father was born in Reykjavík to a very poor family. He had ten siblings, and because of this poverty, the family dissolved and went to farms mainly in the south of the country. Very few of them got a formal education, but they had a lot of wisdom inside. So my father became a taxi driver. My mother was from a more middle-class family, having grown up here in Reykjavík. She had this love for stories and poetry. I remember some of the stories I heard; I used them later in my novels.

For example, one of my uncles was telling such good stories, they didn’t want to take the orders, they wanted him to finish the story. He was brilliant.

Poets, teachers, and authors

One of my teachers was the poet Sigfús Daðason. When I was seriously beginning to read poetry, I found his books at the library, and they spoke directly to me. Later he would be my teacher at the university, and we became very good friends, and he also was very fond of my writing from the beginning.

Of course, other modern Icelandic poets who belong to this generation (born between 1900-1930) influenced me. I lost myself in this world of poetry, and it’s still, in a way, my foundation.

I also found inspiration in American authors such as William Carlos Williams and Richard Brautigan. Brautigan was somebody who spoke directly to me. I could also mention Kurt Vonnegut. And then I began to read some authors translated into Icelandic, like Sinclair Lewis, John Steinbeck, and William Faulkner.

And then in Iceland, we had Halldór Laxness. He was all around. Later, I began to study all his books. He was like a whole academy to me and my writing. I could learn almost anything from him. There are others. Pöþurður Póðarson is a bit older than Laxness. He wrote what you call autofiction. He was somebody, like Laxness, that spoke very much to the time in which I grew up.

Music In The Cafes At Night, Revolution In The Air

Writing is Einar Márd Guðmundsson’s politics

Words: Sam O’Donnell  Photo: Art Bieniek

“I lost myself in this world of poetry, and it’s still, in a way, my foundation.”

The Reykjavík Grapevine Issue 21 — 2019

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What’s happening at HardRock?

Senior citizen musical concert - 5 Dec
Styrktártónléikar Elvars Geirs
HAM Skálmöld, Sólstafir off - 6 Dec
Tom Waits concert - 7 Dec
Jólablús at HardRock?
Ebba Sig stand-up - 12 Dec
The Vintage Caravan concert - Dec 13
Daði Freyr Christmas concert - 14 Dec
DJ Tveir Fullir - 21 Dec
Klúbbakvöld - 27 Dec
Brain Police concert - 28 Dec

Music In The Cafes At Night, Revolution In The Air

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Cheap Food

A selection from Every Happy Hour in 101 Reykjavík

Get the complete Happy Hour listings!

Download our free app Appy Hour in the Apple and Android stores

Cheap Food

Here are some deals that’ll keep your wallet feeling happy and full.

1,000 ISK And Under

- **AMERICAN BAR**
  - Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
  - Beer 800 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.

- **RAPÉN**
  - Every day from 15:00 to 18:00.
  - Beer 695 ISK, Wine 745 ISK.

- **BEER GARDEN**
  - Every day from 15:00 to 19:00.
  - Beer 800 ISK, Wine 970 ISK.

- **BIG PARADIS**
  - Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.
  - Beer 800 ISK, Wine 970 ISK.

- **BÍRÍVÍ**
  - Every day from 11:00 to 20:00.
  - Beer 700 ISK, Wine 970 ISK.

- **BRYGJUJÖNN**
  - Every day from 15:00 to 19:00.
  - Beer 700 ISK, Wine 1,050 ISK.

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

- **DÍLÓN**
  - Every day from 14:00 to 19:00.
  - Beer 600 ISK, Wine 850 ISK.

- **FÖRÍSTÁSÍN**
  - Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
  - Beer 750 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.

- **GÁGURÚRIN**
  - Every day from 14:00 to 21:00.
  - Beer 500 ISK, Wine 750 ISK, Shots 750 ISK.

- **GERÍSÍMART**
  - Every day from 16:00 to 18:00.
  - Beer 500 ISK, Wine 600 ISK, Cocktails 1,200 ISK.

- **GÍL**
  - Every day from 16:00 to 18:00.
  - Beer 700 ISK, Wine 1,000 ISK, Cocktails 1,500 ISK

- **PAPAKÍ**
  - **REYKJAVÍK**
    - Every day from 16:00 to 22:00.
    - Beer 690 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

- **PIRLÍK**
  - Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
  - Beer 600 ISK.

- **PUBLIC HOUSE**
  - Every day from 15:00 to 18:00.
  - Beer 820 ISK, Wine 950 ISK.

- **SÓLÓN**
  - Everyday from 15:00 to 18:00.
  - Beer 800 ISK, Wine 970 ISK.

- **SÚSNI**
  - Everyday from 11:00 to 18:00.
  - Beer 800 ISK.

- **SÜLFÓRRIN**
  - Every day from 15:00 to 18:00.
  - Beer 800 ISK.

- **SÚTTUR**
  - Everyday from 12:00 to 19:35.
  - Beer 900 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.

- **TÓRSHAVN**
  - Everyday from 17:00 to 19:00.
  - Beer 845 ISK, Wine 745 ISK.

- **VALÍ**
  - Everyday from 11:00 to 14:30.
  - Fish of the day - 1,990 ISK.

- **VÍK**
  - Every day from 15:00 to 19:00.
  - Beer 690 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.

- **WINE AND DINE**
  - Every day from 15:00 to 20:00.
  - Beer 695 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

- **YOFÍ**
  - Everyday from 12:00 to 19:35.
  - Beer 900 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.

- **ZÚSLÓ**
  - Everyday from 15:00 to 20:00.
  - Beer 750 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

- **BÆIRI SMART**
  - **RYVÆNDAÚTHÍTA**
    - Everyday from 16:00 to 18:00.
    - Grab a beer for phenomenal 500 ISK or a gin and tonic for 825 ISK.
    - Wine is at 600 ISK and Cocktails at 1,300.

### Featured Happy Hour

- **BÆIRI SMART**
  - **RYFÆNDAÚTHÍTA**
  - **101 Reykjavík**
  - **Featured Happy Hour**
  - **Bæiri Smart** is a charming restaurant and bar with chill music and cozy couches. During Happy hour, which is from 16:00-18:00, grab a beer for phenomenal 500 ISK or a gin and tonic for 825 ISK.

### Average Happy Hour Deals

- **1,000 ISK And Under**
  - **GÍL**
    - Everyday - 1,390 ISK
  - **HEX**
    - Everyday - 1,390 ISK
  - **KAFÍBARINN**
    - Everyday - 1,390 ISK
  - **SÓLÓN**
    - Everyday - 1,390 ISK
  - **VÍK**
    - Everyday - 1,390 ISK

### Soup & Bread

- **1,490 ISK**
  - **Lémur**
    - Everyday from 16:00 - 21:00
  - **Skál**
    - Everyday from 17:00 - 23:00
  - **Vínber**
    - Everyday from 17:00 - 20:00
  - **Lambda**
    - Everyday from 17:00 - 22:00

### Kids Eat Free

- **All Icelandair Hotel restaurants**
  - **At Príkili**
    - If you order two adult meals

### At Haust
- The buffet is free for kids
Fjallkonan is a new lively restaurant & pub in the heart of Reykjavík offering a selection of Icelandic and international dishes from local ingredients. Casual and cozy atmosphere yet still fun and festive. Stop by for snacks & drinks, lunch or dinner.

**Icelandic Delicacies**

- Slow cooked lamb, traditional Icelandic flatbread from the Westfjords, carrot purée, pickled red onions, horseradish sauce
- Slow cooked lamb, traditional Icelandic flatbread from the Westfjords, carrot purée, pickled red onions, horseradish sauce
- White chocolate “Skyr” mousse, meringue, raspberries, cucumber, rucola, smoked cheese, fries
- The Lamb Burger
- Lamb tartar, chive mayo
- Minke whale, malt glaze
- Icelandic platter
  - Roe, crispy lentils, yuzu-elderflower dressing
- Arctic Char & Blini
  - Lighly cured arctic charr, chickpea blini, horseradish sauce
- Lamb & Flatbread
- SKYR ETON MESS CHEESECAKE

**Happy Hour 15-17 every day**

Draught beer, house wine by glass and cocktails – half-price!

**Fjallkonan Welcomes You!**

Happy Hour 15-17 every day

Draught beer, house wine by glass and cocktails – half-price!

**Wordflood**

Bókamessa boasts a record-breaking year for fiction and poetry books

**Words: a rawlings**

**Photo: Art Bienisk**

**Film**

Iceland’s annual book fair ran from November 23rd-24th at Hafnarstræti 1–3.

Bókamessa, Iceland’s annual book fair, is a déel of books, publishers, readers, writers, and piparmákkukor—Icelandic pepper cookies. As the kick-off to the country’s infamous Jólakókabóð, or Christmas Book Flood, the book fair, now in its ninth year, provides a safe harbour to sample new publications in anticipation of the season’s book-buying frenzy.

**The ultimate gift**

“This is such a sport for Icelanders during Christmas time,” Bókamessa organizer Brynísís Loftsdóttír explains. “At Christmas parties, the question is always, ‘What books have you gotten? What are you reading?’”

In Iceland, it has become routine that the ultimate Christmas present is a book —in addition to socks, of course, as to ward off Jólakötturtún from kidnapping unfortunate souls to be devoured by the ogress Gryll. But more significantly, books. This has little to do with bleak midwinter superstitions, but has become tradition on our subarctic island.

**Poetry for days**

Harpa’s views of Faxafjöll Bay and the snow-covered Mt. Esja in the distance juxtapose with the busy book-fair interior. Throng shuffle through Bókamessa looking for titles to add to their wishlists.

Cult author Stefán Mání perchés by rows of his new novel, offering commentary on cover designs for his blood-soaked ‘Ádvénta’ (‘Advent’) and the biblical ‘Svarti- galdur’ (‘Black Magic’). Asta Fonssey Sigurðardóttír smiles in a portrait overtop Partus Press, where her poetry collection ‘Eiljóðarné’ (‘Cows Come Home’) astounds in purple cloth, hardcover, and metallic ink. Guðríður Eva Minervudóttír sits in Storytel’s booth for a live-broadcast interview on her new book ‘Afleðfrí til að lífis af’ (‘Methods of Survival.’)

In addition to publisher booths and tables, the book fair features a robust programme of author readings and public interviews. These are organized as a partnership with Reykjavík UNESCO City of Literature program managers Kristín Ólafsdóttír and Lýra Áslaðustinsdóttír.

“We had poetry hour for several hours today, but we could have been reading continuously for days with so much new poetry in Iceland,” Kristín says of the live programming. “It’s so fabulous, so many young authors.”

**Aprés moi, le déluge**

The growth in publications is truly staggering, Brynísís confirms. “There is 20% more Icelandic fiction this year than the year before, and 25% more poetry. It’s crazy,” she explains.

The organizers agree that the rise in publications has to do with a new generation of publishers and writers flooding the market. “So many young people are into publishing,” Kristín says, “I think that’s wonderful.”

**Importing książki**

Icelandic fiction for children ages six to 12 is also increasing. "There are more Icelandic authors writing for kids than translating books," says Brynísís.

Publishing house Sögur emphasizes children’s books in Icelandic and in translation. Their import innovation this year caught the eye of Brynísís. “Sögur used the opportunity to import 300 books this year. Their poetry books are both Icelandic and Polish. It’s so clever,” she explains.

"There is 21% more Icelandic fiction this year than the year before, and 51% more poetry. It’s crazy.”

**East meets West**

Sveinn Snærí Sevinsson has travelled from Egilsstadir to represent his two new novels ‘Minning þess gleymda’ (‘Memory of the Forgotten’) and ‘Pórpló i skógi- num’ (‘The Village in the Woods’). Initially publishing his first book at the tender age of 18, Sveinn has gone on to publish poetry, novels, and a comic book over a 28-year career. It is, however, his first time attending Bókamessa. He stands with one of his publishers, Fjölg Jóhunnudóttír, a Austurland, also visiting from East Iceland, engaging visitors in conversation about the books.

He is no stranger to face-to-face selling. As a teen, Sveinn sold his first books by going door-to-door in Egilsstadir. “I sold a lot,” he confides, “because it was something new—that a kid like me was publishing poetry in Egilsstadir. Over time, I developed a group of people who always buy my books.”

Sveinn is thrilled by his first experience at Bókamessa. “You have an opportunity to show and present. The best thing about selling a book here is when somebody doesn’t want to buy but he reads it and decides to buy it. That’s a compliment.”

**A sea of readers**

“It’s a public fair,” explains Kristín. “It’s not a business fair. It’s from the publisher to the readers.”

The fair features numerous Icelandic-language publishers, most from Reykjavík. The largest publisher, Forlagið, displays its titles against a wall of pulpets gussied up with pine boughs. Bjarðtur / Verold decorates its walls with larger-than-life portraits of their authors; each eye is as large as a reader’s head, and stares directly at each eye is as large as a reader’s head, and stares directly at each eye is as large as a reader’s head, and stares directly at each eye is as large as a reader’s head, and stares directly at each eye is as large as a reader’s head, and stares directly at each eye is as large as a reader’s head, and stares directly at each eye is as large as a reader’s head, and stares directly at each eye is as large as a reader’s head, and stares directly at each eye is as large as a reader’s head, and stares directly at each eye is as large as a reader’s head, and stares directly at each eye is as large as a reader’s head, and stares directly at each eye is as large as a reader’s head, and stares directly at each eye is as large as a reader’s head, and stares directly at each eye is as large as a reader’s head. When some of these authors arrive later, life-sized and animated, witches of fans dom ripple through the room.

“Greetings is this beautiful relationship- ship to be able to talk to authors,” Lýra re- marks of the encounters taking place during Bókamessa. “People come here as a reader and you can see them thinking, ‘I’m going to catch this one.”

**Participants of book fairs past in the used book store on Hafnarstræti**

**LAMB & FLATBREAD**
- Slow cooked lamb, traditional Icelandic flatbread from the Westfords, carrot purée, pickled red onions, horseradish sauce
- Arctic Char & Blini
  - Lightly cured arctic char, chickpea blini, horseradish sauce, riss, crispy lentils, yuzu-elderflower dressing
- Icelandic Platter
  - Puffin, crozberry gel
  - Minko whale, malt glaze
  - Lamb tartar, olive may
- The Lamb Burger
  - Bacon, mushroom & date dwuelle, pickled red onions, pickled cucumber, sucula, smoked cheese, fries
- Skyry Etón Mess Cheesecake
  - White chocolate “Bry” mousse, merigean, raspberries, raspberry sauce
FANCIES is where we talk to Reykjavík’s most fashion-forward figures about style

Tanja Huld
Leví Guðmundsdóttir

Tanja Huld - Leví is wearing:

- Shoes from Dolls Kill
- Vintage Dolce & Gabbana disco pants from Spúútnik
- Old mesh top
- Bodysuit from somewhere abroad
- Flame shirt from Wasteland
- Cowboy leather jacket from Wasteland

Describe your style in five words:

Favourite stores in Reykjavík:
I really like vintage stores like Wasteland, Spúútnik, the Red Cross, and Fátarmarkaðurinn. I just love browsing and trying to look for some gems. For jewellery, I really like Orrífinn. I am really picky about jewellery because I don’t like it when it’s too cute—Orrífinn is perfect for my style.

Favourite piece:
Difficult question! My favourite designer is Jeremy Scott so I would have to say my keyboard dress that he made in collaboration with Adidas is a favourite.

Something you would never wear:
I don’t like clothes that are uncomfortable. I don’t want to do that to my body.

Lusting after:
I would love to have a snowsuit for the winter. I had one when I was a kid and it was so comfortable. I also want a balaclava to go with the snowsuit!

---

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We also offer two small courses on Happy Hour price!
As in other corners of the world, Christmas in Reykjavík is synonymous with food (and often lots of it).

Words: Ragnar Egilsson/Shruthi Basappa
Photos: Art Bicnick

The traditional Christmas “hlaðborð” (buffet) has been on its way out in recent years and in its place we see restaurants offering curated menus of four to seven courses, bedazzled with wild game, smoked lamb, turkey, apples, creams, pickled cabbage and spiced beers. The Grapevine’s resident foodies picked four places they felt are representative of different takes on the classic holiday menu: The bargain one, the classic one, the fancy one, and a non-traditional one.

I Need My Children to Stop Screaming and this Turkey Leg Should do the Trick

The IKEA Food Court
Packed with punters any day of the week and never short on screeching toddlers, IKEA is not everyone’s idea of cozy meal. However, if you find yourself there shopping for lamps, you might as well take advantage of their ultra-competitive canteen. Because, for a discount retail chain, it’s kind of crazy how decent the food is at IKEA’s food court.

Instead of the traditional hangikjöt (smoked, deboned leg of lamb) they opt for a shank on the bone, bright-red with gnarly nitrates and full-flavoured. It is accompanied by mashed potatoes and bechamel but don’t forget a side of pickled red cabbage or you’ll make Baby Jesus cry.

If mutton isn’t your game, there’s a deboned turkey leg with bacon-heavy stuffing and gravy. It’s not the most nuanced dish but it more than gets the job done.

For the vegans you have a vegan wellington which is a step beyond the glorified sides vegans are usually forced to settle for. Baby-food-green mystery sauce is a lot better than it looks but the puff pastry is not the crispiest thing out there.

For a traditional beverage, grab a can of “hátíðarblanda” (mix of orange soda and a carbonated malt beverage) or you can take advantage of IKEA being the second-least expensive place to buy alcohol in Iceland and stock up on a beer and wine (IKEA is even open on Sundays, “hint hint”). Or do like me and let the sweet phosphoric acid of Coca-Cola gnaw through the lamb shank in your belly like Cola Santa intended. RE

The Grande Dame
Jónfrún
Christmas is that time of year when Icelanders embrace Danish traditions like they’re their own. And the fervour reaches festive heights at

Jónfrún delivers the scandi-xmas bangers... for your mouth!
Jófrúin, a time-honoured Danish outpost in the heart of Reykjavík. Tinkling bells and twinkling lights aside, the jolly atmosphere is bolstered by the traditional fare. The restaurant offers ‘Christmas platters’ that are reminiscent of holiday plates across the world. A little bit of this and a little bit of that justifying for space on a tightly-curated dish, featuring an ensemble cast of herring, sprightly seafood, tartlets, and the pièce de résistance slow-cooked pork replete with crunchy crackling, with all the fixin’s. Of course, a cold Tuborg Classic interspersed with copious shots of aquavit is the only way to wash down that holiday feast. Just remember to save some space for the dessert—a creamy risalaman-de layered with a cherry compote and whirl of whipped cream, which forces one to dawdle out of the restaurant stuffed, but pleased. While tables are reserved long in advance at Jófrúin, and sold out until Christmas, they do have slots available after Christmas day and what better excuse than to not continue the festivities until the new year? SB

This Solid Gold Santa Hat is Giving Me Whiplash

Grillmarkaðurinn

Grillmarkaðurinn is the ultimate treat-yourself option this holiday season. Not that the price range on the holiday menus aren’t that drastic, a basic menu will set you back 8,000 ISK, whereas a high-end one might scratch the 11,000 ISK ceiling. Although keep an eye out for lunch deals and group discounts. This in-store menu is a carnival for all five tastes and senses: sharing platters allowing you to man-handle your borderline raw arctic char, taking in the wisps of smoke rising from a seared minke whale on a tabletop rack, sipping on the cracking of the spicy langoustine tempura in your mouth, and admiring the shine on the chocolate tartlets, and (the pièce de résistance) slow-cooked pork replete with crunchy crackling, with all the fixin’s. Of course, a cold Tuborg Classic interspersed with copious shots of aquavit is the only way to wash down that holiday feast. Just remember to save some space for the dessert—a creamy risalaman-de layered with a cherry compote and whirl of whipped cream, which forces one to dawdle out of the restaurant stuffed, but pleased. While tables are reserved long in advance at Jófrúin, and sold out until Christmas, they do have slots available after Christmas day and what better excuse than to not continue the festivities until the new year? SB

“A date night like this will lead to the kind of sexual escapades that would make a glacier blush”

It’s-a-Christmassy!

La Primavera Ristorante

Not that Grillmarkaðurinn was firmly traditional, but if you want to move even further from the confines of Northern-European Christmas traditions, then La Primavera is the perfect choice. Not content to be slightly spiritually removed from the mass of Reykjavik restaurants, the physical location is tucked away on the far end of the Grandi neighbourhood. In true Italian fashion, the restaurant can accommodate a boisterous extend-ed family seated along a long table as well as a couple out to recreate Lady and the Tramp while admiring the twinkling lights of Harpa across the bay. Despite the un-apologetic Italian touches, La Primavera does source much of their ingredients locally and feature a full range of Italian flavours that extend well beyond familiar pasta dishes. The journey begins with a light arctic char crudo with capers before being laid low by the hearty winter dishes to follow, like the delicious cheese ravioli, drizzled with brown butter and topped with fried sage and a brunoise of orange squash. In case that didn’t pack enough of a punch, you are next presented with a take-no-prisoners umami bomb of barley “risotto,” rich with pungent fontina and truffles. For the main course you can choose between a duck marsala with apple mousse, the best “steak”, and the pan-fried cod with ’nduja aioli. The Italian outing is capped off with mascarpone cream, grilled apricot and fried panettone—be cause it just isn’t Christmas without panettone.

“Tired of smoked lamb and risala-mande? Va bene!”

The Reykjavík Grapevine Issue 21—2019

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Travel

Lava, Water
And Everything
In Between

Finding fire and ice on the South Coast

Words: Aliya Utneousa & Hannah Jane Cohen
Photos: Art Bennek

The words “Fire & Ice” might conjure up thoughts of a certain, off-the-radar HBO show, but on a chilly Reykjavík morning, the phrase took on a whole new meaning for me. At first light, I downed a coffee and zipped up my parka, ready to take on Hidden Iceland’s South Coast: Fire & Ice tour. True to its name, the tour stops at two locations where Game of Thrones was filmed.

Discovering glacial history

The hike was around three to four kilometres, and while it definitely made me sweat, I didn’t feel over-exerted. I appreciated this, as it let me spend my energy taking in the gorgeous scenery.

I will say, though, that as you stand on the glacier, the impact of warming temperatures hits you smack in the face. It’s clear the glaciers are melting fast. On each of his visits, our tour guide Ryan notes how much the glaciers shrank just within weeks. In a few short decades, this glacier may be gone.

True basalt beauty

After discarding our crampons, we set foot on Sólheimajökull. Seeing the glacier up close felt like I was looking at the ocean. The ice is vast and beautifully desolate, I thought, as we set out on our hike through the crevasses and falls of Sólheimajökull. The clouds overhead only made the experience that much more contemplative, though we were rewarded with some pops of sunlight.

The hike is rewarded with some pops of sunlight, and for but a few seconds, and they reveal their famous black colour. As you look into the formidable waves of the Atlantic, you’re sure to be struck by the sight of the famous Reynisdrangar sea stacks. The towering, jagged basalt towers look straight out of a fantasy, and indeed, they were featured in ‘Game of Thrones’ as the Night’s Watch holdout of Eastwatch-By-The-Sea.

Closer are the famous basalt cliffs and caves of Reynisfjara. Resembling a staircase, the perfectly symmetrical hexagonal shapes of the rocks are the result of the slow cooling of basaltic lava. Not only are they truly wondrous to behold, but they are also ideal photo locations, and many of my fellow visitors took advantage of the unusual backdrop.

Feeling dwarfed

After witnessing this otherworldly creation of nature, we visited the Skógafoss and Seljalandsfoss waterfalls. Each is located within minutes of each other, and because Hidden Iceland times its tours to avoid over-lapping big bus tours, we were able to have them almost all to ourselves.

Distilling the glory of such massive structures into a few words feels impossible, but to be blunt, I felt dwarfed by the unrelenting, powerful flow of the falling water. Standing motionless at the bottom, I felt at once refreshed, terrifed, energised, and meditative. I could have stood there forever.

Natural context

Our last stop was the Lava Centre Exhibition in Hvoðsudlófur. Visiting museums and exhibition centres on a tour is certainly a plus, as it adds an educational element that can often be missing.

Spearheaded by an Icelandic geologist, this interactive lava centre lets visitors examine various volcanoes and see in detail the eruptions, lava flows, glacial floods and other geological activities that take place in Iceland.

The museum provided a lovely context for many of the sites we had seen that day and I felt like I had done more than just experience the nature of Iceland, I now understood it.

By 20:00, a solid 12 hours after first boarding our bus, we were dropped back off in Reykjavík, but not before our group created a WhatsApp group to exchange photos and extend invitations to our home countries. I got off the bus with a broad smile taking over my face. Not only had I seen the sites of southern Iceland, but I potentially made some life-long connections with people from all corners of the world.

“Fire & Ice”—two words that will now eternally fill me with warmth.
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WELL, YOU ASKED

THE CHRISTMAS CANCER

Stay away from your drunk Hatari impression...

In HorrorScopes, the Grapevine’s dedicated team of amateur astrologists breaks down your upcoming weeks based on shit like your time of birth.

Aries
Wait under the mistletoe for your special someone. You’re definitely not too ugly to snatch a no/no, just kidding.

Taurus
Chansukkiah is a holiday founded on the belief that one drop of oil lasted for seven days inside a dark temple, which for some reason didn’t have windows. Somehow this now translates into giving gifts every night? Taurus, get back to your spiritual roots and start reading the Tallmud.

Gemini
There’s nothing more romantic and high-production-value than a Netflix Christmas movie, especially with a personal bottle of Merlot. Werk.

Cancer
All you want for Christmas… is the brand new iPhone. When have you stopped believing in love and turned to consumerism? Hit up your old high-school sweetheart instead of crying in the shower and you’ll be alright. Possibly.

Leo
Spend New Year’s watching ‘Dinner for One’—a highly underrated and hilarious film. Who needs to party when you have the sweet company of your imaginary friends?

Virgo
If you notice that there are wet spoons in your cutlery drawer on the 15th of December, don’t be surprised—the Yule Lads are real. Just kidding. But it doesn’t hurt to check twice before having your morning cereal.

Libra
It’s difficult to get gifts for mothers-in-law. A gym subscription will be the perfect thing to put her in her fuck-up diet.

Scorpio
Stop pretending to hate Mariah Carey’s iconic Christmas album and accept that you’re just like every single human on this Earth and love it. What present does one need other than some crisp whistle tones? None.

Sagittarius
Don’t be a Grinch, sure, but it’s also weird to pass out candy canes and wear reindeer sweaters to your work. Especially if they are a “silly one” with Pickle Rick on them. Wubba-bubba-cringle-dub...

Cancer
If you’re afraid that Gryla is going to eat you because you sent a naughty text to your ex-girlfriend, you’d better be! She’s a fierce feminist. #GrylaToo

Aquarius
There’s a chance you’ll get fired after doing a Hatari impression in a fetish Santa costume at your office’s Christmas party. Stay away from vodka-infused Malt og Appelsín at all cost!!

Pisces
After watching ‘Love Actually’ for the fifth time you start to ask yourself why you’re not dating a handsome British prime minister yet. But then you think of Boris Johnson, cringe, and let it go. It’s good to be single.

Reynisfjara, Dating, And Bad Tourists

Words: Andie Fontaine
Photo: Art Bicnick

Got a problem that needs solving, a burning issue that needs addressing, a matter that needs settling, or a thirst for awesome life advice? We at the Grapevine are here to help.

Will I die if I go to Reynisfjara?
No one person can say when, exactly, any one of us will die. Less philosophically, probably not. Literally all you need to do is stay away from the surf and stay on the main beach and you’ll be alright, provided there isn’t a wind storm. The folks who get hurt are typically the ones who get too close to the water, or clamber onto the basalt columns. What is the dating scene like in Reykjavík?
This really depends on who you are. Like if you’re straight and cis, the world is your oyster, but if you’re queer, it may be a bit trickier. Dating apps are popular, especially Tinder and Grindr, and are real. Just kidding. But it doesn’t hurt to check twice before having your morning cereal.

We welcome you back any time.

Send your unsolvable (UNTIL NOW) problems to grapevine@grapevine.is or tweet us at @rvkgrapevine.
Daily departures from Húsafell and Reykjavík

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the amazing
Langjökull glacier tunnels
Diversity Is The Reality

Words: Muhammed Emin Kizilkaya

Many foreign students arrived at the University of Iceland early last month to the sight of Nazi stickers spread out all around the campus. Several foreign students, who live in the student apartments on Sæmundargata, complained that they had received brochures of Nazi propaganda through their mailboxes.

This university houses over 1,000 foreign students, and many students condemned the incident on social media, especially in the group International Students at the University of Iceland, where I’m an admin.

These flyers and accompanying ideology do not represent Iceland, nor the university, nor the general Icelandic population. Nor do they in any way represent peace and consensus. These messages symbolize segregation, hate and extreme thoughts and misguided fantasies of a “utopian” future Iceland.

We must condemn these utterly disgusting acts through universal human values and the art of living together. We are in no way accepting this in or around the university, as this does not represent pure freedom of speech, but is a way of mobilising people into segregation, polarisation and violence. This does not represent us, but is a representation of ignorance and isolation from the social reality.

We live in a globalised world village, where people—no matter their ethnicity, religion or cultural background—live side by side, and where diversity is and has always been unavoidable. The tiny groups of losers from all corners of the Earth, who represent extreme ideologies and harbour fantasies of a glorified, segregated and polarised world, exaggerated through force and violence, shall never be representative of the common world population.

The world is how you make it to be, and you can only change the world positively by changing yourself.

Together we are and together we will be.