

REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

The Fishrot Files

News: Namibia and Iceland react differently to bribery

Skálmöld

Art: Metal Vikings on the edge of a break

Making Einar Már

Books: 'Angels of the Universe' author opens up

Christmas Feasts

Food: 'Tis the season to stuff yourself

COUNTESS MALAISE is unlike anything you'll find in Icelandic hip-hop, and it's time to give your tribute



Plus!

GIG GUIDE × CITY MAP × TRAVEL IDEAS × FOOD



COVER PHOTO:
Rut Sigurðardóttir

ART DIRECTION:
Rut Sigurðardóttir
Sveinbjörn Pálsson

ABOUT THE COVER:
After a lot of near misses battling the countess'

busy schedule, we finally got a hold of her at Kling & Bang, where she opened an exhibition last weekend. Ever the performer, she helped us orchestrate an almost impromptu photo shoot, with brilliant results.



10: Forced To Bribe?



16: Skálmöld's Ragnarök



34: A Guide to Christmas Feasts

First

08: The Whishing Hill
06: One Man Down In Coalition

19: Ásta's Perfect Day
32: Inside Iceland's Annual Book Fair

38: Horror-Scopes: Don't Hatari While Drunk



EDITORIAL

Go Easy On The Grýla 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 ('Jólakötturinn') 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 ('Gluggagægir') to take a gander at your goods. And nobody wants to meet Meat Hook ('Kjötkrókur') in a dark hallway. Yet, they visit our kids and leave a small package in their shoes for thirteen days straight. It's cuter than it sounds. Just go easy on threatening the kids with Grýla if they don't behave. It only breeds anxiety. Plus Grýla gives you the creeps. And she makes a stew made out of children. Yikes.

But Christmas is more or less about being together. I don't

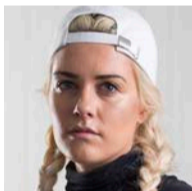
think that anybody is forgetting about this, but it can slip one's mind when checking his credit online and panicking. There is no shame in having a moderate Christmas and focusing on the family and the connection between people. Although, it could be a tough sell for the teenager in the house. Feel free to threaten them with Grýla. Teenagers probably deserve it.

The Reykjavík Grapevine loves Christmas, and we adore New Year's Eve when Icelanders spend billions on shooting fireworks in the air despite all the pollution that comes with it. Just don't make pipe bombs.

So, from us at Reykjavík Grapevine, Merry Christmas and Happy (and safe) New Year. **VG** 🍷



Elin Elisabet is an illustrator and cartoonist born and raised in Borgarnes. At the tender age of 15, Elin moved to Reykjavík and hasn't looked back, except for the annual springtime impulse to move someplace quiet and keep chickens. Elin likes folk music, stationery, seal videos, the country of Ireland, and eggs.



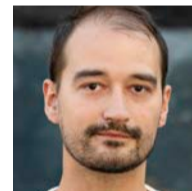
Hannah Jane Cohen is based out of Iceland by way of New York. An alumni of Columbia University, Hannah has lived on five continents and speaks three languages fluently. Her visionary work is known for expanding the definitions of emotion, introspection, and above all else, taste.



Alexander Jean Edvard Le Sage de Fontenay is a Reykjavík-born part-time DJ (under the pseudonym Bervit), event-planner and lover of art, creation and aesthetics. Most recent endeavors include co-producing The Grapevine's own Grassroots concerts at Húrra and LungA Art Festival's busy event schedule.



Inês Pereira graduated in Journalism and immediately traded the warm coast of Portugal for the icy landscapes of South Iceland. From a young age she felt she would have to write to express herself, being that she was interested in everything and great at nothing.



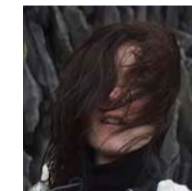
Samuel O'Donnell Sam is an English major from The United States. He has his Bachelor's Degree, and keeps telling himself that this is the year he will begin pursuing his Master's. In his spare time, he enjoys playing video games, writing short horror stories, listening to all kinds of metal, and reading.



Sveinbjörn Pálsson is our Art Director. He's responsible for the design of the magazine and the cover photography. When he's not working here, he DJs as Terrordisco, hosts the Funkpátturinn radio show, or sits at a table in a Laugardalur café, drinking copious amounts of coffee and thinking about fonts.



Andie Fontaine has lived in Iceland since 1999 and has been reporting since 2003. They were the first foreign-born member of the Icelandic Parliament, in 2007-08, an experience they recommend for anyone who wants to experience a workplace where colleagues work tirelessly to undermine each other.



a rawlings is Grapevine's literature correspondent, also covering environmental news, travel, and more. An interdisciplinary artist whose work focuses on environmental ethics, dysfluency, and watery bodies, her books include 'Wide slumber for lepidopterists' and 'Sound of Mull.'



Lóa Hlín Hjálmtýsdóttir is a national treasure. One of Iceland's leading illustrators, when she's not drawing in her unique style, she's the front-woman of Icelandic electro-pop supergroup FM Belfast. Her comic strip Lóaboratorium appears every issue on page 8, and is also available as a daily dose on her Twitter.

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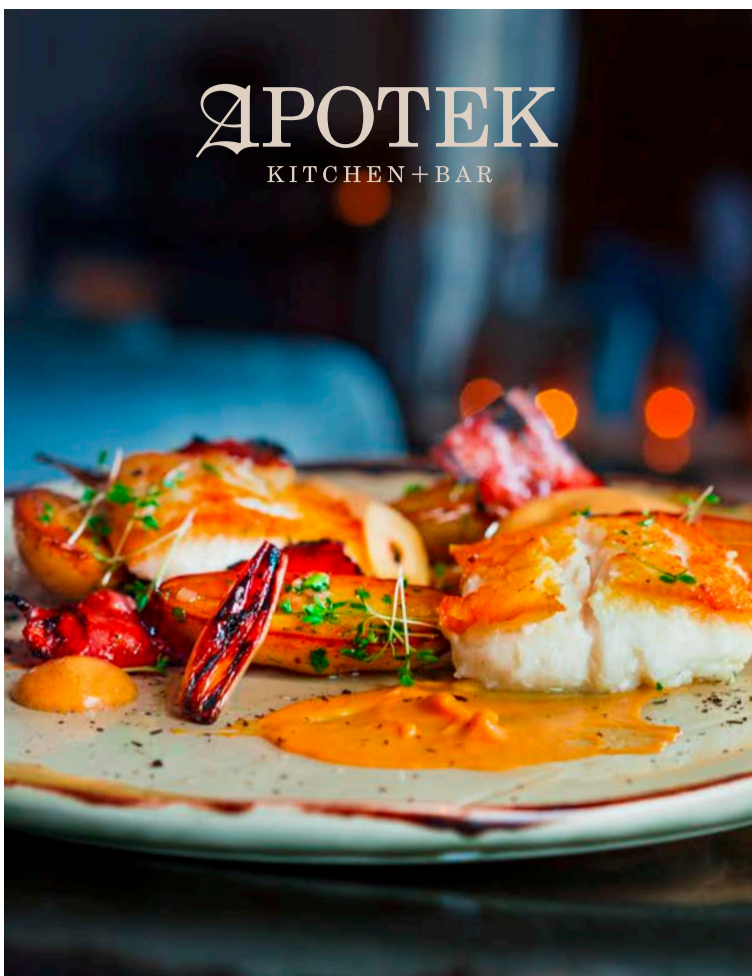
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A protest. Presumably people are upset that not more Icelanders got Grammy noms.

What Are Icelanders Talking About?

The headlines exploding the comments sections

Words: **Andie Fontaine** Photos: **Andie Fontaine & Art Bicnick**

NEWS 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 RÚV, 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 suspects, Icelandic authorities have been busy downplaying, deflecting, or outright blaming Namibia for the whole mess. Read all about it on page 10.

In happier news, **two Icelandic women are amongst those nominated for the 2020 Grammy Awards.** Specifically, Anna Þorvaldsdóttir has been nominated for Best Engineered Album in the classical genre for her album 'Aequa,' while Hildur Guðnadóttir 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." **It's a historic first for Iceland,** and even if they don't

nab a win (though they really ought to), it's still a remarkable achievement for our tiny island nation.



The Reykjavik Grapevine comprehensive Reynisfjara plan includes a guard that ushers tourists away from the shoreline with a giant water cannon

Once again, the beautiful but foreboding South Iceland beach of Reynisfjara has been making headlines. First, **a tourist was injured when knocked over by one of Reynisfjara's notorious sneaker waves.** Then Minister of Tourism Þórdís Kolbrún R. Gylfadóttir announced that she would be working on a new response plan for Reynisf-

jara, establishing better monitoring of weather conditions there and giving police greater authority to close it down when conditions are potentially dangerous. Lastly, Reynisfjara District Court found in favour of a tourist who sued a tour company for taking her and others to Reynisfjara during bad weather, where she was subsequently injured by high winds. If you do visit Reynisfjara, stay on the main beach and as far from the surf as possible.

Lastly, Chinese airline Juneyao Airlines announced they will begin **direct flights between Reykjavik and Shanghai** by the end of March 2020. A round-trip economy ticket will be an astonishingly low 68,000 ISK (about €500), while business class will be a much higher 204,000 ISK, or around €1,500. 🍷



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The Reykjavik Grapevine is published 21 times a year by Fröken Ltd. Monthly from December through February, and fortnightly from March till October. Nothing in this magazine may be reproduced in whole or in part without the written permission of the publishers. The Reykjavik Grapevine is distributed around Reykjavik, Akureyri, Egilsstaðir, Seyðisfjörður, Borgarnes, Keflavík, Ísafjörður and at key locations along road #1, and all major tourist attractions and tourist information centres in the country. You may not like it, but at least it's not sponsored (no articles in the Reykjavik Grapevine are pay-for articles. The opinions expressed are the writers' own, not the advertisers').

Published by Fröken ehf. Hafnarstræti 15, 101 Reykjavík www.grapevine.is grapevine@grapevine.is

Member of the Icelandic Travel Industry Association www.saf.is

Printed by Landsprent ehf. in 25,000 copies.

PUBLISHER
Hilmar Steinn Grétarsson
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+354 540 3601
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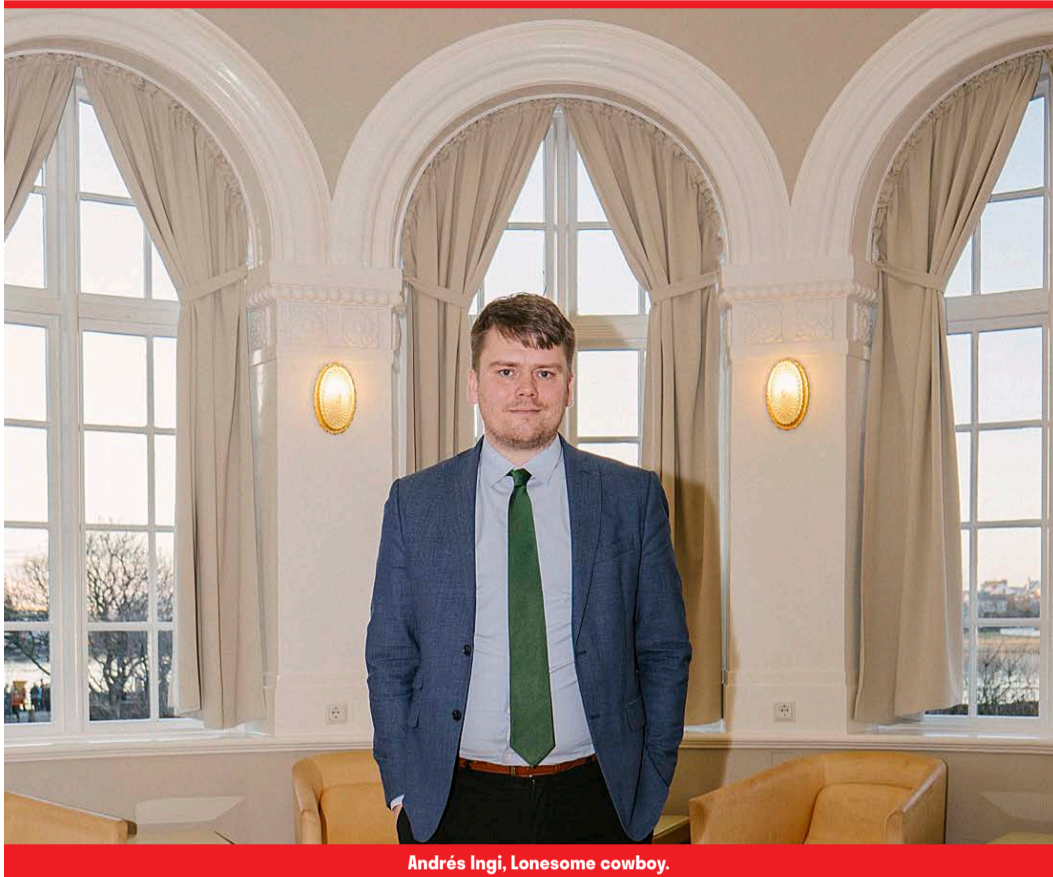
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Andrés Ingi, Lonesome cowboy.

Ruling Coalition Decreases By One

Left-Green MP announces departure from parliamentary party

NEWS

Andrés Ingi Jónsson, a member of Parliament who was elected as a Left-Green Party 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 Brynjólfssdóttir, 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.

Falling short

In an announcement about his depar-

ture that he posted on Facebook, 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 party 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. 🇮🇸

ASKA

Pagan Chieftain

Q: How Was Winter Celebrated Before Christian Traditions?



Christmas lights and traditions bring much-needed warmth to the cold Icelandic winters. But before Christianity arrived in the country, Icelanders were pagan. We asked Hilmar Örn Hilmarsson, the head chieftain 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 of course: do you celebrate Christmas? But I have usually risen to the occasion by offering the hapless individuals who ask this an unwanted history lesson.



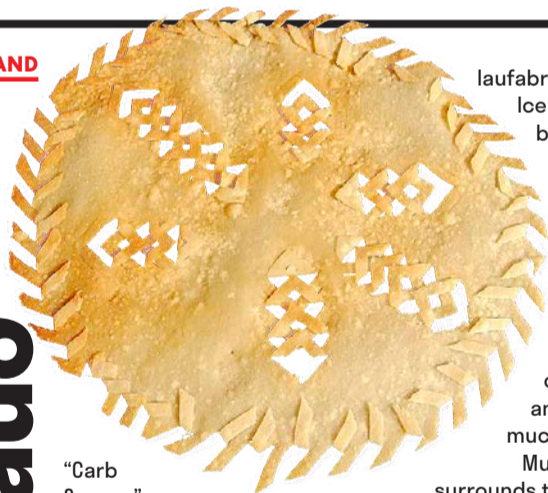
would usually reel off the various winter solstice celebrations in the pagan world starting with the Roman Saturnalia, then the celebrations of Sol Invictus and Mithras, a Persian deity popular among Roman soldiers whose birthday was celebrated on the December 25th. I would then move towards the north.

Jól was an important event, which we can glean from other sources: Houses had to be 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/Yule is a feast that reverberates 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

Laufabrauð



“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 decorating 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 dur-

ing the winter. Therefore, in order to stretch what they had the furthest they could—literally and figuratively—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. Or just buy it at your local bakery. IP 🇮🇸

Volcano & Earthquake Exhibition

Photo: Eyjafjallajökull Eruption 2010



LAVA Centre is an awarded, interactive exhibition on Icelandic volcanoes and earthquakes. Learn about the most active Icelandic volcanoes and see all the latest eruptions in 4K. Lava Centre is a mandatory stop on your Golden Circle or South Coast adventure.

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The surrounding houses are all occupied by chronic wish-o-holics

also the resting place of the incomparable Guðrún Ósvífirdóttir, Iceland's first nun and recluse.

What makes Helgafell particularly special to Icelanders today, though, is the folk belief in its wish-granting powers—but not without the wish bearer following some very specific instructions. First, you have to walk three times counterclockwise around Guðrún's grave. Then, you must ascend Helgafell without looking up or around you, without saying a word, and without any bad thoughts in your mind. Once at the summit, you may make your wish. It will come true, legend has it, if you followed all the instructions and tell no one what your wish was.

Pure drama

It is unclear why this particular hill has been bestowed with such magical properties, but it likely has something to do with Guðrún's very dramatic and often supernatural life. Either way, it remains a popular spot for its beauty, and for making wishes. It can't hurt, right? 🍷

GRAPEVINE PLAYLIST



Shades of Reykjavik - Aftur í Bil
After a few years of silence, Shades of Reykjavik is back with "Aftur í Bil." With a persistent beat and a lyrical hook that is sure to get stuck in your head, the track definitely slaps. The video is also a wild ride. Highlights include two hooded skeletons racing around Reykjavik while the cops chase them... until aliens abduct the cops. Just regular weekend shenanigans for the SoR crew. **SPO**



Daughters Of Reykjavik - Sweets
Daughters Of Reykjavik—FKA Reykjavikurdætur—are back with an English/Icelandic track featuring a seductive sound and luscious lyrics. The daughters have never done an English track before, and that, along with their newly translated name presumably means they're now looking abroad for success. Treat yourself to those sweets and wish them well. **LM/HJC**



Elin Hall
Formerly known as Elin Sif, Elin Hall's voice is simply gorgeous and will resurrect some long-buried emotions. The new single, "Upp að mér," is a beautiful teaser for her upcoming debut album which will be full of equally dreamy and delicate songs, I'm sure. Honestly, I cried a little during her Airwaves performance. **LM**



SPÜNK - Barnalaug
Something for the degenerates. I feel like I'm in somebody's basement, three feet away from a circle pit when listening to this album. It's fast. It's harsh. It's the kind of music your parents would hate. Or at least mine would. **SPO**



Elli Grill - Nú Koma Jólin
This song is some kind of an hallucinogenic-fueled reggae Christmas track, which is broken up with metal and hardcore gabber club music bits—all, of course, within three minutes. The video is downright brilliant, Elli kidnaps santa and gets him drunk in the private park of the parliament. Elli Grill is famous for his weird high pitched joker-ish voice and I think "Nú Koma Jólin" is the closest we can get to live in the decadent mind of a psychopath. Count me in. **VG**



JFDR - My Work
This is an almost-uncomfortably intimate release by Jófríður. "My Work" is a visceral lament about pain, regret, despair, and growing up with lyrics like, "Oh mother would you cry if I tell you the things I have done, hurried my death and done my beauty so wrong." Jeez. Don't play at a party, but definitely in your room when you want to sob. **HJC**

The Magic Wishing Hill

Realise your dreams with this one weird trick

ICELANDIC SUPERSTITIONS

Words: **Andie Fontaine**

Photo: **Art Bicnick**

Some Icelandic superstitions are specific to one particular place—don't touch this rock, don't try building a road through this hill, and such—but one of the more fascinating local legends concerns Helgafell, a large hill on the Snæfellsnes peninsula (not to be confused with the other Helgafells that

can be found elsewhere in the country).

Your heart's desire

Helgafell translates to "sacred mountain," and the location has a rich history, having even been mentioned in Laxdæla saga as a place of early settlement. It is

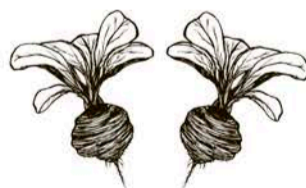
"What makes Helgafell particularly special to Icelanders is the folk belief in its wish-granting powers."

JUST SAYINGS

Here's one for the endless self-posting idiots out there. This saying literally means, "the ones that are the most boastful have the least substance" and it's used by Icelanders to describe those flashy types who probably go to the gym a lot and buy Michael Kors bags. We're not entirely sure where this saying originated, but it fits very well with the modern world of influencers, where reality and cyber-reality aren't always one and the same. We see you using FaceTune, liars. **VG 🍷**



COMIC



BREAKFAST FROM 7
LUNCH FROM 12

BERGSSON
MATHÚS

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



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Hallgrímskirkja Motet Choir
Hallgrímskirkja International Baroque Orchestra

Conductor:

Hörður Áskelsson

Concertmaster:
Tuomo Suni



Soloists:

Herdís Anna Jónasdóttir Soprano
David Eler Countertenor
Martin Vanberg Tenor
Jóhann Kristinsson Bass

Admission:

9.900 ISK Zone A
6.900 ISK Zone B

FRIDAY DEC. 20th at 12 am

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 Hallgrímskirkju** and soloists from the choir.

Conductor: **Hörður Áskelsson**

Admission: **3.000 ISK**

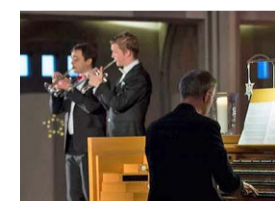
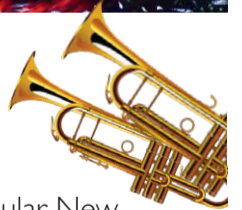


Hallgrímskirkja International Baroque Orchestra

MONDAY 30th DEC. at 8 pm
NEW YEARS EVE DEC. 31st at 4 pm

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 Klais organ.

Performers: **Baldvin Oddsson** trumpet, **Jóhann Nardeu** trumpet and **BjörnSteinar Sólbergsson** organ.

Admission: **3.500 / 4.000 ISK**





Why be a badboy when you can be a bad man? Bernhardt Esau (left) and Þorsteinn Már Baldvinsson

The Fishrot Files: A Tale Of Two Countries

Iceland and Namibia and comparisons in corruption

Words:
Andie Fontaine

Photo:
Wikileaks

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 squirreled 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 Stundin, Kveikur, Al-Jazeera and The Namibian—catalysed responses in both countries, but the differences 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 Jóhannes 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 Vilhjálmsson was reporting in 2012 that Samherji was plundering African fishing stocks—mostly off the coasts of Morocco, Western Sahara, Mauri-

tania and Namibia—snatching up quotas that African companies could have used, and taking all the profits out of the local economies.

What makes the Fishrot Files revelations special is that we now 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 million USD in bribes to several Namibian officials, including (now former) Minister of Fishing Bernhardt Esau, (now former) Justice Minister and former attorney general Sacky Shanghala, and James Hatuikulipi, an investor and the (now former) 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 often very complex. For example, Samherji paid \$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 Esja Seafood 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 Bernhardt and Sacky. Shortly thereafter, they both resigned. James also vacated his post, and, at the time of writing, all three have warrants issued 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 closed... It is systemic, and the looters are getting more and more sophisticated to enrich themselves at the expense of many ordinary Namibians.” This paper has also been continuously reporting on how Samherji and other colonisers 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 on 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 Þór Júlíusson.

Kristján used to be on Samherji's board, and is life-long friends with Samherji CEO Þorsteinn Már Baldvinsson, who has temporarily stepped aside as investigations into his company continue. The fishing minister is also responsible for awarding quotas. In the eyes of many, including key members of the parliamentary opposition, this puts him too close to the case to be effective in his position.

Not that it matters to Kristján—he told reporters that he was completely unmoved by 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 Katrín Jakobsdóttir has defended him and asked his critics to back off.

“Forced” to bribe

While opposition MPs have diligently criticised the response, bear in mind that Þorsteinn Már is still very much a free man. Even as tax authorities and at least two banks are pouring over Samherji's records, Þorsteinn and his friends have secured platforms on various media outlets to wax poetic about how unfair this whole thing is, and have paid visits to Samherji fish factory workers to characterise the investigations as an attack on all of them.

Meanwhile, Þorsteinn Már's pals in the Independence Party have gone on the defensive in a major way, blaming Namibia for Samherji's malfeasance. The crowning example of this is Minister of Finance Bjarni Benediktsson telling television station Stöð 2: “Corruption in these countries, that's perhaps the root of the problem in this particular case. A weak government, a corrupt government in this country. That seems to be the underlying problem that we're seeing crop up now.”

This statement made world news, and for good reason. It is not just a spectacular example of blame-shifting; it also reflects a colonial mentality about African countries, painting them as so woefully corrupt that honest European businessmen simply have no choice but to pay bribes to African officials. It also ignores the fact that Icelandic fishing company CEOs ingratiate themselves to Icelandic politicians, donating to their campaigns—those same politicians have been lowering taxes on these companies, for some reason.

So what now?

While Icelandic tax authorities are combing through Samherji documentation, both Arion Bank and Íslandsbanki are reportedly investigating the fishing giant's activities. Tina Søreide, one of Norway's leading experts on corruption, also told reporters that the FBI and the Securities and Exchange Commission could possibly get involved, on account of how Bank of New York Mellon stopped a fund transfer from one of Samherji's shell companies. The FBI, for the record, will neither confirm nor deny whether they are interested in the case. ♡

Meanwhile, in Norway

Remember when we mentioned DNB? Well, they haven't escaped the Fishrot Files unscathed. As reported, Samherji was a major client of DNB, which helped in the transfer of around \$70 million USD into shell companies in tax havens. That much is a matter of public record. What is less clear is how culpable they are, and management at the bank has been very

vocal about getting to the bottom of this—especially since the Norwegian government owns a 34% stake in the bank.

Timing plays a crucial role in this. DNB's former CEO, Rune Bjerke, retired last September, and the new CEO is now Kjerstin Braathen. She is now in the difficult position of managing the fallout of DNB activities that

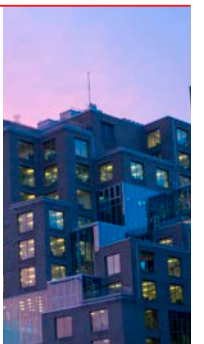
preceded her post.

In this respect, she seems to be handling herself well. Speaking to the newspaper Dagens Næringsliv, Kjerstin said in no uncertain terms that DNB was taking the case seriously “and we can't rule out that we have been misused,” emphasising that a full investigation is necessary.

Norway's Minister of Finance, Siv Jensen, completely agrees, urging DNB to “lay all its cards on the table,” adding, “DNB must contribute so we can get to the bottom of this,

I think that's in DNB's own interests.”

Nonetheless, Kjerstin has been just as adamant about DNB's innocence as Icelandic businessmen have been about theirs. “Sometimes you can get the impression that it's DNB that's accused of criminal operations,” she told Dagens Næringsliv. “I want to stress that these are complaints tied to a fishing firm in Iceland. It's not nice when customers of DNB are alleged to be involved in crime. What we can do is bring forth information that can enlighten the situation.”



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Feature :

The Outsider

COUNTESS MALAISE, THE OUTSIDER OF ICELANDIC HIP—HOP, NOW CLAIMS HER THRONE

Words:
Hannah Jane Cohen
Photos:
Rut Sigurðardóttir

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 Dýrfinna Benita Basalan, has projected an aura of mystery. With the sporadic release of songs that were aggressive, honest, dark, but still turned 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 rapid 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 Prikjó, 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 Kraumur award.

THE LUCKY ONES

I meet Dýrfinna 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, Dýrfinna 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.

GANGS & RICE

"When you grow up mixed, you don't really feel like you have the right to belong anywhere," Dýrfinna says calmly, sitting in the back of the gallery. "I grew up in Breiðholt, where there were a lot of immigrants, but I moved around a lot because my father and mother split and my Mom was sick, so we often lived in social housing."

While immigrants make up 15.6% of the Icelandic population nowadays, that number was significantly smaller during Dýrfinna's childhood. "There were some mixed race kids but there was still a lot of racism. In Breiðholt, there used to be a lot of beef between brown people and white people; gangs, you know," she explains. "One day there was this big knife fight in a kiosk where a lot of Filipinos and other races were fighting against Icelanders. The next day in school, these older kids—white kids—were like 'Yeah, we're gonna beat you up.'"

She was defended by another mixed-race classmate, but the incident was just one of many where Dýrfinna 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 sleeve, 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."

TOUGH GIRLS

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 Dýrfinna 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



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, deflecting 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."

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 subsequently 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 personality 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 worth it? 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 28th and I dropped the album 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 nonetheless 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.

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 confident 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."

FINDING BELONGING

While Dýrfinna has found her fanbase in the city, in the context of the wider Icelandic hip-hop community, she still feels separate. "I feel like I'm the Björk of hip-hop. I am not really affiliated 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-r.

"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 place. "Just listen to the album. Put it on repeat. Don't even read this article, just stream it on repeat because I want to get those plays. I need to get that money. I need validation." She bursts out laughing. "Ok. No, I don't. Just kidding." 🍷

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Happening

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A Horrible Sing-Along

Horrible Youth & Óværa

December 14th - 21:00 - Gaukurinn - 1,500 ISK

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 and Óværa party at Gaukurinn. Icelandic Yule Lad costumes are mandatory. OK, they're not, but it would get you into the mood. **VG**



You Only Christmas Once

Prins Jóló

December 14th - 20:00 - Gamla Bíó - 3,990 ISK

The King of silly lyrics, the Queen of the Christmas Mood, and the Prince of Póló, Prins Póló is here with his beloved annual Christmas concert. While his bemusing lyrics might be more kick for Icelandic speakers, we promise that his catchy melodies work in any language. This year, His Royal Majesty will share the stage with musician friends from Benni Hemm Hemm to Margrét Arnardóttir. You only live once, so, Jóló! **VG**



R.I.P. Happiness

Ólafur Eliásson: The Glacier Melt Series 1999/2019

Until February 9th - Hafnarhús

Ready for an awesome end-of-the-world-anxiety-attack? Iceland's most renowned artist, Ólafur Eliásson, is here with a series of pictures he has taken of Icelandic glaciers spanning over 20 years. Each tracks the depletion of the landmarks. Climate deniers in particular are invited. **VG**

CULTURE NEWS

Info

'Space for Humans: The Moon on Earth' is open until February 3rd at the Reykjavík Museum Of Photography.



Matthew Broadhead - Space For Humans

The Trail Of The Cosmonauts

Matthew Broadhead's photo exhibition beams 1960s astronauts into the present day

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen

Photo: Art Bicnick

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 Reykjavík 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."

Run by astronaut enthusiast Örlygur Hnefill Örlygsson, the Exploration Museum is one of Iceland's most peculiar treasures—a gallery devoted to photographs and artefacts from the 1965 Apollo geology field trip in Iceland. The site instantly fascinated Matthew, who subsequently teamed up with Örlygur to plan a trek following the trail of the cosmonauts.

Mother Earth

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're forgetting our own. I felt really strongly about Earth being Mother Earth."

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

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 Örlygur'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 spacesuit portrait. "Örlygur'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 trio. "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." He stops and smiles. "It also looks quite futuristic, right?"

ELECTRIC DREAMS

Music

Cop Elli Grill's latest album 'Rassa Bassi Vol. 2' online at elligrillehf.bandcamp.com and stream his entire catalogue on Spotify. Follow up on Elli's devious behaviour at [instagram.com/elligrillehf](https://www.instagram.com/elligrillehf)



I Love Rubbish

A delightful collection of carefully-composed electronic dance-bangers

Words: Alexander Le Sage de Fontenay

Photo: Matthew Eisman

Hjalti Kaftu—an Icelandic play on words meaning "shut up"—is the musical-alter-ego of Pétur Eggertsson of noise-rock/punk band Skelkur í bringu and violin-techno-duo Geigen. His debut release, 'Ég elska drasl' ('I Love Rubbish'), is a delightful collection of carefully-composed electronic dance-bangers, which are well worth a listen.

Wild child

Pétur currently lives in Oakland, California, where he's finishing a master's degree in Music Composition. "There is a huge subculture of free improvisation and experimental composition here," he explains. "Be it electronic or instrumental, there is a show almost every night with some wild sounds."

One of the composer's chief pas-

sions has been electronic dance music. "I grew up in rave-era England as a young kid and became a DJ during my college-years," he explains. "I made a lot of dance music, which nobody ever really heard. I think I'm making up for that now."

Sound and movement

For 'Ég elska drasl,' Pétur felt inspired by his experiences with dance music as a whole. "I look at the tracks as homages to certain genres of dance music," he says. "Dance music is just an incredible way to bring people together, to get lost in sound and movement."

Pétur likes to play with the boundaries of music in his performances. "I use non-electronic objects—loaves of bread, coffee mugs and newspapers—as controllers for activating sounds or interacting with effects," he says. "It's me seeing electronics being integrated so much into our everyday lives and finding ways to turn that around."

Future beach balls

Currently, Pétur is working on a two-track single and making plans for future concerts. "I'll be in Reykjavík around the holidays and would like to play a show then," Pétur explains. "I'm working on equipment that will give some control to the audience. So, expect some interactive beach-balls or something at my next performance!"



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Skálmöld. Práinn is second from the left.

Ragnarök Is

On the edge of a break, Skálmöld guitarist

Words: **Lea Müller** Photo: **Art Bienick**

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 Bió, with special guests Finntröll and Blóðmör. But, as guitarist Práinn 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,” Práinn laughs. Práinn 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.

We thought that for the next year each of us would have two hundred copies under our beds, and would be trying to give them to relatives.”

Reality quickly defied their expectations. With ‘Baldur’, Skálmöld tapped into a musical gap that many underestimated. Not even record labels were aware of the opportunities 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 Finntröll,” Práinn recalls.

A decade of fun

Now, ten years later, as Práinn 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,” Práinn says. “But when I look back, my very favourite moments were when the

boys were together and had fun.” Práinn 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 song-writing process. “It’s so special because everyone contributes. Jón Geir, our drummer, is for example good

at listening to the bigger picture of every song. We take this machine and it just flies,” Práinn 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,” Práinn explains.

With their roots in Norse mythology and Icelandic folk tales, all Skálmölds albums can be considered concept albums. “We basically write new stories without harming the integrity of the mythology.

“All we wanted was to make one album that we could be proud of and then die.”



n't Here Yet

Práinn reflects on an eventful decade

That's really cool if you look at how tales are supposed to be evolving," Práinn 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,'" Práinn 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 categorise 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,'" Práinn 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. No dead animals around our neck. Ironically, we have always been touring with bands wearing such costumes," he says. Their good

friends Finntroll, who will be playing at their shows in December, are a good example of this. The band always clads themselves in mystical trollish outfits with fake ears and makeup.

The metal scene has changed since Skálmöld first took the stage. "I think that many bands are increasingly aiming for the general public, which is great," Skálmöld is, however, unaffected by the trend. "We have always just done what interests us most. We are six individuals that all have big egos. We all think that we know what is best for ourselves and the band. Somehow that energy has just moved and found its path."

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.

"When we made the first album, the record company said we would have to wear fur and swords and shit. But we said 'no.'"

"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 laments. "I will probably go there during the break and actually see something." He also plans to do some solo projects. "I don't know if I dare to say but I've been studying a bit of jazz music." He pauses and sighs. "Now the boys will kill me."

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. 🍷



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Has anyone seen this kid by the way? We think that the Yule Cat grabbed him

Celebrate (Before The Yule Cat Eats You)

How to Christmas like an Icelander

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

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 cat, 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.



Ice Skating at Ingólfstorg

Until Dec. 24th - Ingólfstorg - 12:00-22:00 - Free! (990 ISK to rent skates)

The next Winter Olympics might not be until 2022 but that doesn't mean you can't start practising now. Get on the path to win Iceland's first figure skating medal

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 Hlölí afterwards for a true Reykjavík afternoon. **HJC**



Jülevenner Emmsjé Gauta 2019

Dec. 22nd & 23rd - 16:00, 20:00, 23:00 - Háskólabíó - 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 Emms-

jé Gauti. It's a fresh take on the trope featuring young pop stars like Briet and Aron Can along with old favourites like the flamboyant Páll Óskar. There's a special family show on the 23rd at 16:00, which we imagine will be the talking point at all the Gen Xer parties. **VG**



Heiðmörk Christmas Market

Weekends until December 22nd - 12:00-17:00 - Heiðmörk - Free!

Nearly every Icelandic venue/store has its own version of a holiday market, but the one in the old hunting lodge at Elliðaavatn is a not-to-miss experience. On a frozen lake in a gorgeous forest, sit the kids into a beautiful grove for some Christmas

stories—most in Icelandic. Afterwards, cut down your own Christmas tree, enjoy some hot chocolate, and just be merry. Oh, and don't forget to buy a ton of handmade stuff. What more is Christmas than capitalism wrapped in a bow? **VG/HJC**



Baggalútur

Dec. 6th, 7th, 8th, 13, 14, 15th, 19th, 20th, 21st - 17:00, 21:00 - Háskólabíó - 9,559 ISK

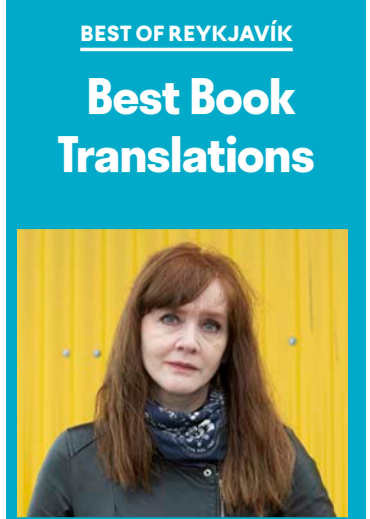
Ok, this concert is literally as Icelandic as you can get. Warning: it will be in Icelandic, but we think the show is crazy enough that even foreigners will have fun. The light-hearted comedy band Baggalútur essentially invented the Icelandic Christmas concert a decade ago and are still the fiercest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



Christmas Screening: Love Actually

Dec. 23rd - 20:00 - Bió Paradís - 1,000-1,600 ISK

The best way to find out if your friend or partner isn't a psychopath 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. Anyway, Bió Paradís hosts a ton of special Christmas screenings each year, but let's be real: 'Love Actually' is not only the best love story of all time, but it's also 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 let it snow. **VG**



BEST OF REYKJAVÍK

Best Book Translations

Hotel Silence

Auður Ava Ólafsdóttir

Winner of the 2018 Nordic Council Literature Prize, 'Hotel Silence' is characterised by the bleak humour it applies to the tragedy of human existence. In the novel, Auður Ava interrogates the more benevolent aspects of traditional masculine values through her protagonist: a solemn middle-aged handyman whose only means of communicating love is by installing kitchens, tiling bathrooms and being useful to his relations and compatriots. After an emotional blow, he sets off on a journey to an unspecified location with the aim of committing suicide in as quiet and polite a manner as possible. **BH**



Woman at 1000 Degrees

Hallgrímur Helgason

Hallgrímur Helgason's subject matters are so varied that if it wasn't for his florid and exuberant prose style it might be difficult to see his books as belonging within the same oeuvre. In this work of fiction, a vivacious and foul-mouthed octogenarian narrates her life from the islands of Breiðafjörður, living as a bedridden invalid in a suburban garage. As she spends her time catfishing gullible men in distant lands with pictures of Icelandic beauty queens, her only companion is a live hand grenade; her final means of maintaining control over her fate. **BH**

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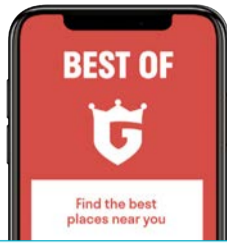
Hornið opened in 1979 was the first restaurant of its kind in Iceland, a restaurant with a true Italian atmosphere. Hornið is known for good food made out of fresh raw materials, good pizzas baked in front of the guests, good coffee and comfortable service.

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Restaurant Hornið - Hafnarstræti 15, 101 Reykjavík - s. 551 3340 - www.hornid.is

December 6th—January 9th

In Your Pocket



Reykjavík Map

Places We Like

Best Of Reykjavík

Perfect Day

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

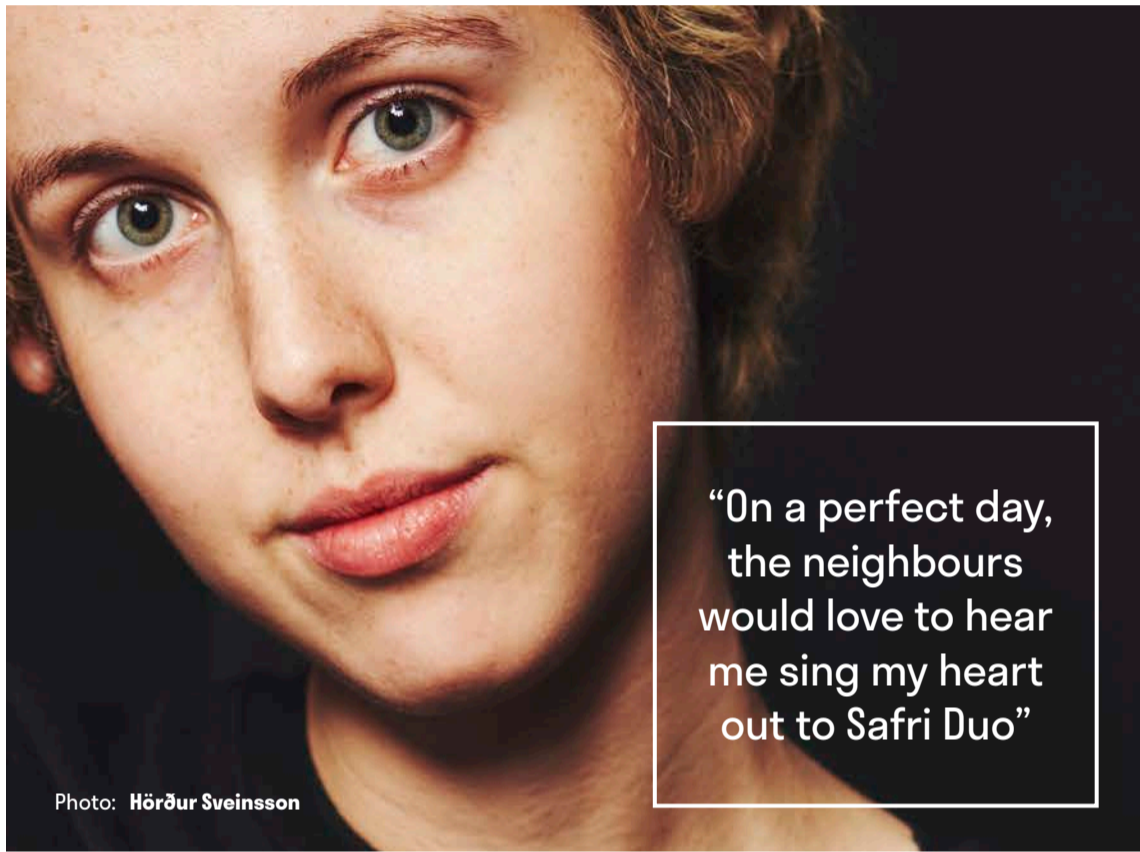


Photo: Hörður Sveinsson

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

Ásta Kristín Pjetursdóttir

Ásta Kristín Pjetursdóttir is a violist who has played as a soloist with the Symphony Orchestra, she recently made her Iceland Airwaves debut with her folk/pop solo act Ásta. Here's her perfect day in the city.

First things first

On a perfect day, I'd wake up to a sunny, blue sky. With a smile on my face, I'd put on some bangin' tunes on the highest volume and dance around the apartment like there's no tomorrow. And, on a perfect day, the neighbours would love to hear me sing my heart out to Safri Duo.

Morning

After cooling down from all the dancing, I'd make pancakes for breakfast with OG Nutella, bananas and fresh berries, and eat in front of the TV. Af-

ter watching a couple of shows of some amazing TV series that I just discovered, it's time to get up and start my day for real. I head out—the sun is shining and there's absolutely no wind—and walk to Barónessan, the new flower shop on Barónsstígur. I buy the most beautiful bouquet just to brighten my day up even more.

Lunch

For lunch, I meet up with my friend Berglind at Fjallkonan for a really juicy veggie burger with some curly fries. We talk a lot and laugh a lot, just like always.

Afternoon

In the afternoon, I get a call from my friend Gerbrich, who lives in LA, and she tells me that she and all the other girls—Anne, Alina and Caitriona, who live in Copenhagen and NYC—spontaneously came to Iceland to surprise me. I am so happy and rush out to the airport to pick them up. Of course, I

drive safely, but only after I pick up a bagel from Kaffitár with sun-dried tomato cream cheese. God, 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 together on the tiny sofa and talk. Before turning into total blobs, we put on 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: Reykjavík 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, Justin Timberlake, and all the other maestros. ☺



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Venue Finder

Venues	Museums & Galleries
The numbers on the right (i.e. E4) tell you position on the map on the next page	
Austur Austurstræti 7 D3	ART67 Laugavegur 67 F7 Open daily 9-21
American Bar Austurstræti 8 D3	ASÍ Art Gallery Freyjugata 41 G6 Open Tue-Sun 13-17
Andrými Bergþorugata 20 G6	Aurora Reykjavík Grandagarður 2 B1 Open 09-21
B5 Bankastræti 5 E4	Asgrímur Jónsson Museum Bergstaðastr. 74 G4 July 8-Sep 1, Mon-Fri
Bar Ananas Klapparstígur 28 E5	Berg Contemporary Klapparstígur 16 E5 Tu-F 11-17, Sat 13-17
Bió Paradís Hverfisgata 54 E5	The Culture House Hverfisgata 15 E5 Open daily 10-17
Bjarni Fel Austurstræti 20 E4	The Einar Jónsson Museum Eiríksgata G5 Open Tue-Sun 10-17
Bravó Laugavegur 22 E5	Ekkisens Bergstaðast. 25b F4
Boston Laugavegur 28b E5	Galleri List Skiphólf 50A H10 M-F 11-18, Sat 11-16
Dillon Laugavegur 30 E5	Hafnarborg Strandgata 34, 220 D3 Open Wed-Mon 12-17
Dubliner Naustin 1-3 D3	Hitt Húsið Pósthússtræti 3-5 D4
English Pub Austurstræti 12 D3	Hverfissgalleri Hverfisgata 4 D4 Tu-Fri 13-17, Sat 14-17
Gaukurinn Tryggvagata 22 D3	i8 Gallery Tryggvagata 16 D3 Tu-Fri 11-18, Sat 13-17
Hard Rock Café Lækjargata 2a D3	The Penis Museum Laugavegur 116 F8 Open daily 10-17
Hressó Austurstræti 20 D3	Kirsuberjatræð Vesturgata 4 D3 M-F 10-18, Sat-Sun 10-17
Húrra Naustin D3	Kling & Bang Grandagarður 20 A4 W-Sun 14-18, Th 12-21
	Listastofan Hringbraut 119 A4 Open Wed-Sat 13-17
	Living Art Museum Grandagarður 20 A4 Tu-F 11-17, Sat 13-17
	Mokka Kaffi Skólavörðustíg. 3A E5 Open daily 9-18:30
	Museum of Design and Applied Art Garðatorg 1 E5 Open Tu-Sun 12-17
	The National Gallery of Iceland Frikirkjuvegur 7 F3 Open daily 10-17
	The National Museum Sudurgata 41 G2 Open daily 10-17
	The Nordic House Sturluggata 5 H2 Thu-Fri 11-17, W 11-20
	Hafnarhús Tryggvagata 17 D3 Open 10-17, Thu 10-22
	Kjarvalsstaðir Flókagata 24 H8 Open daily 10-17
	Ásmundarsafn Sigtún D3 Open daily 10-17
	Reykjavík City Library Tryggvagata 15 D3 Mon-Thu 10-18, Fri 11-18, Sat-Sun 13-17
	Árbæjarsafn Kistuhylur 4 D3 Open daily 9-18
	The Settlement Exhibition Aðalstræti 16 D3 Open daily 9-18
	Reykjavík Museum of Photography Tryggvagata 15 D3 Mon-Thu 10-18, Fri 11-18, Sat-Sun 13-18
	Saga Museum Grandagarður 2 B2 Open daily 10-18
	Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum Leaugarnestangi 70 D3 Open Tu-Sun 14-17
	SÍM Hafnarstræti 16 D3 Open Mon-Fri 10-16
	Tveir Hrafnar Baldursgata 12 G4 Open Fri-Sat 13-16
	Wind & Weather Window Gallery Hverfisgata 37 E5

Vital Info



Useful Numbers

Emergency: 112
On-call doctors: 1770
Dental emergency: 575 0505
Taxi: Hreyfill: 588 5522 - BSR: 561 0000

Post Office

The downtown post office has moved to Hagatorgi 1, open Mon-Fri, 09:00-17:00.

Pharmacies

Lyf og heilsa, Egilsgata 3, tel: 563 1020
Lyfja, Laugavegur 16, tel: 552 4045
and Lágmúli 5, tel: 533 2300

Opening Hours - Bars & Clubs

Bars can stay open until 01:00 on weekdays and 04:30 on weekends.

Opening Hours - Shops & Banks

Most shops: Mon-Fri 10-18, Sat 10-16, Sun closed. Banks: Mon-Fri 09-16

Swimming Pools

Sundhöllin, the downtown pool at Barónsstígur, is an indoor swimming pool with hot tubs and a diving board. More pools: gpv.is/swim
Open: Mon-Thu from 06:30-22. Fri from 06:30-20. Sat from 08-16. Sun from 10-18.

Public Toilets

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

Public Transport

Most buses run every 20-30 minutes
Fare: 470 ISK adults, 220 ISK children.
Buses run from 07-24:00, and 10-04:30 on weekends. More info: www.bus.is.

A



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The Map

Get the bigger, more detailed version of The Reykjavík Grapevine City Map at your nearest hotel or guesthouse, with selections from our Best-Of awards, vital info, downtown bus stops and a wider view of the city.

Dining

1. Fjallkonan

Hafnarstræti 1-3

Named after the female personification of Iceland, Fjallkonan 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 meat, fish and vegetarian options, Fjallkonan does these to perfection as well.

2. Block Burger

Skólavörðustígur 8

Block Burger is an office favourite. You can see their white paper to-go bags stacked on writers' desks. Modelled heavily on the American chain Shake Shack in presentation, Block is reasonably priced (for Reykjavík) 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 cod head 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 Deig, 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 16

Iceland's first Ramen bar has upped their broth game with a silky slick Tonkotsu. They have a choice of noodles and broths catering to food intolerances and fads, and a popular 'Ramen of the Month'. We suggest getting the Ramen Tonkotsu with their perfectly cooked soy cured 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 pancake served with ginger sauce and the crispy shrimp dumplings with sriracha mayo are to die for. Come early and enjoy happy hour while you can: you'll never want to leave.

8. Messinn

Lækjargata 6b

Messinn may be modelled on the well-known Westfjords restaurant Tjoruhúsið, but it's now no doubt a Reykjavík 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 plockfiskur, velvety graflax, and a perfectly seared trout with honey and almonds.

9. Sea Baron

Geirsgata 4a

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

10. Pylsuhúsið

Ingólfstorg

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.

Drinking

11. Curious

Hafnarstræti 4

Watch out, henny—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 café, Curious is a one-stop-shop for whatever scene you belong to. Werk.

12. Bravó

Laugavegur 22

Oh, bravo, Bravó, for having the best happy hour in this fair city. With its colourful fairy lights and a plethora of comfortable pillows, Bravó feels like a children's bedroom tent 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

Bankastræti 7a

Loft stands many heads and shoulders above most of the alfresco drinking spots in Reykjavík, 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

Bergstaðastræti 1

With a saloon-like atmosphere in the daytime, when dogs and kids run around amongst the diehard 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 fails 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 looking for like-minded peeps to drink with, here you go.

16. Session Bar

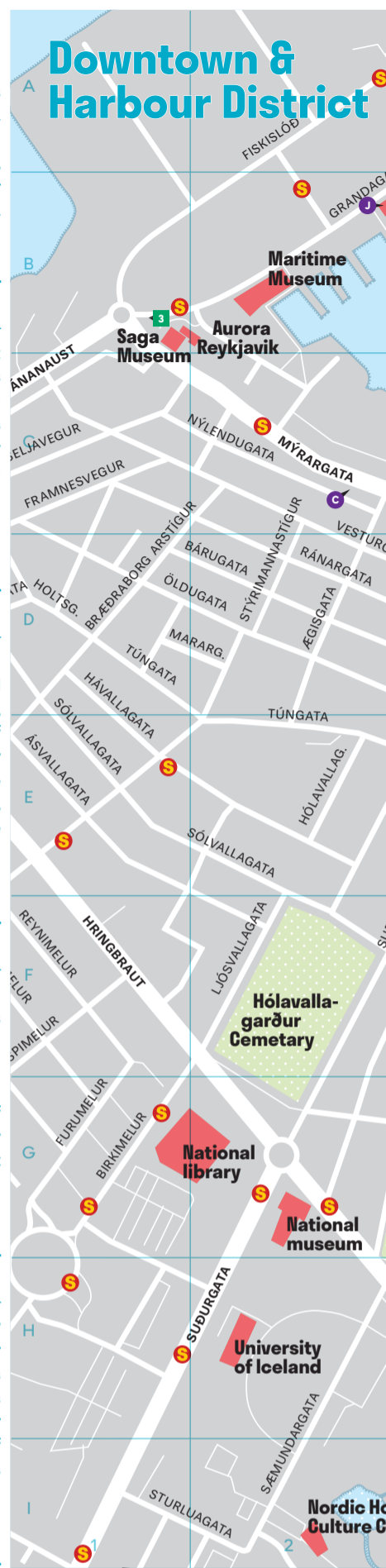
Fógetagarður

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 Reykjavík's generally pricey craft bar.

17. Papaku Reykjavík

Klappastígur 38

Formerly Bar Ananas, Papaku Reykjavík is Reykjavík's only beach bar, and it is truly a breath of fresh air for the otherwise dreary downtown scene. No sir, this is no dive bar, but a club, with a pool table, piano, darts board, a spacious bar, a tiny dance floor, and a solid line of DJs 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 channel 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.

Shopping

19. Kvartýra №49

Laugavegur 49

This minimalistic, Bauhaus-esque spot took the Icelandic fashion

E

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Wine bar & food

VINSTÚKAN
TÍU SOPAR

Map of Reykjavik showing various locations marked with letters A through S. Key locations include: Reykjavik Art Museum, Harpa Concert Hall, The Culture House, National Theatre, National Gallery, Hljóm-skálagarður Park, Landspítali Hospital, Hallgrímskirkja Church, Listasafn Einarssonar, Ásmundarsalur, Bio Paradis, Hverfisgata 44, and Hlemmur Food Hall.

G

HÚRRA REYKJAVÍK

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COMMON PROJECTS DROLE DE MONSIEUR EYTVS
FILLING PIECES HAN KJOBENHAVN HERON PRESTON
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New In Town



Yuzu
Hverfisgata 44

Headed up by the owners of beloved clothing store Húrra Reykjavík, 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 two previously mayo-averse Grapevine staffers. **HJC**

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 scents 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. ÞA Zimsen

Vesturgata 2a

This peaceful spot is equal parts

café 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 Tónar

Skólavörðustígur 15

This city-centre record store is something of an institution, offering the unique experience of having the store staff ask about your music taste then sit you down with a coffee, some headphones, and a pile of Icelandic records.

23. Farmers And Friends

Hólmaslóð 2 & 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. Spúútnik

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 maybe six shirts, they'll determine that just one is truly good enough.

26. Rauðhetta & Úlfurinn

Skólavörðustígur 8

In a sense Rauðhetta & Úlfurinn is a Reykjavik 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.

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"The song could be talking about God, your ex-girl/boyfriend, or even yourself"

TRACK BY TRACK

'Minn almáttugur' by GDMA

Forget the haters and find your success

Words: **Hannah Jane Cohen** Photo: **Nicola Lamburov**



Album

Stream 'Minn almáttugur' on Spotify.

GDMA—the duo of *Gabriel 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 Almighty') 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.

Dinamit ('TNT'):

Our main mission here is to show our haters that we don't care. The concept of 'Minn Almáttugur' is being different and most of our songs are very unlike. 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 taboo. 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. ♡

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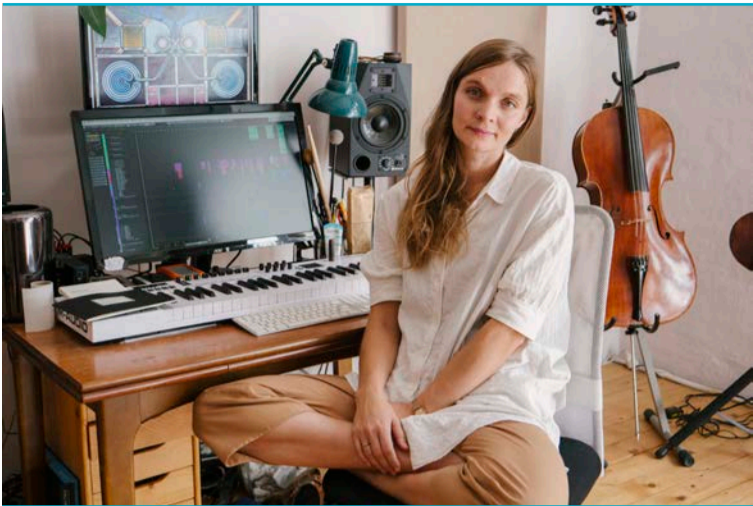
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Music



Reigning champion of the Icelandic music scene, Hildur Guðnadóttir

The Greatest Hits

The Grapevine's critics pick the best of 2019

Words: **The Grapevine Music Review Team**

As 2019 draws to an end, we asked our music team for their personal highlights from this fabulously diverse year in Icelandic music.



It's impossible to talk about this year in Icelandic music without first mentioning one name: **Hildur Guðnadóttir**, 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 chords the moment the fireman grasped the graphite—I'm getting chills thinking about it! Other than that, **Une Misère's** 'Sermon' was an obvious standout, as was their Iceland Airwaves performance at the Reykjavík Art Museum. The band's melange of hardcore/death/black metal has done what seemed impossible: it crossed over to the mainstream. They play at Prikid now for god's sake! Next on the list, the debut of gugusar—a 15-year-old electric wunderkind—made me excited for the future of the scene as did the soothing piano works of **Gabriel Ólafs**. I stan. **HJC**



This was undoubtedly a defining year for **Post-dreifing**. The young D.I.T. ("do it together") music and art collective has been pumping out more new music this past year than you can shake a stick at, with standout releases by the likes of **Skoffin**, **GRÓA**, **sideproject**, **bagdad brothers**, **We Are Not Romantic**, **K.óla** and many more. They also dominated the underground live scene and drew attention from international media. On another note, as the resurgence of dark music keeps booming, **Kælan Mikla** and their synth-producer Sólveig Matthildur have kept soaring, opening for The Cure, touring

extensively through North America and Europe, and securing their place in the modern goth cannon. **RB**



This year was a diverse one. The biggest 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 Markan**, **Víkingur Heiðar Ólafsson** and **Anna Þorvaldsdóttir**, 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 brilliant comeback in 2019 with his boyish and melancholic album 'Sad Party,' and **Mr. Silla** released 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 devastating debut album 'Undir Skyggðarhaldi.' 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 verður alltilfae.' 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. **PUW** ☘



Two Icelandic women are amongst those nominated for the 2020 Grammy Awards, setting a historic precedent for Icelandic music. **Anna Þorvaldsdóttir** has been nominated for Best **MUSIC NEWS** Engineered Album, Classical, for her album 'Aequa.' **Hildur Guðnadóttir** 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 Icelandic women go home with Grammy awards on January 26th? Only time will tell, but we're rooting for them both. **AF**



The grim-postmodern-scream-of-angst-and-BDSM-fueled-anti-hate—and now anti-corruption—band **Hatari** performed at a protest rally at Austurvöllur connected to the scandal around the fishing company **Samherji**, who are accused of bribery in Namibia. Forgoing their normal vinyl gimp onesies, Hatari donned business suits to underline the uniform of corruption, which the band then endorsed onstage in a very sarcastic way. Hatari is no stranger to capitalism, as they currently operate a company called **Svikamylla ehf.**, or the "Big Scam", which tries to sell the livestock—i.e. us, the depressed consumers—useless stuff to fill our empty souls. It works. **VG**



Genki Instruments' 'Wave' ring officially won the Icelandic Design Prize at the 2019 Iceland Design Awards. Created by **Ólafur Bjarki Bogason**, **Daniel Grétarsson**, **Jón Helgi Hólmgeirsson**, and **Haraldur Hugosson**, the ring is a wearable MIDI controller that allows artists to control sounds with a series of small tilts, pans, rolls, taps, and clicks. Of course, always being ahead of the curve, the Grapevine named Wave Product of the Year at the 2018 Reykjavík Grapevine Design Awards. "The way they have integrated design with the technological process is a good example of what design can do," the Grapevine awards panel said. "They designed an experience." **IP**

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19/12 KLAKI, MIGHTY BEAR

20/12 (18+) & 21/12 (20+):
24/7, YUNG NIGO, DANIIL

23/12 XMAS KARAOKE PARTY

26/12 DRAG-SÚGUR DRAG LAB
MONTHLY EXPERIMENTAL DRAG SHOW

27/12 ALICE IN CHAINS TRIBUTE CONCERT

28/12 DJ FLUGVÉL OG GEIMSKIP,
SINGAPORE SLING AND MORE

29/12 BURLESQUE SHOW
BY TROUPE LADIES AND A GENTLEMAN

31/12 NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

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VÍKING
BRUGGHÚS

Our Picks



Une Misère: 'Sermon' Release Show

December 14th - 21:00 - IDNÓ - 3,000 ISK ★

If the Reykjavik Grapevine is sure about anything, it's that 2019 was the year of misery. While Une 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 'Sermon' as well as

a slew of memorable live performances, including a particularly raucous set at the Reykjavik 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. Who else will mosh while screaming about drug addiction and mock-vomiting? No one. They'll be joined by witchy trio Kælan Mikla, and cool rap guys Joey Christ and Birnir. **HJC**



Hipsumhaps

Dec. 19th - 22:00 - Bryggjan Brugghús ★

There's a reason why every hip-hop fan in the city is hyping up Hipsumhaps. **HJC**



Can't think just feel #12

December 13th - 20:00 - Loft - Free! ★

'Can't think just feel' has been around for twelve whole months! For those of you keeping score at home, that's one year. The monthly concert series is curated by MSEA. This month's lineup features SOD-DILL, Holdgervlar, and PANG. Entry is free, so bring all your friends. **SP0**



Post-dreifing

Dec. 6th - 20:00 - Hressó ★

DIT ('Do It Together') collective Post-dreifing is putting on a showcase. Great for anti-capitalist vegans. **HJC**



Auður & Band

December 27th - 19:30 - Gamla Bíó - 4,500 ISK ★

There's a bit of debate in the office as to whether or not Auður 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. **HJC**

December 6th—January 9th

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/happening. Send your listings to: listings@grapevine.is.

Friday December 6th

★ **Post-dreifing: Korter í flog / Stirnir / Tucker Carlson Jonestown Mas-sacre & Gróa**
20:00 Hressó
Karaoke Party!
21:00 Gaukurinn
Eivör Christmas Concert
20:30 Harpa
Hermigervill x Simon fknhdsm
22:00 Kaffibarinn
Bragi Arnason
20:30 Stúdentakjallarinn
Baggalútur 2019
17:00, 21:00 Háskólabíó

Saturday December 7th

Flaaryr / Guðmundur Arnalds & aaiieenn
21:00 Mengi
DJ Motherfunker
21:00 Hressó
Eivör Christmas Concert
20:30 Harpa
DJ CasaNova
22:00 Kaffibarinn
Baggalútur 2019
17:00, 21:00 Háskólabíó

Sunday December 8th

A Band Called Eva Christmas Show
18:00 IDNÓ
Reykjavik Chamber Orchestra Christmas Concert
16:00 Harpa
Sunday Jazz
20:00 Bryggjan Brugghús
Eivör Christmas Concert
20:30 Harpa
Baggalútur 2019
17:00, 21:00 Háskólabíó

Monday December 9th

White Lies
20:30 Harpa
Monday Night Jazz
21:00 Hressó
DJ Þorsteinn Eyfjörð
22:00 Kaffibarinn

Tuesday December 10th

Karaoke Party!

21:00 Gaukurinn
Jazz Night
20:30 Kex Hostel
DJ Tank Police
22:00 Kaffibarinn

Wednesday December 11th

Múlinn Jazz Club: Tómas R. Quartet
21:00 Harpa
Don Lockwood Band
21:00 Slippbarinn
Party Karaoke With DJ Dóra Júlía & Helga Margrét
21:00 Sæta Svinið
Valdimar & Family Christmas Concert
20:00 Harpa
DJ Passa
22:00 Kaffibarinn

Thursday December 12th

Ylja Christmas Show
21:00 Bryggjan Brugghús
Aesculus / Morii / Cheap Poetry
21:00 Gaukurinn
Valdimar & Family Christmas Concert
20:00 Harpa
DJ Áskell
22:00 Kaffibarinn

Friday December 13th

★ **Can't think just feel #12 // Eat enough for all of us**
20:00 Loft
Sähkókitarakvartetti & Hafdis Bjarnadóttir
21:00 Mengi
Pálmi Gunnarsson Christmas Show
20:00 Harpa
DJ Katla
21:00 Hressó
Múlinn Jazz Club: Una Stef & the SP74
21:00 Harpa
Friðrik Dór & Jón Jónsson
20:00 Bæjarbíó
The Vintage Caravan
21:00 Hard Rock Café
Baggalútur 2019
17:00, 21:00 Háskólabíó

Saturday December 14th

★ **Une Misère**
21:00 IDNÓ
★ **Horrible Youth & Óværa**

22:00 Gaukurinn
Skoffin & Between Mountains
21:00 Hressó
Christmas At The Iceland Symphony
14:00, 16:00 Harpa
Stebbi & Eyfi Christmas Concert
19:30 Harpa
DJ Margeir
22:00 Kaffibarinn
Hipsumhaps
21:00 Stúdentakjallarinn
Daði Freyr Christmas Show
22:00 Hard Rock Café
Baggalútur 2019
17:00, 21:00 Háskólabíó

Sunday December 15th

Kira Kira Album Release Show
20:00 Kornhlaðan
Leonard Cohen & Nick Cave Tribute Show
19:00 IDNÓ
Singer/Songwriter Night
21:00 Gaukurinn
Sunday Jazz
20:00 Bryggjan Brugghús
Christmas At The Iceland Symphony
14:00, 16:00 Harpa
Baggalútur 2019
17:00, 21:00 Háskólabíó

Monday December 16th

Sigurður Guðmundsson & Sigríður Thorlacius
20:00 Harpa
Monday Night Jazz
21:00 Hressó
DJ Z
22:00 Kaffibarinn

Tuesday December 17th

Sigurður Guðmundsson & Sigríður Thorlacius
20:00 Harpa
Karaoke Party!
21:00 Gaukurinn
Jazz Night
20:30 Kex Hostel
DJ Kjörk
22:00 Kaffibarinn

Wednesday December 18th

Thugs Need Hugs 2
22:00 Prikið
Don Lockwood Band
21:00 Slippbarinn
Party Karaoke With DJ Dóra Júlía & Helga Margrét
21:00 Sæta Svinið
DJ Pabbi x Sonur Sæll
22:00 Kaffibarinn

Thursday December 19th

★ **Hipsumhaps**
22:00 Bryggjan Brugghús
KLAKI & Mighty Bear
22:00 Gaukurinn
DJ Helgi PartyZone

21:00 Hressó
DJ Marbendill
22:00 Kaffibarinn
Baggalútur 2019
17:00, 21:00 Háskólabíó

Friday December 20th

Christmas Festival: 24/7, Yung Nigo
Drippin & Daniil
23:00 Gaukurinn
Quest & Friends
21:00 Hressó
DJ Intr0beat
22:00 Kaffibarinn
Baggalútur 2019
17:00, 21:00 Háskólabíó

Saturday December 21st

Kiasmos DJ Set
22:00 Kaffibarinn
Jólagestir Björgvins 2019
17:00, 21:00 Harpa
Christmas Festival: 24/7, Yung Nigo
Drippin & Daniil
23:00 Gaukurinn
Bjartar Sveiflur: Prom Night
21:00 Hressó
Baggalútur 2019
17:00, 21:00 Háskólabíó

Sunday December 22nd

Sunday Jazz
20:00 Bryggjan Brugghús
Jólagestir Björgvins 2019
16:00, 20:00 Harpa
Fu Kaisha
22:00 Kaffibarinn
Leonard Cohen & Nick Cave Tribute Show
19:00 IDNÓ

Monday December 23rd

Emmsjé Gauti Christmas Show
16:00, 20:00, 23:00 Háskólabíó
Christmas Jazz Night
21:00 Hressó
Christmas Karaoke Party!
21:00 Gaukurinn

Tuesday December 24th

★ **CHRISTMAS EVE** ★

Wednesday December 25th

★ **CHRISTMAS** ★

Thursday December 26th

DJ Motherfunker
21:00 Hressó
Kerr Wilson
22:00 Kaffibarinn

Friday December 27th

★ **Auður & Band**
19:30 Gamla Bíó
Mr. Silla / Jae Tyler & Special K

21:00 Hressó
Alice In Chains Tribute Concert
22:00 Gaukurinn
DJ Frimann
22:00 Kaffibarinn

Saturday December 28th

Brain Police
22:00 Hard Rock Café
DJ flugvél og geimskip / Singapore Sling & More
22:00 Gaukurinn
Glæstar Vonir Club Night
21:00 Hressó
DJ KGB
22:00 Kaffibarinn
GG Blues
22:00 Bryggjan Brugghús

Sunday December 29th

Sunday Jazz
20:00 Bryggjan Brugghús

Monday December 30th

Monday Night Jazz
21:00 Hressó

Tuesday December 31st

★ **NEW YEAR'S EVE** ★

Wednesday January 1st

★ **NEW YEAR'S DAY** ★

Saturday January 4th

MANÍA
22:00 Gaukurinn

Sunday January 5th

Reykjavik 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 Brugghús

Wednesday January 8th

Monday Night Jazz
21:00 Hressó

Thursday January 9th

Iceland Symphony Orchestra: Viennese Favourites
19:30 Harpa
Karaoke Party!
21:00 Gaukurinn
Jazz Night
20:30 Kex Hostel

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Freyja Eilíf, inspecting her domain

Come Into Exxistenz

Freyja Eilíf opens new Reykjavík gallery

Words: **a rawlings** Photo: **Art Bicnick**

Gallery

Exxistenz is located at
Bergstaðastræti 25B, Reykjavík

“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 Exxistenz is that it will be a creation for its own self.”

She sits in the studio section of Exxistenz, 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 Þór Sigurbórsson.
- 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 Exxistenz.

Out with the old

Exxistenz 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 Exxistenz.

“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 Exxistenz, Freyja Eilíf is inviting guest curators to populate the space with group shows. The inaugural group show is curated by Johanne Christensen (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 fantastic names and descriptions for the esoteric arts—from energy work to past-life integration to Tarot.

“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 her multimodal healing options, she explains, “I have configured my practice with teachers, so it’s no hoo-goo-boogoo. 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 breadcrumbs on the earth. I’m braiding many things together as one.”

Our Picks

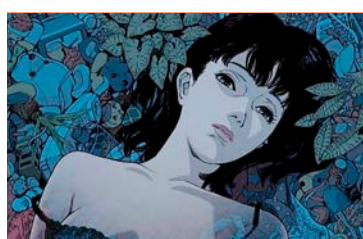


★ Lucky Me!

Until January 12th - Kling & Bang

'Lucky Me!' mixes into a nostalgic all the mediums interpretation of you can think of Filipino culture by

three Icelandic artists of Filipino origin. Fashion designer Darren Mark, multi-disciplinary artist Dýrfinna Benita Basalan (a.k.a. our cover star Countess Malaise), and visual artist Melanie Ubaldo come from very different backgrounds in the real world, but have shared experiences with 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 marginalised groups to go public with their art. And if art ever needed a purpose, that's a great one. **IP/HJC**



★ Japanese Film Days 2019

December. 5th-10th - Bió Paradís

These days are dedicated to Japanese film with a focus on the art form of anime. As a thoughtful and inexpensive Christmas gift,

text your weeaboo friends about it. While we wouldn't recommend showing up in your cat 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 brought in a psychic to make

contact with deceased artist Ásgrímur Jónsson. He probably said "Go away, I'm trying to rest." **SPO**



★ 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

a standard Icelandic Christmas tradition and are now being revived. We hope they'll bring skottdans back next. **HJC**

December 6th—January 9th

Art Listings

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

Send your listings to: listings@grapevine.is

Opening

18

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 text has not been released for this exhibition yet, we assume it'll be spectacular.

- Opens on 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 19th century.

- Runs until December 31st, 2019

Violin Power 1

In this autonomous work, observe Steina's development as an artist, from playing the violin in her youth and dancing in later years, to singing along to the Beatles' "Let it Be" as a stoical, mature artist.

- Runs until December 31st, 2019

Soliloquy

Come see this retrospective of Jóhanna Kristín Yngvadóttir (1953–1991), who made a splash in the Icelandic art scene in the early 1980s. Jóhanna Kristín's expressionistic 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

EINAR JÓNSSON MUSEUM

Permanent Exhibition

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

REYKJAVÍK CITY MUSEUM

Settlement Exhibition

As Viking ruins meet digital technology, this exhibition provides insight into Reykjavík's farms at the time of the first settlers.

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - ÁSMUNDARSAFN

Ásmundur Sveinsson: Under the Same Sky - Art In Public Space

Ásmundarsafn is named after sculp-

tor Ásmundur Sveinsson. This new permanent exhibition presents the artist in a new light. What dialogue does his works provoke?

- Runs until December 31st, 2019

Ólöf Nordal: úngl-úngl

Ólöf Nordal (b. 1961) often references Icelandic folktales, national heritage and cultural motifs which she places in a modern context. She is also preoccupied with nature and our connection to the land. In her work she attempts to explore and examine the structural material of mythical tales, she looks for things that fall outside the traditional framework.

- Runs until February 2nd, 2020

REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Encounters - Nordic Photography Beyond Borders

This exhibit is characterised by social and political overtones. In the works, ways are explored of visualising "encounters" between subjects, thus drawing attention to major issues like immigration, changes to land- and cityscapes, or the local impacts of globalisation.

- Runs until January 12th, 2020

Space for Humans: The Moon on Earth

Broadhead's practice entails an engagement with photography as a critical medium and explores the conjunctions between different subjects; notably geology, anthropology, history, and mythology.

- Runs until February 3rd, 2020



REYKJAVÍK MARITIME MUSEUM

Fish & Folk

Name a better duo than fish and Iceland. You can't. So come learn about the history of Icelandic fisheries from rowing boats to monstrous motor boats.

Melckmeyt 1659

Melckmeyt was a Dutch merchant

ship that crashed near Flatey Island in 1659. Explore the wreck here.

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - HAFNARHÚS

Erró: Mao's World Tour

Between 1972 and 1980, Erró painted over 130 paintings, with two images of different origins against each other: Chinese propaganda posters of Mao Zedong and Western tourist pictures from famous sites.

- Runs until January 5th, 2020

SOMETHING FROM NOTHING: The Visual Realm Of Magnús Pálsson

Artist Magnús Pálsson is known for the breadth of his mediums. Here, selected pieces from the early 60s until today reflect Magnús's pop/conceptual philosophies in sculptures, bookworks and two-dimensional works.

- Runs until January 12th, 2020

Ólafur Eliasson: The Glacier Melt s Series 1999/2019

In 1999, artist Ólafur Eliasson documented several dozen glaciers in Iceland. Twenty years later, he returned to photograph them again. This new photographic series brings together images from 1999 and 2019 to reveal the radical threat to our climate.

- Runs until February 9th, 2020

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ICELAND

Pike Ward

Around 1900, Englishman Pike Ward was a well-known figure in Iceland. The fisherman was an amateur photographer, focusing on everyday life. Here, see over 1,500 photos and 300 artifacts the eclectic collected from his travels around the country.

- Runs until January 12th, 2020



MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ART

Anna María Pitt Workshop

Silversmith Anna María Pitt has taken over the studio of the Museum of Design and Applied Art. Come watch her make her nature-inspired jewelry live, then buy some in the store.

- Runs until January 26th, 2020

Sveinn Kjarval

This exhibition focuses on the pio-

neering work of Sveinn Kjarval, one of the most pioneering furniture makers and interior designers in the country. While many pieces have been lost in time, there will be photographs showing never-before-seen designs.

- Runs until August 30th, 2020

NORDIC HOUSE

Af Stað! / Go!

Go! Through the snow mound, into outer space and back in time in this holiday exhibition featuring 12 artists. Each Sunday there will be a special event coordinating with the exhibition.

- Runs until January 12th, 2020

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - KJARVALSSTAÐIR

Jóhannes S. Kjarval: Can't Draw a Harebell

Here, explore the floral works of Jóhannes S. Kjarval, after whom the museum is named. Be it ornamental plants, potted plants, or wildflowers, you'll find it all.

- Runs until December 31st, 2019

Ólöf Nordal: Úngl

In this mid-career retrospective, Ólöf Nordal dissects the structural material of mythical tales—taking old events and folktales and putting them into a modern context. Enter her preoccupation with nature and connect yourself to the land.

- Runs until January 5th, 2020

GERDARSAFN KÓPAVOGUR ART MUSEUM

Lots Of Tiny People

The exhibition project 'Lots Of Tiny People' explores the spiritual, the unknown, esotericism, and anthropology. The title is derived from a blackboard drawing by Austrian anthropologist Rudolf Steiner, who used to draw images to support his

spoken words. In addition to the artworks on display, there will also be lectures, courses, and discussions on the topic of art, man, and spirit.

- Runs until January 5th, 2020

HVERFISGALLERÍ

Súper Lókal

Loji Höskuldsson's visual art primarily explores new and traditional ways of embroidery, a technique he inherited from his mother who is a professional seamstress and embroidery expert. In his embroidery, Loji most often depicts a sort of still life with focus on everyday objects, plants and fruits. The subtle poetic situations in our domestic lives are elevated in his works.

- Runs until February 8th, 2020

BERG CONTEMPORARY

Yui Yaegashi

BERG Contemporary's latest exhibition presents new works by Páll Haukur. Full of fragmented and distorted colour, this exhibit seeks to break the fundamental rules of art by not relying on the meaning or importance of things. We love a rebel.

- Runs until December 21st, 2019

LIVING ART MUSEUM

Light Bazaar

Diverse works in various mediums by over 50 artists will be for sale at this fundraising bazaar, all relating to light in some abstract way: works about light, works that illuminate, light installations, neon lights, candles, photographs, inner light and the list goes on and on. The goal is to illuminate midwinter.

- Runs until December 22nd, 2019

MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ART HÖNNUNARSAFN ÍSLANDS

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Filing of a ceramic collection

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Anna María Pitt
Silversmith
Designer in residence
Opening 25th October



28.11.2019–09.02.2020

Ólafur Elíasson

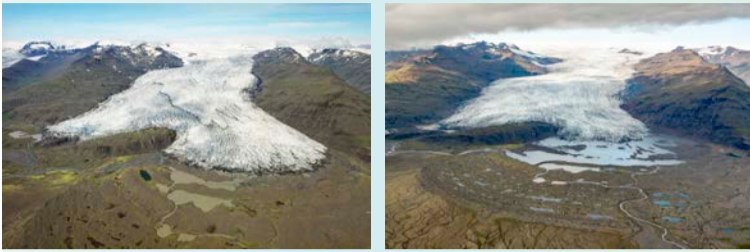


Photo: Ólafur Elíasson. Detail of *The glacier melt series 1999/2019*, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and iB Gallery, Reykjavík

The glacier melt series 1999/2019



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Film

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The titular character in duplicate

The City Across the Bay

'Agnes Joy' explores teenage life in far-off suburbia

Words: **Valur Gunnarsson** Photo: **Stills from the film**

Film

Screening in Háskólabíó (without subtitles), on VOD from December 19

Silja Hauksdóttir emerged as a director in 2003 with the charming 'Dís,' based on a novel she co-wrote. After directing a couple of episodes of the annual 'Áramótskaup' sketch comedy review—including the legendary post-collapse edition in 2008—she's back with her sophomore effort, 'Agnes Joy.'

Frustratingly far away

'Agnes Joy' is set almost entirely in Akranes, a town often ignored by Icelandic filmmakers. As New Jersey is to New York City, Akranes is so close and yet frustratingly far from the bright city lights.

Titular character Agnes wants a night on the town (meaning Reykjavík), but her friends worry about hitching a ride back and prefer to sit at home and watch football. Though they live in a virtual Reykjavík suburb, they might

as well be on the other side of the country. In one gorgeous shot, we see the teenagers drinking by the

shore, looking longingly over to the lights of the capital across the bay.

Agnes is ably played by newcomer Donna Cruz, and this is one of the first films to feature a main character adopted to Iceland, but rather than being an anomaly and the crux of the plot, it is here presented as rather ordinary. In fact, it is Agnes' parents who want to travel to the Philippines and see where their adopted daughter is from, while Agnes, like many small-town Icelandic teen solely dreams of moving to Reykjavík.

The seductive next door neighbour

The plot shuttles between Agnes and her mother Rannveig, wonderfully portrayed by Katla Þorgeirsdóttir, 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 it than Dustin Hoffman in 'The Graduate.'

Þorsteinn 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 taken for a prostitute in Reykjavík, but her heritage is only mentioned in the reverse in Akranes, as in the opening scene when she is throwing up yesterdays' Opal liquor while wearing a traditional 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 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.

gpu.is/film
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Various Events

Friday December 6th

'The Holiday' Christmas Party!
20:00 Bió Paradís
Not So Secret Friday Show
21:00 The Secret Cellar

Saturday December 7th

TuttiXmas Burlesque Show
21:00 Gaukurinn
'Harry Potter & The Chamber of Secrets' Christmas Screening!
15:00, 21:00 Bió Paradís

Sunday December 8th

Black Sundays: 'The Breakfast Club'
20:00 Bió Paradís
Party Bingo With Sigga Kling
21:00 Sæta Svinið

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 Celler
'Love Actually' Holiday Screening
19:30 Bió Paradís

Friday December 13th

'National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation' Christmas Screening
20:00 Bió Paradís
Drag-Súgur Holiday Drag Show
21:00 Gaukurinn

Saturday December 14th

'Harry Potter & The Prisoner Of Azkaban' Christmas Screening!
15:00, 21:00 Bió Paradís

Sunday December 15th

Black Sundays: 'Brazil'
20:00 Bió Paradís
Party Bingo With Sigga Kling
21:00 Sæta Svinið

Monday December 16th

Soulflow: Women & Queer Comedy
21:00 Gaukurinn

Tuesday December 17th

Funniest Four: Comedy Show
21:00 The Secret Celler
Gógó Starr: Drag Pub Quiz!
21:00 Fjallkonan

Wednesday December 18th

Golden Mic Stand-Up Comedy
21:00 The Secret Celler

Thursday December 19th

My Voices Have Tourettes
21:00 The Secret Celler

Friday December 20th

Christmas Party!: 'Elf' Screening
20:00 Bió 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 Svinið

Monday December 23rd

Soulflow: Women & Queer Comedy
21:00 Gaukurinn
'Love Actually' Holiday Screening
20:00 Bió Paradís

Thursday December 26th

Drag-Súgur Drag Lab
21:00 Gaukurinn
My Voices Have Tourettes
21:00 The Secret Celler

Friday December 27th

'Raiders Of The Lost Ark' Screening
20:00 Bió Paradís

Saturday December 28th

Saturday Night Showcase
21:00 The Secret Cellar

Sunday December 29th

Burlesque Xmas Show
21:00 Gaukurinn
Black Sundays: 'Alien' Screening
20:00 Bió Paradís

Monday December 30th

Soulflow: Women & Queer Comedy
21:00 Gaukurinn

Thursday January 2nd

My Voices Have Tourettes
21:00 The Secret Celler

Friday January 3rd

Friday Party!: 'The Bodyguard'
20:00 Bió Paradís

Saturday January 4th

Saturday Night Showcase
21:00 The Secret Cellar

Sunday January 5th

Black Sundays: 'Easy Rider'
20:00 Bió 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 Celler

Thursday January 9th

My Voices Have Tourettes
21:00 The Secret Celler



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Whats happening at HardRock?

Senior citizen musical concert - 5 Dec

Styrktartónleikar Elvars Geirs
HAM Skálmöld,
Sólstafir ofl - 6 Dec

Tom Waits concert - 7 Dec

Jólablús Þollýar - 11 Dec

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



Einar Már in the historical home of the Reykjavik artist, Kaffi Mokka.

Music In The Cafes At Night, Revolution In The Air

Writing is Einar Már Guðmundsson's politics

Words: Sam O'Donnel Photo: Art Bicnick

Making of an artist

Writer Einar Már 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, because, as he says, "sometimes the society needs your voice, and sometimes it's best to be quiet." Here, he gives us insight into what made him the author he is today.

The spark that started it all

Since I was a boy, I was a storyteller and a talking poet, so I think it was very good for the people around me that I started doing it alone. I found rather early in life the need to express myself. These were tough times in the late 60s and early 70s. As Bob Dylan says, "there was music in the cafés at night, and revolution in the air," so I could say that this revolution in the air inspired me a lot.

In my teenage years, I read a lot. In the beginning, it was very much with a social engagement. I was engaged in left wing politics. The organisation I belonged to had an anarcho-socialistic character. Many

of the progressive artists were among this movement. But later I began to look for other things besides social engagement. I was always looking 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 Reykjavik 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 Reykjavik. 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 went to fight in the Spanish Civil War, and when he came back, he was also a taxi driver. And he was always telling stories. The taxi

drivers had this dispatch central where people would call for a taxi, and sometimes because my uncle 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 1910-1930) 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. Þórbergur Þórðarson 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. ☺

"I lost myself in this world of poetry, and it's still, in a way, my foundation."

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Wine 800 ISK.

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Every day from
11:00 to 20:00.
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GAUKURINN
Every day from
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Wine 750 ISK,
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Every day from
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Wine 600 ISK,
Cocktails 1,200 ISK.

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Wine 700 ISK.

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Beer 495 ISK.

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Beer 850 ISK,
Wine 850 ISK.

KEX HOSTEL
Every day from
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Every day from
16:00 to 20:00.
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Tuesdays-All day
Medium Sized pizza with 3 toppings -1,000 ISK-Vegan option
- Tapas Barinn**
Every day 17:00 - 18:00
Half off of selected tapas
Various prices

Deig / Le Kock
Every day-All day
Doughnut, coffee & bagel -1,000 ISK

KEX Hostel
Every day 15:00 - 19:00
Chicken wings - 650 ISK
Baked almonds - 500 ISK

1,500 ISK And Under

Hamborgara-búlla Tómasar
Tuesdays-All day
Burger, french fries & soda - 1,390 ISK

Sushi Social
Every day 17:00 - 18:00
Truffle potatoes

Gló
Every day-All day
Bowl of the month - 1,290 ISK
Vegan option

Shalimar
Monday - Friday 12:00 - 14:30
Curry - 1,290 ISK
Vegan option

Sæta svínið
Every day 15-18
Chicken wings - 1,190 ISK
"Dirty" fries - 1,390 ISK

Solon
Monday - Friday 11:00 - 14:30
Ceasar salad -

1,490 ISK
Lemon
Every day 16:00 - 21:00
2f1 Juice + sandwich 1,095 ISK
Vegan option

Uppsalar - Bar and cafe
Every day 11-14
Burger & fries - 1,390 ISK
Vegan option

2,000 ISK And Under

Bryggjan Brugghús
Monday - Friday 11:30 - 15:00
Dish of the day

soup & bread - 1,690 ISK

Solon
Monday - Friday 11:00 - 14:30
Fish of the day - 1,990 ISK

Matarkjallarinn
Monday - Friday 11:30 - 15:00
Fisherman's fish soup -1,990 ISK

5,000 ISK And Under

Apótek
Every day 11:30 - 16:00
Two-course lunch -3,390 ISK

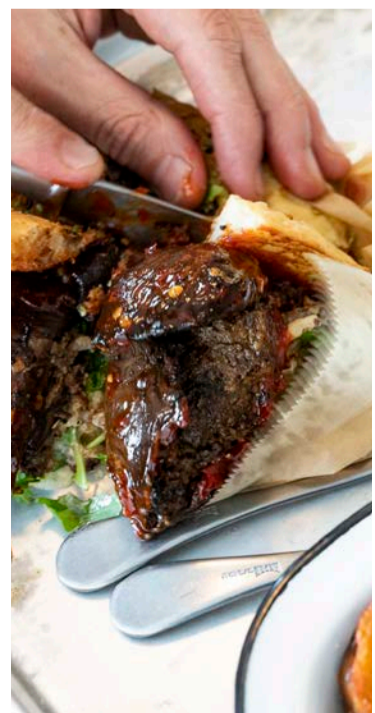
Three course lunch - 4,390 ISK

Kids Eat Free

All Icelandair Hotel restaurants

At Prikið
if you order two adult meals

At Haust
the buffet is free for kids

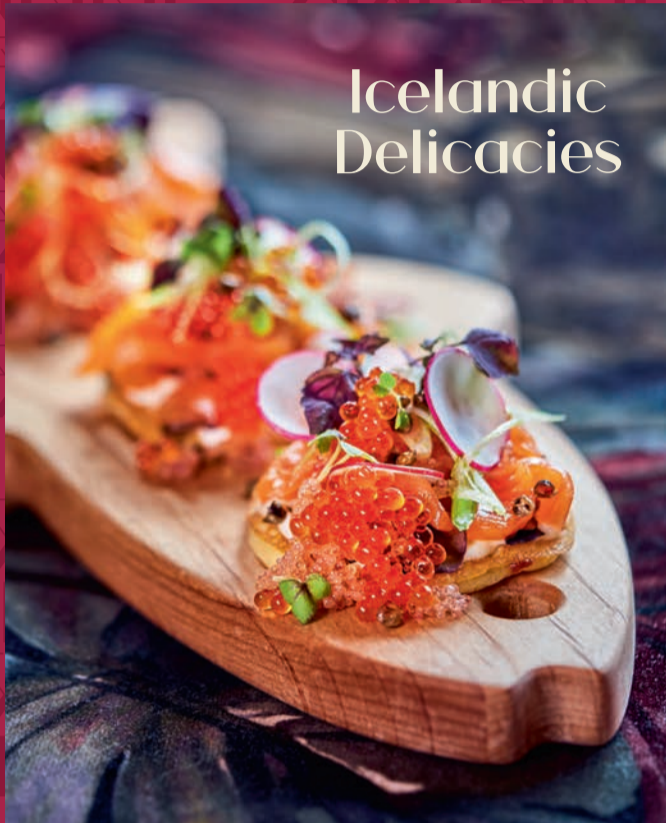


FJALLKONAN

KRÁ & KRÆSINGAR

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 cosy atmosphere yet still fun and festive. Stop by for snacks & drinks, lunch or dinner.



Icelandic Delicacies



Must try dishes

LAMB & FLATBREAD

Slow cooked lamb, traditional Icelandic flatbread from the Westfords, carrot purée, pickled red onions, horseradish sauce

ARCTIC CHARR & BLINI

Lightly cured arctic charr, chickpea blini, horseradish sauce, roe, crispy lentils, yuzu-elderflower dressing

ICELANDIC PLATTER

- > Puffin, crowberry gel
- > Minke whale, malt glaze
- > Lamb tartar, chive mayo

THE LAMB BURGER

Bacon, mushroom & date duxelle, pickled red onions, pickled cucumber, rucola, smoked cheese, fries

SKYR ETON MESS CHEESECAKE

White chocolate "Skyr" mousse, meringue, raspberries, raspberry sauce

Happy Hour 15-17 every day

Draft beer, house wine by glass and cocktails – **halfprice!**

FJALLKONAN WELCOMES YOU!



Participants of book fairs past in the used book store on Hverfisgata

Wordflood

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

Words: **a rawlings** Photo: **Art Bienick**

Film

Iceland's annual book fair ran from November 23rd-24th at Harpa.

Bókamessa, Iceland's annual book fair, is a déluge of books, publishers, readers, writers, and piparsmákökur—Icelandic pepper cookies. As the kick-off to the country's infamous Jólábókaflóð, 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 Christmastime," Bókamessa organizer Bryndís Loftsdóttir explains. "At Christmas parties, the question is always, 'What books have you gotten? What are you reading?'"

In Iceland, it has become rote that the ultimate Christmas present is a book... in addition to socks, of course, so as to ward off Jólakötturinn from kidnapping unfortunate souls to be devoured by the ogress Grýla. 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 Faxaflói Bay and the snow-covered Mt. Esja in the distance juxtapose against the busy book-fair interior. Throngs shuffle through Bókamessa looking for titles to add to their wishlists.

Cult author Stefán Máni perches by rows of his new novel, offering commentary on cover designs for his blood-soaked 'Aðventa' ('Advent') and the biblical 'Svartigaldur' ('Black Magic'). Ásta Fanney Sigurðardóttir smiles in a portrait overtop Partus Press, where her poetry collection 'Eilífðarnón' ('Cows Come Home') astounds in purple cloth, hardcover, and metallic ink. Guðrún Eva Mínervudóttir sits in Storytel's booth

for a live-broadcast interview on her new book 'Aðferðir til að lifa 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 Viðarsdóttir and Lára Aðalsteinsdóttir.

"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."

Après moi, le déluge

The growth in publications is truly staggering, Bryndís confirms. "There is 21% more Icelandic fiction this year than the year before, and 51% 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 Bryndís.

Publishing house Sögur emphasizes children's books in Icelandic and in translation. Their import innovation this year caught the eye of Bryndís. "Sögur used the opportunity to import 300 books in Polish. They have books in both Icelandic and Polish. It's so clever," she exclaims.

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

East meets West

Sveinn Snorri Sveinsson has travelled from Egilsstaðir to represent his two new novellas 'Minning þess gleymda' ('Memory of the Forgotten') and 'Þorpið í skóginum' ('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 his 28-year career. It is, however, his first time attending Bókamessa. He stands with one of his publishers, Félag ljóðaunnenda á Austurlandi, also visiting from East Iceland, engaging visitors in conversation about the books.

He is no stranger to face-to-face sales. As a teen, Sveinn sold his first books by going door-to-door in Egilsstaðir. "I sold a lot," he confides, "because it was something new—that a kid like me was publishing poetry in Egilsstaðir. 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 pallets gussled up with pine boughs. Bjartur / Veröld 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 would-be consumer. When some of these authors arrive later, life-sized and animated, whiffs of fandom ripple through the room.

"There is this beautiful relationship to be able to talk to authors," Lára remarks of the encounters taking place during Bókamessa. "People see their favourite author and you can see them thinking, 'I'm going to catch this one.'" 🐦

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen
Photo: Art Bicnick

FANCIES is where we talk to Reykjavik's most fashion-forward figures about style

Tanja Huld Levý Guðmundsdóttir



Tanja Huld Levý 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:
Playful. Quirky. Comfortable. Layered. Maximalist.

Favourite stores in Reykjavik:

I really like vintage stores like Wasteland, Spúútnik, the Red Cross, and Fata-markaðurinn. I just love browsing and trying to look for some gems. For jewellery, I really like Orrifinn. I am really picky about jewellery because I don't like it when it's too cute—Orrifinn 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! 🐷

Sæta svínid
ICELANDIC GASTROPUB

HAPPY HOUR

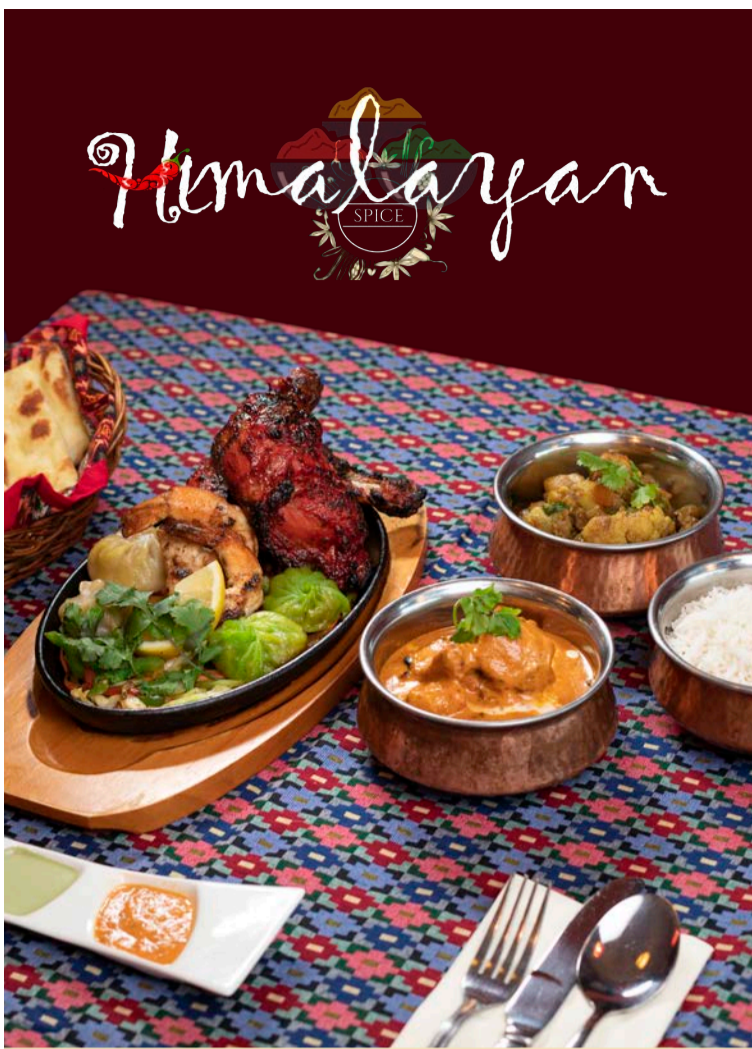
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Food

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Jómfrúin delivers the scandi-xmas bangers... for your mouth!

Fine Christmas Dining... And IKEA

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 Bienick

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

Jómfrúin

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

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Top Ten of Best restaurants in Iceland (DV. 17.06.11)

very reasonable prices

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MIXED thai restaurant, hverfisgata 125, tel : 588 -1818

YummiYummi thai restaurant, hverfisgata 123, tel : 588 -2121



JimClaudia2016

Reviewed 1 week ago

Authentic Thai Food

I am surprised at the poor reviews because during our visit in August the service and food were both great. Maybe because we just arrived just before they opened at 6?

Actually, in hindsight, I am glad we did not read the reviews because we were so pleased with our meal and we were able to have lengthy conversations with both the owner and staff.

Show less

Date of visit: August 2019

Value Service Food

www.ban thai.is tel : 55 -22-444, 692-0564 banthai@banthai.is



Jómfrúin, a time-honoured Danish outpost in the heart of Reykjavik. 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 jostling for space on a tightly-curated dish, featuring an ensemble cast of herring, sprightly seafood, tartlets, and (the piece de resistance) 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 risalamande 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 Jómfrúin, 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 deal bargains and group discounts).

This 10-course menu is a carnival for all five tastes and senses: sharing platters allowing you to manhandle your borderline raw arctic charr, taking in the wisps of smoke rising from a seared minke whale on a tableside yakitori, zening out to the crackling of the spicy langoustine tempura in your mouth, and admiring the shine on the chocolate fondant as it catches the reflection of our Instagram-hungry devices.

As a series of dishes, it is no less balanced or mindful. Dishes will



That’s one hard shrimp

contain little reminders of a previous dish, such as the morsel of langoustine making a guest appearance with the opalescent cod, and in-amongst the white tablecloth swagger you’ll get playful nods to Icelandic home-cooking such as the Waldorf salad with the wild goose or a ring of rice krispie puffs around a tiramisu sphere.

The best thing is that despite the richness of the dishes, you won’t be left too full to move. Which is fortunate, because a date night like this will lead to the kind of sexual escapades that would make a glacier blush. RE

It’s-a-Christa-Masy!

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,

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

the restaurant can accommodate a boisterous extended 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 unapologetic 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 charr 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 beet “steak,” and the pan-fried cod with ‘nduja aioli.

The Italian outing is capped off with mascarpone cream, grilled apricot and fried panettone—because it just isn’t Christmas without panettone.

Tired of smoked lamb and risalamande? Va bene! RE



La Primavera’s tiny dish of yuletide joy

SNAPS

REYKJAVIK | B I S T R O - B A R | EST. 2012

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Travel

Lava, Water And Everything In Between

Finding fire and ice on the South Coast

Words: Aliya Uteuova & Hannah Jane Cohen Photos: Art Bicnick



Distance from
Reykjavik:
200 km

How to get there:
Route One east

Trip provided by:
hiddeniceland.is

Support the Grapevine!
View this QR code in your
phone camera to visit
our tour booking site



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

It was at promptly 8:00 AM that I, along with 11 other adventures, cheerfully boarded the Hidden Iceland bus, which would take us on our journey. First stop: a hike on the Sólheimajökull glacier, located just two hours—158 kilometres—outside of Reykjavík.

Situated between the Katla and Eyjafjallajökull volcanoes, Sólheimajökull is part of the Mýrdalsjökull glacier, the fourth largest ice cap in Iceland. When Eyjafjallajökull erupted in 2010, it not only wreaked havoc on many major European airports, but it also caused a layer of volcanic ash to settle on Sólheimajökull. Seeing the glacier up close felt like I was looking at the past.

The glacier is vast and beautifully desolate, I thought, as we set out on our hike through the crests 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 was around three to four kilometres, and while it definitely made some adrenaline course through my veins, it was relaxed enough that 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 shrunk just within weeks. In a few short decades, this glacier may be gone.

True basalt beauty

After discarding our crampons, we loaded back into the bus and drove but ten minutes south to the Reynisfjara black sand beach. The beach is known for its beauty as well as for its danger. The tides are unpredictable and strong and can grab unsuspecting visitors that get too close to the water. I vowed not to become another statistic, and kept my distance from the waves. Luckily enough, I did not need to touch the Atlantic to take in the grandeur of the beach.

My first impression of Reynisfjara was of the land underneath my feet. Reynisfjara is covered in various-shaped pebbles, made from lava, which was cooled by the ocean. The rocks might seem grey at first, but rub them

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 wonders 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 are located within minutes of each other, and because Hidden Iceland times its tours to avoid overlapping 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,

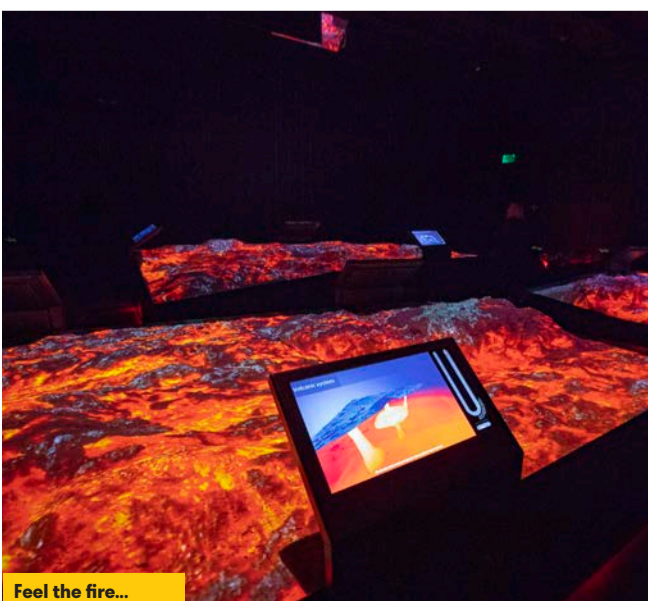
I felt at once refreshed, terrified, energised, and meditative. I could have stood there forever.

Natural context

Our last stop was the Lava Centre Exhibition in Hvalsöllum. 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 ac-

“The towering, jagged basalt towers of Reynisdrangar 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.”



Feel the fire...



See the ice.

tivities that take place in Iceland. The museum provided a lovely context for many of the sites we had seen that day and I left feeling 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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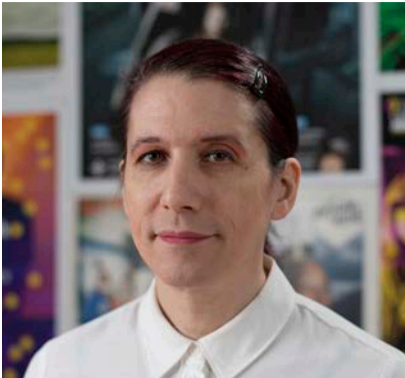
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WELL, YOU ASKED



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 a lot of people are hooking up that way. Why not go to some special interest event from our Listings page and meet some like-minded people and like, talk to them?

Are you aware that not all tourists to Iceland behave badly?

Yes, we are aware. You might get the impression from our news coverage that we think all tourists to Iceland are behaving badly, but we only report on those folks as a cautionary tale for other prospective visitors. The vast majority of tourists are lovely people and we welcome you back any time. 🍷

Send your unsolvable (UNTIL NOW) problems to grapevine@grapevine.is or tweet us at [@rvkgrapevine](https://twitter.com/rvkgrapevine).


HORROR-SCOPES


THE CHRISTMAS CANCER


Stay away from your drunk Hatari impression...

Words: **The Reykjavík Grapevine Spiritual Dept.**
Photo: **Art Bicnick**


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 10/10. Just kidding.


Taurus  Chanukah 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 Talmud.

Gemini  There's nothing more romantic and high-product-

tion-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




Go fish!

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 fucking place.

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. Wubbalubba-criinge-dub...

Capricorn  If you're afraid that Grýla 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. 🍷

CITY SHOT by Art Bicnick



Epic mic drop.

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LAST WORDS

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 propoganda 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. ♥

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