

TOURISM, CULTURE AND BUSINESS

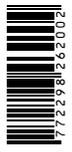
ICELANDIC TIMES

ISSUE 45 • 2021



Governor Ásgeir Jónsson's Revolt
Ocean Cable to Europe on the agenda
and Greenland comes into the foray
Connecting the Faroe Islands
The Plumber who became the Award
-Winning Photographer, Steiniþíp

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ICELANDIC TIMES

Icelandic Times is an ambitious magazine, published in five languages, for the multitude of visitors Iceland receives all year round. Icelandic Times emphasizes everything that can be considered Icelandic – the people, the food, tourism, industry and in fact anything that might give visitors a better picture of the country and its people.

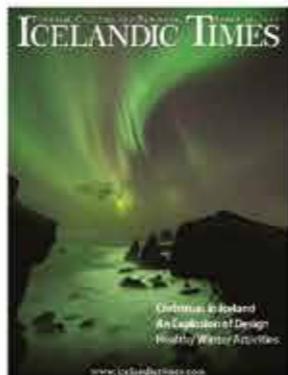
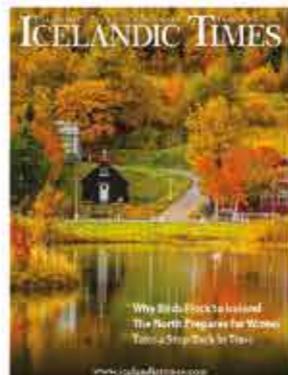
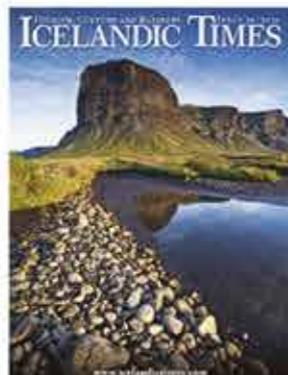
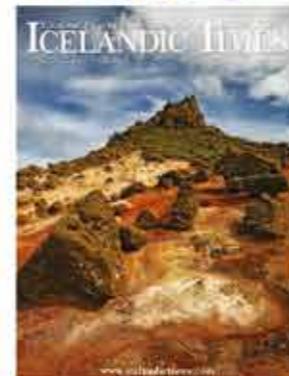
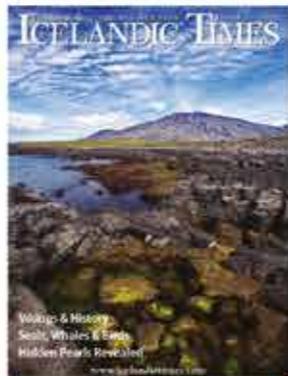
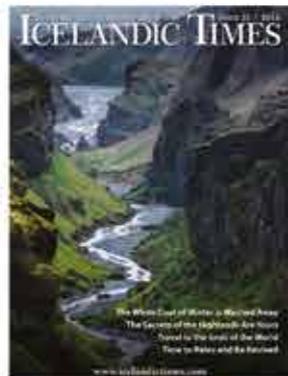
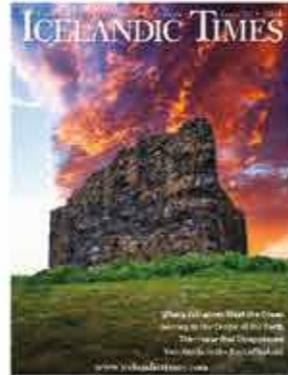
As you may know, Iceland has a lot to offer and there are countless individuals and companies who have meticulously laboured for years to make your stay more

memorable. Hundreds of mountain trails and caves have been mapped out, dozens of jeeps have been modified, millions have been spent on logistics, and thousands of sweaters have been knitted, just for you.

We hope you enjoy reading about these people and that this magazine will be helpful in making your stay more enjoyable.

Lenur Þ. Þrostfelli

Managing Editor and Publisher



Changes are taking place in the North! To help you experience them, a new airline, Play, has launched in Iceland. A silent change is taking place with Iceland's closest western neighbour, Greenland. Not only is the country opening up more to tourists, it has plans to use its giant reserves of hydro power to feed Europe's electricity demands. Cooperation between Iceland and Greenland grows every year. Icelandic companies are helping to develop the infrastructure needed to receive more visitors and now, you can book a flight in New York to Greenland's Nuuk via Keflavík Airport, also from Copenhagen and London or for that matter, any Icelandic destination. Greenland's tourist chief, Hjörtur Smárason, is an Icelander and he wants to open Greenland so others can experience its unique features.

Like Greenland, the Faroe Islanders are increasingly looking to the outside world beyond Denmark. The Faroe carrier, Atlantic Airways, is planning daily flights to Iceland and soon, New York is to become a destination. The contrast between the size of the two countries couldn't be greater,

but the experiences they offer visitors are truly memorable.

In Iceland, Dr. Ásgeir Jónsson, Governor of Iceland's Central Bank, is steering a course to ensure stability, with low inflation and interest rates. Recent changes have strengthened the Central Bank's ability to withstand special interest groups and oversee the banks to benefit the people of Iceland. His interview makes absorbing reading.

Innovation overcomes obstacles like the pandemic and you can read a number of inspiring examples here of Icelanders risking all and winning.

We think you will find this issue a fascinating and enlightening picture of the North.



Einar Th. Thorsteinsson

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Credits

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Icelandic language

Icelandic is one of the European root languages, like Latin. There is no 'c' or 'z' in modern Icelandic, except in foreign words. However, it still contains some letters not found in most other languages. This basic list provides a general idea of their sounds, using familiar words rather than phonetics.

Character	Pronunciation
á	Like 'ow' in 'cow'
æ	Like the personal pronoun 'I'
ð	Like 'th' in 'with'
þ	Like 'th' in 'thing'

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ICELANDIC TIMES

WE ARE FLUENT IN 5 LANGUAGES!

Published in English, Chinese, French, German and Icelandic



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THE ICELANDIC PHALLOLOGICAL MUSEUM

Visit one of the most unique museums on the planet

The Icelandic Phallogological Museum is one of the most unique museums in the world and one of the most-visited in Reykjavík. The museum contains a collection of more than 300 penises belonging to every species of mammal found in Iceland and scores of foreign species. Visitors to the museum will see specimens belonging to whales, a rogue polar bear, seals and walruses, and specimens originating from many different kinds of land mammals. “The collection began in 1974 and it’s been constantly growing,” said Þórður Ó. Þórðarson, the manager of the museum. “We have well over 300 penis specimens and 300 penis themed art and cultural pieces.”

History of the museum

The founder, Sigurður Hjartarson, a historian and teacher, began this collection in 1974 when colleagues who worked at the nearby whaling station in West Iceland began giving him whale penises to tease him. The idea of collecting specimens from more mammalian species was born. Collecting the organs progressed and by 1980, he had collected 13 specimens, four from whales and nine from land mammals. In 1990 there were 34 specimens and, when the museum opened in Reykjavík in August 1997, the specimens totalled 62. In the Spring of 2004, the museum moved to the small fishing village of Húsavík, the whale watching capital of Europe. It

was moved back to Reykjavík in 2011 and opened under the direction of a new curator, Siguður’s son.

New and exciting location

“The first location in Reykjavík was great, but we had to relocate because the collection grew and the number of visitors grew as well,” said Þórður. “We are now located at Hafnartorg, which is a great area of Reykjavík near Harpa.” The museum has undergone extensive changes to improve the visitor experience. There is more space for guests to roam and view the specimens and the technology has been enhanced, with touch screens adding a modernized feel. Another exciting addition has been a phallus-themed bistro where locals and tourists can enjoy food, coffee and beers on tap from local breweries.

A visit to the Icelandic Phallogological Museum is a unique, must-see experience when visiting Reykjavík. The museum, which is open every day from 10:00 – 19:00, is a great way to spend a couple of hours in the capital, and it will be a conversation piece for years to come! - JG



The Icelandic Phallogological Museum
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The Viking Village is a unique place and it is the only viking theme hotel and restaurant in Iceland. We have step by step been developing our facilities over the last 29 years and we will continue to do that in the future. We offer hotel accommodation and viking houses that are good for families and groups.

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It is a very good place to see the northern lights. The restaurant is open for groups in the evenings.

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OCEAN CABLE TO EUROPE ON THE AGENDA AND GREENLAND COMES INTO THE FORAY

The Arctic Circle Assembly was held in Mid-October with 1,400 participants and 400 speakers from 50 countries

The Arctic Circle Assembly – Hringborð Norðurlóða – was held at Harpa Conference Centre between 14th-17th October 2021 with 1,400 participants despite the Covid pandemic, though participants needed to provide a negative result from a COVID-19 test.

The Assembly was first held 2013 and has led to Iceland's leading role in discussion and debate on the Arctic. For the first few years, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson was still serving as President of Iceland and, even though he did not run for Presidency in 2016, the Arctic Circle Assembly has grown in stature year by year. The Assembly is the only annual international forum held in Iceland and both Iceland and Ólafur Ragnar have received much acclaim for staging the Assembly.



400 speakers from 50 countries

Four hundred speakers from 50 countries took to the stage. Scientists and opinion leaders from all corners of the earth. Greenland presented its intentions to build hydroelectric power plants and lay ocean cables across the Atlantic via Iceland all the way to Europe. The European Union presented its new environmental and fisheries policies and the Biden administration presented the new US policy on environment, as the US is again participating in the Paris Accord. Icelandic Prime Minister Katrín Jakobsdóttir introduced Iceland's plan for a Green Economy to 2030. Iceland's emphasis will be on green energy in transport, decrease of carbon emissions and CO² capture.

Electricity to Europe

Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson claims that Iceland should explore the possibility of an

ocean-cable, selling sustainable electricity to Europe. However, Greenland might take the lead and lay its own cable to Europe via Iceland and Faroe Islands. Ólafur Ragnar pointed to Norway providing electricity to Germany, the UK and the Netherlands. The Norwegians had proven that ocean-cables are technically viable.

"We have to explore these possibilities, as the Norwegians have proven that this is the way to provide Europe with sustainable green energy", Ólafur Ragnar said in an interview with Icelandic TV station, RÚV. "If we continue resisting laying a cable across the Atlantic, I think our problem in Iceland will be that, when the Greenlanders come knocking on our doors, they will want to lay a cable via Iceland to Great Britain and on to Europe, as they have one of the world's greatest hydroelectric reserves in the Western World", the former President said.

The Icelanders are confronted with the key question of whether to cooperate with the Greenlanders and the Faroes or: "Are we just going to say: Dear friends, No, we just want to keep the energy for ourselves", Ólafur Ragnar said and continued, "Should we utilize hydroelectric/geothermal power? People need to realize that the energy-consuming modern technology people use being on the internet, YouTube, Instagram and the rest, has to be sustainable. We will have to build Data Centres powered by sustainable energy. If people want to be on the internet, communicating, seeking information, then we need to harness hydroelectricity and geothermal power".

Regarding the Assembly, the former President said, "I believe that this Assembly affirmed Iceland as the world's centre of discussion and cooperation on the Arctic".

-HH. Photo: Páll Stefánsson



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FlyOver Iceland

Soar above the island on an exhilarating ride

FlyOver Iceland gives you a thrilling bird's eye view over the breathtaking landscapes of Iceland. Located in the Grandi harbour district on the west side of Reykjavík, the experience utilizes state-of-the-art technology, with full motion seating, for a true sense of flight. You sit suspended, feet dangling, before a 20-metre wraparound screen, while the film takes you on an exciting journey across Iceland. To enhance the experience, there are special effects, including wind, mist and scents, making you feel as if you are there.

An unforgettable experience

It's a unique feeling, hanging suspended as you soar through the landscape, feeling a light mist as you glide above a thundering waterfall, laughing and gasping at the dips and speed, and being enthralled by the epic beauty of the island. For many, the experience is more thrilling than expected and it's fantastic to share with your family.

Learn about Iceland's history and nature

Before the flight-ride experience, there are two pre-ride shows that allow you to explore the unique nature of Iceland, as

well as the nation's mythology and history. Before your flight begins, an animated Icelandic storyteller will welcome you into an ancient Viking longhouse. You join him by the light of the fire as he weaves a tale while an impressive shadow-play projection brings it all to life.

The animated narrator then takes you through the second experience, which uses audio, video and music. The guide, Sú Vitra, is a character based on old troll mythology that has been designed by the world-renowned illustrator Brian Pilkington. Sú Vitra guides you through three different acts. The first invites you to feel the power of Iceland's nature, including towering volcanoes, vast glaciers and thundering waterfalls. The next act centres around the first settlers, while the last act shows how Icelanders have made a life on the island, despite the many obstacles.

Relax at the comfortable café

You are welcome to enjoy the onsite café, Kaffi Grandi, where you can purchase snacks, light meals, soft drinks and coffee beverages. Adults can also order from the bar that includes a selection of beers, wines and cocktails.



Fun for the whole family

FlyOver Iceland is the perfect way to spend some time in the heart of Reykjavík with your family. Children aged 12 and under are welcome to join, as long as they are at least 102cm tall. FlyOver Iceland is open Wednesdays to Sundays this summer and the entire experience lasts about 35 minutes. The Grandi area is home to other family-friendly activities like the Whales of Iceland exhibition, as well as shopping and ice cream shops. -JG



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flyovericeland.is
www.flyovericeland.com



ART67 Gallery in the Heart of Reykjavík

In the heart of Reykjavík, you can find the big and beautiful ART67 gallery. The gallery is a co-op gallery in one of the most magnificent locations on Laugavegur, the city's main shopping street. ART67 is run by fifteen Icelandic women—11 painters and 4 clay and glass artists, and each artist gets their own space to breathe. If you buy an artwork for 65,000ISK or more, you get free shipping, no matter where you are in the world.

Birna Smith, who founded the gallery together with the ceramic artist, Kristín Guðmundsdóttir, said that in 2009, they had saved a lonely and abandoned house in the middle of the financial crisis. "We clad it with beautiful works of art by talented artists. 12 years later, we have now moved to one of Reykjavík's most magnificent shopping locations", she said.

When you enter gallery Art67, one of the artists will warmly welcome you. Birna said that she makes sure that there is a good

spirit in the gallery and a great driving force. "Passion, positivity and gratitude is what carried us through two difficult recessions in Iceland since we opened the gallery."

Every month a new guest artist opens an exhibition, but the gallery rents out one wall for a month at a time. October's guest artist is Marta Ryba. She is a self-educated artist who has lived in Iceland for the past six years. She is a realistic painter, emphasising details, lights, and shadows. Her exhibition is called *Interstellar Restlessness* and features familiar faces from movies in a surreal vacuum.

November's guest artist is the glass artist Selma Hannesdóttir.

The fifteen artists who maintain the Art67 gallery are Birna Smith, Gréta Erlendsdóttir, Fríða Rögnvaldsdóttir, Hólmfríður Vídalín Arngrímsdóttir, Kristín Guðmundsdóttir, Vigdís Bjarnadóttir, María Manda, Magnea Lynn Fisher "Sissy", Fríða Freyja, Hafðís Brands, Guðrún Hrund Sigurðardóttir,

Jóhanna Hreinsdóttir, Jóhanna Hreinsdóttir Katrín Gísladóttir Sedlacek, Margrét Hafðís Hauksdóttir and Yvonne Kristi Nielson.

The artists are as diverse as they are many. As mentioned earlier, 11 painters and four clay and glass artists run the gallery. There is great diversity within the group. You can find everything from landscape and abstract paintings to 3D works, whether they are on canvas or made of clay or glass.

Facebook: Art67 Gallerí
Instagram: @galleryart67
Weekdays: 11:00-18:00
Saturdays: 11:00-17:00
Sundays: 13:00-16:00



Art67
Laugavegur 61, 101 Reykjavík
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art67.is



GOVERNOR Ásgeir Jónsson's Revolt

Iceland's Central Bank has never been better equipped to ensure stability to serve the people, claims Governor Ásgeir Jónsson. With the merger of The Bank and Financial Supervisory at the start of 2020, the Bank is stronger than ever to enforce discipline on financial markets to improve the welfare of the people.

By Hallur Hallsson. Photo: Páll Stefánsson

Dr. Ásgeir Jónsson was appointed Governor of Iceland's Central Bank in July 2019, at 49 years of age. His appointment is for five years, so he has three more years to serve. "What will be, will be regarding a second term", he says. His emphasis is to establish the Bank's independence. His background is different from many of his predecessors; there was no politicking for his appointment. He has been called a communist and a liberal but has never been active in politics. However, he has made his stance clear on many issues that the Bank has to deal with.

Ásgeir Jónsson's forefathers were farmers and fishermen and he, himself, was a fisherman aboard trawlers from the town of Sauðárkrókur in the North—and never got seasick! However, though Dr. Jónsson is the Bank Governor, the highest office that an economist can attain to, he faced extreme challenges as a child: stammering, illiteracy and bullying. He was raised, until he was eleven years of age, at Bjarnarhöfn, Snæfellsnes – Bear Harbour – where his father Jón Bjarnason [1943] was a farmer jointly with his brother, Hildibrandur [1936-2017] and father, Bjarni Jónsson [1908-1990] from Asparvík – Aspen-Inlet at Strandir in the Northwest.

A stammer and slow to read

"I had difficulties with reading until finally the age of eight or nine", Ásgeir says in an inter-view with Icelandic Times. The learning was based on knowing the letters, starting with A and then B and so on. This was Greek to the young boy. To make things worse, he stammered and was bullied. Ásgeir reads differently to most people, as he sees words as pictures. This is possibly a form of dyslexia but Ásgeir has never been diagnosed. He solved that matter himself. "I didn't do well at school and yearned to be able to read", he says. Then one day he was able to connect the dots. Words manifested themselves in pictures and he was able to read, the letters were out of the way. This was a major revelation to him. He started reading the Sagas, beginning with Eyrbyggja, the regional Saga and then the other Icelandic Sagas, one by one. A brave new world appeared to him. "In fact, I became a fast reader almost overnight. That has helped a lot in my studies and job", he says. However, he still makes spelling mistakes as letters tend to mix within words. "I was raised on a farm with no playmates, only adults and the animals. There were no computer games and TV programmes were simple", he says. He spent his time in his grandfather's library and became passionate about the Icelandic Sagas—and

still is. At Akureyri's College, he attained 10 in Icelandic on the Sagas. "That is the grade that, to this day after all the studying, I'm most proud of."

Born in Norway 1970

Ásgeir was born at Aas, in Norway in 1970, second of six siblings. His father was studying agronomy at Aas University. In 1971 the family moved to Bjarnarhöfn farm between the towns of Stykkishólmur and Grundarfjörður. It is a well-known farm that had been bought in 1914 by Thor Jensen [1863-1947], a Danish man, who had arrived in Iceland at the age of 13 and led Iceland's fishery revolution at the start of the 20th century. Thor Jensen built sheep-sheds at Bjarnarhöfn, even though he was leading Iceland's fisheries revolution. Ásgeir's grandfather and his sons had 700 sheep.

At the age of eleven, Ásgeir moved with his parents to the ancient bishopric at Hólar in Hjaltadal in the north, one of Iceland's most historic places, where Iceland's last Catholic Bishop, Jón Arason [1484-1550] was a central figure. It does not come as a surprise, therefore, that Ásgeir has written about Jón Arason with deep insight. His historical work, "Uppreisn Jóns Arasonar – Jón Arason's Revolt" was published this year. Ásgeir puts the power-struggle between the Danes and Germans into perspective.





Bishop Jón Arason was a Catholic bishop backed by the Germans, however the King of Denmark had signed an Executive Order that Icelanders should turn to Lutheran worship. Bishop Jón Arason was beheaded at Skálholt Bishopric in 1550 and the king's servants raided Iceland's churches and monasteries of gold, silver and valuables and transported them to Denmark. That was the beginning of Copenhagen's elite taking over the country, followed by the Trade Monopoly [1602-1787]. Iceland was run as a colony. These were Iceland's Dark Ages.

Economics became his passion

Ásgeir studied at Akureyri's College and graduated at twenty years old in 1990. After

pondering about whether to study biology, medical science or become a fisherman, he found his passion in economics and enrolled at Iceland's University. He graduated in 1994. His BS paper, 'Sigt gegn vindi' – Sailed against wind – deals with Iceland's economy from 1400-1600. The year before his graduation, he began working for the Dagsbrún, – Day Ascending – Labour Union, where Iceland's legendary labour leader Guðmundur Jaki – 'the giant' – Guðmundsson [1927-1997] was supreme. People debated whether the 23-year-old economist was a communist or a liberal, but Gvendur Jaki always referred to him as the "University kid". Ásgeir got to know Iceland's most loved labour

leader in his final battle. Gvendur Jaki had revolted against the economists at Iceland's Confederation of Labour and so he wanted a 'foal'. "I was that foal," Ásgeir says with amused expression.

Ásgeir was constantly reading, seeking knowledge. He went to Indiana, USA and finished his Master's Degree from the University of Indiana in 1997 and his doctoral thesis in 2001. Ásgeir has been quoted that his stammering intensified when he was teaching in English. He started speech coaching at Indiana Speech, getting his English stammering out of the way. Dr. Ásgeir Jónsson has had to tackle and defeat his demons to become the man he is and Governor of Iceland's Central Bank.

Chief Economist at 33 years of age

He returned to Iceland and became Chief Economist of Kaupthing Bank, aged 33. At the turn of the century, Iceland's credit was a triple AAA. For some reason, the Financial Supervisory had been moved out of the Central Bank in 1998 during Finnur Ingólfsson's tenure as Minister of Commerce. That took the sting out of the Central Bank. The banks were privatised and what was called 'the modern Viking raids of Europe' began.

"I was a very young Chief Economist. We were new kids on the block, inexperienced. I wasn't in the innermost circle of Kaupthing, although I was the face of Kaupthing as the media sought my comments on Iceland's economy and forecasts", Dr. Ásgeir says. He became well known, quite a celebrity. When the banks collapsed and with them the Icelandic Economy, he became one of the culprits. He started researching what had gone wrong and wrote "Why Iceland, an inside account of the meltdown's fascinating and far-reaching tragedies... in painstaking detail". "Why Iceland" was written in English and translated into Japanese, German and Arabic. It is the most referred to book on Iceland's banking collapse.

Dr. Ásgeir was involved in Kaupthing's resurrection with new name, Arion Bank. At the age of forty, he wanted a change so he left banking. He became professor at Iceland's University. It came as a surprise to many when, eight years later, Dr. Ásgeir was appointed Governor of the Central Bank—and some were quite critical. Dr. Ásgeir finds that understandable. "I believe that none of us who were in the whirlpool of the Collapse are the same. In retrospect, I would have done things differently. However, my involvement in the Collapse in itself helps me. I know the banks inside out and the pitfalls to debate the banks, as well as other special interest groups. Unlike my predecessors, I have inside knowledge of the banks. That gives me confidence in the never-ending struggle between special interest groups", he says.

Despite the Banking Collapse of 2008, Dr. Ásgeir believes that those years had their positives. Iceland managed to establish massive international firms that are still operating. Governments have done

well in the build-up after the Collapse and the Emergency Laws were the foundation to refinance the economy. Icesave united the nation, as it revolted against UK, Dutch and EU bullying. "Companies, politics and the public learnt their lesson. We are more careful. This can be seen in how companies are run, with fewer debts and more professionalism", he says. "The banks took over Iceland, didn't they?" "Yes, they did", he answers.

Tragic loss of a sister in 2011

The years after the Collapse were difficult for Dr. Ásgeir and his family. His sister Katrín died of cancer in 2011. He discussed the loss with Fréttablaðið before he took office in 2019. "When people get sick with cancer, the younger they are, the tougher the sickness. Katrín was diagnosed with the disease, went into therapy, and seemed to be cured. However, the disease resurfaced, and she died in only six months", he says. "It was horrifying to see how the cancer took everything from this beautiful young woman, who had been so healthy. Her sight, movements and then life itself."

It is obvious that it is tough to recall. "This was immense and without warning. It shocked everyone in the family. Katrín had always been healthy, and cared for herself better than most," says Dr. Ásgeir. "Neither my parents nor brothers and sisters have been the same since and we've stuck together more. After such loss, one understands better what really matters in life", said Dr. Ásgeir in the interview with Fréttablaðið. His father, Jón Bjarnason, served in the government of Samfylking and Vinstri græn—the Left Alliance and Left Greens — from 2009-2011, when his daughter died.

Appointment not politically biased

How is Dr. Ásgeir Jónsson different from his predecessors? "People don't know me for my political standpoints nor was the appointment based on politics. I'm independent of special interests. My commitment is to the Icelandic people and their well-being", he says. No special interest group was involved in his appointment. Freedom of Speech is the Governor's weapon and he's fearless in taking on special interests, such as the

Ásgeir had difficulties with reading until finally at the age of eight or nine. The learning was based on knowing the letters, starting with A and then B and so on. This was Greek to the boy. To make things worse, he stammered and was bullied.

pension funds or labour unions, companies and their Confederation, quota-owners and politicians. He has, for example, criticised the political parties for not building Sundabraut – the main road out of Reykjavík to the west and north, the municipality of Reykjavík, for inexplicable lack of building land and the giant fishing company, Samherji in Akureyri, in their quarrels with the Central Bank, criticizing, naming and going after individual public servants.

"I'm independent and I realize that I am dealing with powerful special interest groups, who may or may not be happy. I am my own master, and my allegiance is with the people of Iceland and their interest. I realize that this may lead to me not serving a second term. If so, then so be it", says Dr. Ásgeir.

Welfare policy and low interest rates

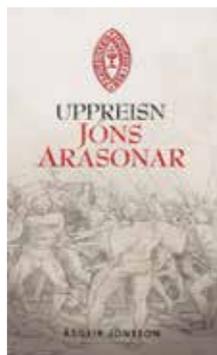
The Central Bank's policy is to ensure the people's welfare. Stability is key, he says. "The monetary policy is crucial for low-income people, who stand to lose most if inflation gets out of hand or during recession. This is my focal point; it matters to me. The monetary policy is welfare policy. My goal is low inflation and low interest rates. These are fundamentals for a higher standard of living in Iceland", he says.

Dr. Ásgeir, criticizing Samherji for attacking individuals at The Central Bank, was much talked about, but can it continue, that 12-15 people – or what the actual number may be – are in charge of Iceland’s fishing quotas with a yearly turnover of ISK 300 billion – over 2.3 Billion US Dollars? “This is a political question, which in itself is not for me to decide or debate,” he says.

Dr. Ásgeir points out that The Central Bank, for the first time in Iceland’s economic history, has powerful tools and independence at its disposal to ensure stability. It’s a different era. A solid króna is key to Iceland’s solid economy. With the merger of The Central Bank and The Financial Supervisory in 2020, the Bank got wide-ranging authority. Never before has an institution had such wide-ranging powers over the commercial banks. The Currency Reserve is at a historical high of ISK 900 Billion – 7 Billion US Dollars – and that’s huge for a nation of 330 thousand. “Iceland had soft landing at the end of Covid. The Bank sold ISK 200 Billion of its Currency Reserve, ensuring stability. Icelanders are, like never before, at a crossroads to run their economy and deal with inflation and depression. The Króna did well through Covid’s rough seas. Never in Iceland’s economic history, has an institution had such responsibility as does The Central Bank at present”, says the Governor.

The Soft Landing

Dr. Ásgeir emphasizes that he must hold his cool and not overestimate himself but stay humble. The Icelanders are fatalists, nature gives and nature takes and all will be well. These elements are engraved in the nation’s psyche. The nation has shown serenity in face of adversity, for example during the Cod Wars with Britain, The Banking Collapse and now the Covid pandemic. The Central Bank worked closely with the government during Covid, and the nation had weathered the storm. Now, it’s important to ensure balance in government spending. We see the Mediterranean nations struggling, and indeed Europe and America, where money is being printed feverishly, meaning inflation and a lower standard of living in the Western World. Uncertain times are ahead but Iceland is in better shape to deal with the future than most nations.



Uppreisn Jóns Arasonar – Jóns Arason’s Revolt – by Dr. Ásgeir Jónsson is a must-read about one of Iceland’s most dramatic and consequential events. With the execution of Hólar’s Catholic Bishop, Jón Arason, governmental power was moved to Copenhagen. The king took over land ownership of the Church, fish and brimstone. He confiscated all of the gold, silver and valuables, which were

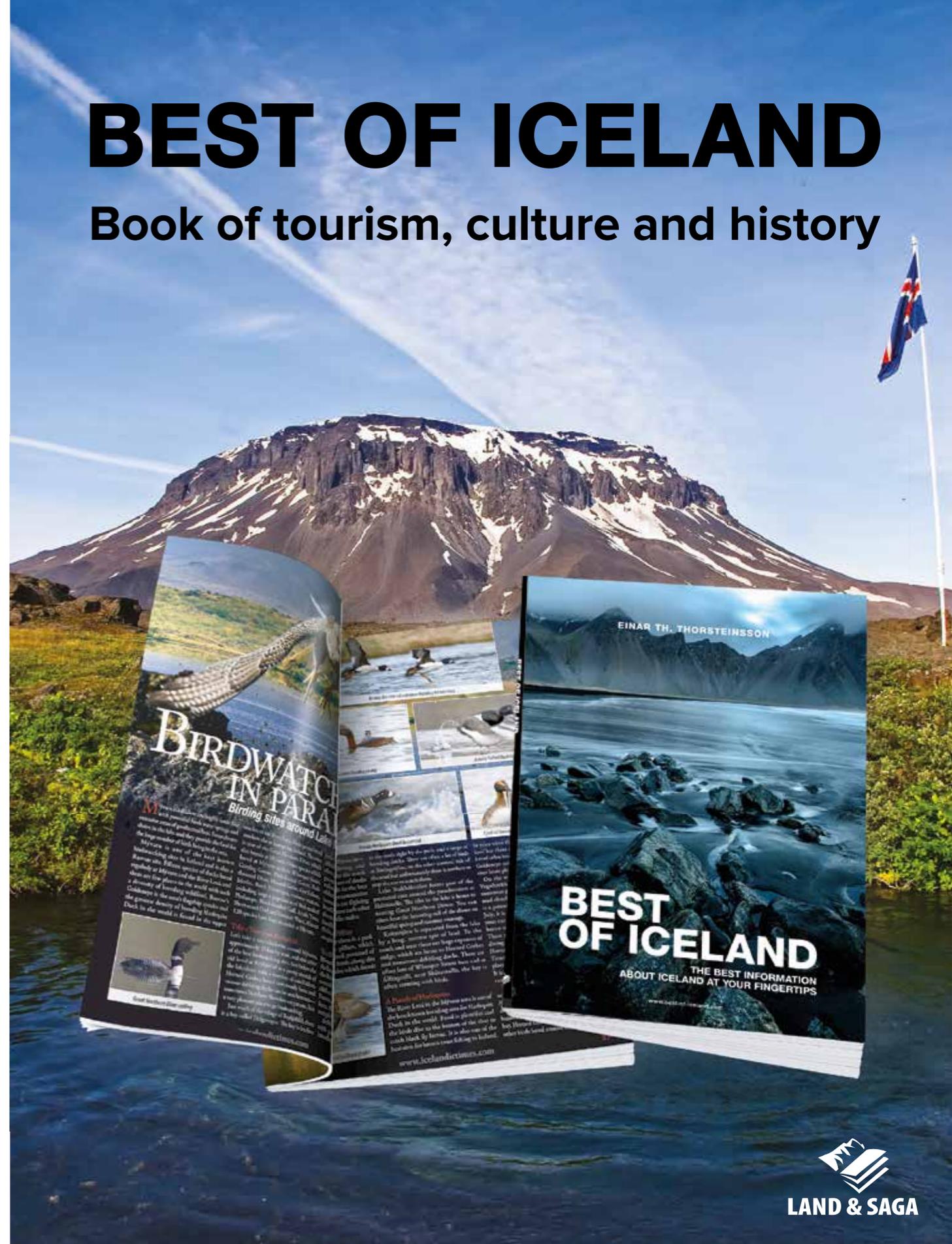
transported abroad. Copenhagen’s merchants were handed Iceland to exploit and the infamous Monopolistic Trade [1602-1787] was enforced. Iceland was closed to foreign relations. Iceland practically became a Danish colony. Iceland’s dark ages followed with poverty and isolation.

Jón Arason [1484-1550] was the son of a widow, born at tiny cottage Grýta in Eyjafjörður in the North, educated at Munkaþverá Cloister close by. He became a Catholic bishop at the age of 36. Jón Arason postponed the Lutheran Reformation for almost a decade. He had reached agreement with King Christian III [1534-1559] that Hólar bishopric would continue to be Catholic, and his son Sigurdur would succeed him. However, there was an intense power struggle

involving Iceland. Jón Arason was born towards the end of the “English” 15th century when the English and the Germans would grapple to buy fish from the locals. Dr. Ásgeir writes about the commercial war between the Danes and Danish colony. Iceland started in 1547. Jón Arason started his Armed Revolt supported by the Germans. He proclaimed the whole of Iceland as Catholic. Jón Arason lost a key battle at Sauðafell at the Valleys, Western Iceland and was taken prisoner along with his two sons. They were beheaded at the Skálholt bishopric in the South. The following year, an armed militia moved to Southern Iceland and killed all the Danes they got their hands on—almost 20 men, as well as the king’s Ombudsman, an Icelander. Dr. Ásgeir puts this into context with the European politics of the time.

BEST OF ICELAND

Book of tourism, culture and history



ELEGANT ICELANDIC Jewellery

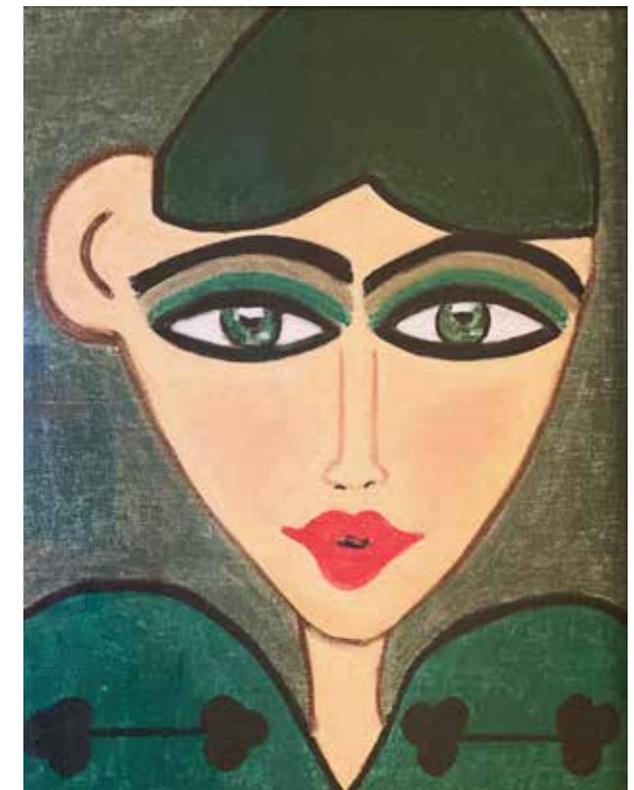
Renowned designer Hendrikka Waage presents jewellery, art collections

Hendrikka Waage has designed an exquisite collection of rings, earrings and necklaces. Indeed, the Baron Collection encompasses intricate Sterling silver and yellow gold lattice detailing, with the subtle colours of stones, which add a defined elegance to the pieces. Her jewellery is both glamorous and affordable, designed for the sophisticated, elegant, and modern woman.

The Baron Collection was inspired by a family heirloom, a carafe that has been handed down through many generations of the Waage family. Its history is fascinating as it was once owned by the mysterious entrepreneur and musician Baron Charles Francois Xavier Gauldree Boilleau, who lived in Iceland at the turn of the 1800s. Like the Baron himself, the collection conveys an air of mystery and elegance.

Taking inspiration from the world

Being Icelandic, born and raised in Reykjavik, Hendrikka is used to the natural beauty of the strong, beautiful and spiritual environment of Iceland. But her work and style are not limited to Iceland as her jewellery designs are influenced by some of the countries where she has lived and worked, including Russia, Japan and the USA. Hendrikka currently spends her time between Iceland and England. She loves the English countryside and the charm of London, which is now her home. "England is home for me, it's where I live, but Iceland is always in my heart. I am very patriotic," said Hendrikka.



Debuting new art

In addition to her stunning jewellery, Hendrikka has created a series of portraits with a powerful message. The work features portraits with women with a single-ear theme. "The motif is open to interpretation, but one interpretation is that in today's world, with an influx of information coming from every direction, you don't have to listen to everything", said Hendrikka. The portraits pay tribute to women who have forged their own path in life rather than following conventional wisdom. "Ultimately the motif is open-ended—open to boundless possibilities from one viewer to next", she said.

A creative background

Hendrikka has studied drawing and painting throughout her life, inspired by her late mother who also painted from a very young age. "Our home was very artistic. I began as a jewellery designer so designing and creating has always come naturally to me," said Hendrikka. "I began painting these characters that I call "Wonderful Beings" after studying at the

London Academy of Arts, where my teacher said that my paintings have an inimitable style and encouraged me to pursue them." Hendrikka uses many vibrant colours as she believes that rich colours enrich our lives. She uses a mixed media of oil, oil pastels and even graphics in her work.

Expanding into additional markets

Hendrikka has received extensive positive press coverage in all the major fashion and lifestyle magazines in the UK, including Vogue, Elle, Glamour, and Hello. In collaboration with Katla, Hendrikka is pleased to announce a new Katla X Hendrikka limited edition capsule of "Wonderful Beings" t-shirts and hoodies for pre-sale exclusively on katla.com. The sweaters and t-shirts pay homage to the empowerment of women around the world. -JG



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ZETO OFFERS Sustainable Icelandic Hair Care

New powder shampoo features bioactive seaweed extract

The Icelandic skin care industry has an interesting newcomer on the market. Zeto is an Icelandic, family-owned biotech/personal care company that sources wild seaweed from the pristine waters of Breiðafjörður, in West Iceland, to produce pure, bioactive seaweed extract that the company uses in its skin and hair products.

A family business

Zeto has a fascinating family story, with seaweed taking centre stage in the brand. “I’m a geographer who mastered in sustainability and I fell in love with seaweeds when I was mapping coastal habitats,” said owner, Eydís Mary Jónsdóttir. “My mother taught me to love nature and foraging, so I grew up with her making things like soaps and creams using foraged



Introducing Zeto’s powder shampoo

Zeto is excited to release its powder shampoo, which is a new, innovative form of shampoo that is rehydrated at the point of use. Zeto’s Balancing Powder Shampoo is a professional quality shampoo that is scientifically formulated to balance the scalp and nourish hair follicles, laying the foundation for healthy, beautiful hair. To use it, squeeze

ingredients. My brother is a specialist in extracting proteins and other natural bioactive compounds and he has worked with seaweed for many years. When the three of us put our passions together, Zeto was born. Seaweeds are one of the most sustainable, nutrient dense organisms found on our planet, packed with bioactive, skin-enriching ingredients.”



Eydís Mary Jónsdóttir

a small amount of powder into the palm of your hand, wet the other hand and gently rub them together to make a thick paste before applying it to thoroughly wet hair. The shampoo includes amino acids and plant-based polymers that help improve shine, volume and combability. “It gently, yet efficiently, cleanses the hair,” said Eydís. “We are launching this shampoo this summer and along with it being an effective product, it minimizes the carbon footprint of both packaging and transportation, essentially making it a more sustainable option to conventional shampoos that often contain 70% water.”

Ideal for sensitive skin

Zeto’s Balancing Powder Shampoo is a salon-grade shampoo but it is mild, with quality ingredients that have properties that soothe the skin. “People with a sensitive scalp that have tested our shampoo, say it relieves itching,” said Eydís. “This can be a great option for people who are sensitive to preservatives, perfumes and harsh sulfates, which Zeto’s powder shampoo does not contain.” The shampoo is also safe to use on colour-treated hair and curly hair.

A commitment to sustainability

All Zeto products are formulated with ingredients that resonate well with hair and skin, are biodegradable and nontoxic to aquatic ecosystems. “We work with our proprietary sustainable seaweed extract that we use in all of our products,” said Eydís. “We formulate for maximal effectiveness, minimal environmental impact and we never test on animals.” The company’s commitment to sustainability extends beyond the formulas, as the bottles are not only recyclable but are also made from recycled material to encourage a more sustainable circular economy for plastics.

Transparent ingredient list

Ingredients are the key to the product. While seaweeds are the heart of the formula, consumers can be assured that there is no silicone, no harsh sulfates, no fragrance, no EU allergens and no parabens in Zeto’s powder shampoo and it’s always cruelty free. “We do not use filler ingredients and make sure that actives are always used at efficacious levels,” said Eydís. “When there



Laminaria digitata

is water in our formulas, it is there to boost the effectiveness of hydrophilic ingredients in our formulas, not to fill up the bottle.”

A suitable name

Zeto is a company with strong values, with sustainability at its core, committed to using high performance, time-proven ingredients to create. The company’s name, therefore, is quite fitting. The name Zeto derives from Greek and expresses an ardent wish that another should live. “It truly captures the essence of what we strive to do,” said Eydís. Being based locally in Iceland, Zeto follows some of the strictest environmental and

regulatory legislation in the world, but Zeto even goes beyond that to ensure the highest quality and safety of their products. “We have really strict protocols for our processes and the materials we use and that is something we are not willing to compromise. The proof of our products’ performance lies in the 5 years of product development, testing and refinement, but the true test is the positive feedback from our customers.” -JG



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CONNECTING THE FAROE ISLANDS

Atlantic Airways sees growth opportunities in Iceland

Atantic Airways, the national carrier of the Faroe Islands celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2018, having grown from a small operator to an international airline. The company operates several modern aircraft and helicopters, serving an increasing number of domestic and international passengers. Atlantic Airways has impressive growth plans for 2022 that include Iceland.

“Our main activity has been to connect the Faroe Islands, to give the Faroese an opportunity to go abroad and to bring visitors to the Faroes, and that includes Iceland,” said CEO Jóhanna á Bergi. “We have routes to 10 different destinations, some all year and some for the summer and winter. The airline operates direct flights all year round from the Faroe Islands to Copenhagen, Billund, Aalborg, Edinburgh, Keflavik, Oslo and Paris, and seasonal flights to Barcelona, Mallorca and the Canary Islands.”

Good Iceland connection

Atlantic Airways has a strong relationship with Iceland and only sees that growing. “We are aiming to have a daily flight to Iceland as there is more interest and we are eager to invite Icelanders to the Faroes, to share our culture, food and nature.”

Future plans

The airline’s expansion plans had to be put on hold due to the fallout of Covid-19. “We had plans in 2020 that we put on hold, so 2022 will be our 2020”, said Jóhanna. “We are continuing to look at how to best serve the Faroese people and to attract visitors to the Faroes in 2022.”

“Our plan is to build on MICE activities and attract business travellers, conferences,



Jóhanna á Bergi

sports events and music events. Our high season is from July to September and we want to have a better balance between the high season and low season”, said Jóhanna. “We are working on attracting business and entertainment events for the shoulder season.”

Steady growth

The number of passengers flying Atlantic Airways has been steadily growing over the years, with 2018, its 30th year in operation, seeing a record-breaking 308,000 passengers, a 10% increase over the previous year. “We are seeing tourists come to the Faroe Islands and Nordic countries from all over the world and we expect that number to increase”, she said. -JG



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Photo: Páll Stefánsson

A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

Iceland and the Faroe Islands share strong cultural and business interests

The Faroe Islands and Iceland have enjoyed a close relationship for decades. “It goes way back”, said Halla Nolsøe Poulsen, the Faroes’ ambassador to Iceland. “Many Faroese went to Iceland to work in the fishing industry and would stay for months at a time. Many would go on to find Icelandic spouses and stay in Iceland and this, in part, led to a strong network between the two countries.”

There are countless instances of the bond between the Faroes and Iceland. “Every time there has been a crisis in Iceland, the Faroes stepped in and turned out to be a

friend in need”, said Halla. “When the crisis hit in 2008, the Faroese gave Iceland its first loan. That was a very strong sign of the brotherhood of nations.” Another example is when there was a landslide in Súðuvík many years ago, destroying some houses. “The Faroes gathered money to help rebuild the kindergarten in town”, she said. “There have always been close ties between us and the desire to help when possible.”

The relationship goes both ways. “We feel that Icelanders are very good in giving us a stage in larger world matters”, said Halla. “When we talk about Nordic Co-operation, the Faroes want to have



Halla Nolsøe Poulsen

full membership and Iceland has always supported that ambition. Other nations would say that there needs to be a conversation with Denmark, and would not take a stand, but we have always had Iceland’s support.” The annual Arctic Circle conference is another example. “The former President of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, has been very inclusive and has always pointed out that the Faroes should have a place in the Arctic Circle, to be included in policymaking and discussing Arctic issues.”



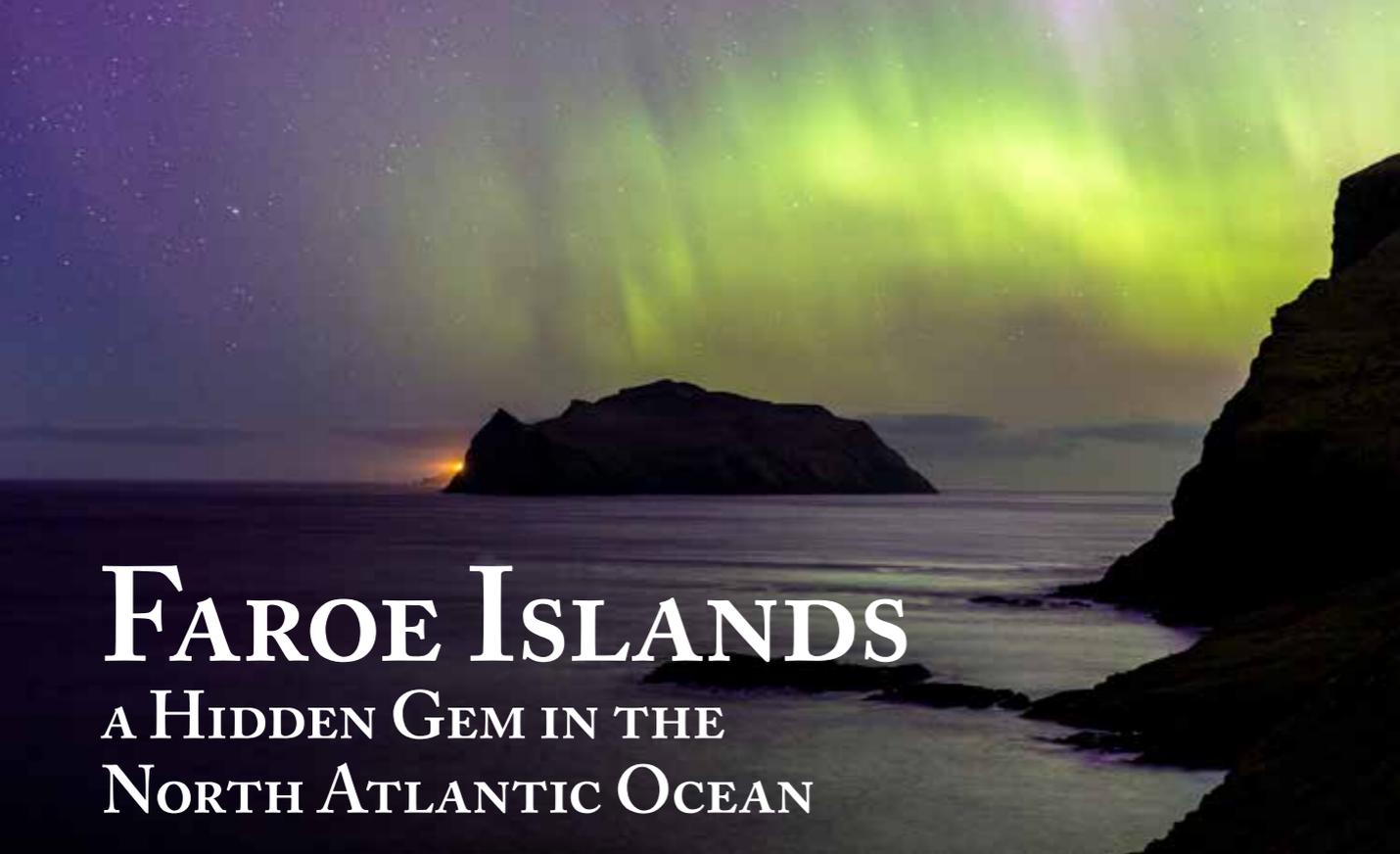
Relationship extends to business

Iceland and the Faroe Islands have strong business relations as well. “In 2006 we signed a free trade agreement with Iceland that states that there should be no discrimination between the countries”, said Halla. “That was the reason for establishing our representation in Reykjavík, and Iceland is the first and only nation to have an ambassadorship in the Faroe Islands.”

A new report from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs gives good recommendations on how to strengthen the business relationship

between the two countries. “Current numbers show that Iceland exports more goods to the Faroes than the Faroes to Iceland, with most exports being fish, some industrial goods and some lamb and sheep meat”, she said. “The Faroe Islands is the second-largest market for Icelandic lamb and sheep meat, after the UK.” There is much room for improvement here though. “There needs to be a bigger flow of goods and services to Iceland and there is a lot of potential for improvements there. Some obvious sectors to cooperate in are travel

and tourism and fish farming”, said Halla. There is an opportunity to strengthen cooperation in the tourism industry. “We saw during the pandemic that interest spiked in neighbouring countries, the Faroes can be an extended home market”, she said, adding that after a summer of traveling internally in Iceland, many Icelanders were interested in visiting the Faroes as their first trip abroad since the pandemic started. Increased travel would further enhance the relationship between both nations. -JG



FAROE ISLANDS

A HIDDEN GEM IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN



The Faroe Islands are a cluster of 18 mountainous islands in the North-Atlantic Ocean. An autonomous territory of Denmark, the small country lies halfway between Iceland and Scotland.

High bird-cliffs, old houses and sheep is possibly something people think of when they think about the Faroe Islands. There are, after all, more sheep on the island than people. A few years ago, Visit Faroe Islands and Atlantic Airways launched a campaign called “Sheep View” to petition Google to include the Faroe Islands in their Google Street View. The petition worked, and you can still check out Sheep View on YouTube.



Guðrið Højgaard

Sustainability is important

Guðrið Højgaard, Director of Visit Faroe Islands, says that in recent years they have begun to emphasise sustainability. “Sustainability is crucial to us and important for the future of the Faroe Islands.” There are many aspects to look at, but one of the more popular things they have done is close popular tourist destinations for a maintenance weekend. Volunteers apply to help, and then about 100 are chosen to take part. Last year’s maintenance weekend was postponed due to Covid-19 until September 2021.

One of Højgaard’s favourite places in her country is the village Tjørnuvík on the main island, Streymoy. It is nestled in a deep valley and there are no other villages in sight. From Tjørnuvík, you have a great view of the Risin and Kellingin sea stacks, a must-see when visiting the island.

Tórshavn is the capital, with the majority of the population living there. Tórshavn has

everything a city has to offer. From great hotels and restaurants to beautiful houses, museums, and clothing stores.

Other exciting places to see are Húsavík, Tinganes, Vestmanna bird cliffs and Gásadalur, home to the beautiful Múlafossur waterfall. This is, of course, not a definitive list, and we recommend checking out www.visitfaroeislands.com to get further information about what to see and do in the islands.

How to travel

Just as in Iceland, there are no trains in the Faroe Islands, but the road system is excellent. You can travel via rental car, bus or even cycle. If you would like to do something different, you can go for a helicopter ride.

To get to the Faroe Islands, you can either fly or take the ferry. From Keflavík Airport, it’s only an hour-long flight. It is also possible to fly from various destinations such as Copenhagen, Paris, Edinburgh, and Bergen. The Smyril Line ferry is a Faroese company that sails between Denmark and Iceland. -HDB



THE JOYFUL WONDERLAND

The Little Christmas Shop that is festive all year round

Anne Helen, owner of 'The Little Christmas Shop' on Laugavegur, Reykjavík's main shopping street, is what you might call a 'one woman wonder'. 20 years ago, she decided it was time for a change and turned to doing what she does better than most of us; making the world a prettier place, one Christmas ball at a time.

In the Land of Eternal Christmas

Anne Helen, a genuine aesthete, says she has always had somewhat of a Christmas obsession and an intense passion for things of beauty. She never goes for anything average but hunts for things of quality that truly stand out. Though she imports merchandise from all over Europe, her ambition is to specialise in Icelandic handiwork and ornaments. She already has an extensive range, most made exclusively for her by a number of craftsmen,

each having a distinctive approach and working in materials such as wool, glass and clay. In addition to customary Christmas ornaments, she includes local folklore figures, like the thirteen Yule Lads and the Christmas Cat.

Anne Helen loves to tell customers about Icelandic Christmas traditions. Visitors often stop by simply because they've heard of her hospitality and the shop's friendly atmosphere. They rarely leave empty handed. After all, placing an Icelandic Yule Lad on your Christmas tree every year is a great way to remember your visit to Iceland. -HD



Little Jólábúðin

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THE SEA-BARON RESTAURANT by Reykjavík's old harbour

Reykjavík's freshest fish and the world's best lobster soup

Sægreifinn Restaurant – Sea-Baron Restaurant – is a harbourside restaurant that serves the freshest fish in Reykjavík and world's best lobster soup in a cosy atmosphere. The restaurant features a simple menu of signature dishes; lobster soup and grilled fish on spears. Guests can enjoy king prawn shrimp, scallops, salmon, blue-ling, tusk, redfish, sea trout, halibut, whale steaks, whale samples, vegetable skewers and potato skewers, among other dishes. This famous local eatery is a favourite among tourists and locals alike.

The late Kjartan, the Sea-Baron

A true legend and a trailblazer in Reykjavík harbour was the late Kjartan Halldórsson, the Sea-Baron, who passed away in 2015. A fisherman and Coast Guard chef, he came up with the recipe for what has been called the "world's greatest lobster-soup". It all started in 2003, as a fish-shop for the locals.

Kjartan's transition from fishmonger to restaurant owner was based more on coincidence than anything else. One day, standing by his boxes of fish packed in ice, a group of foreign visitors asked if it were possible to prepare fish for them. Quick to respond, Kjartan ran to the nearest shop, purchased a grill, cooked and invited the visitors to dine on fish barrels inside his fish-shop that is the Sea-Baron restaurant today. Word spread quickly and more people asked for his grilled seafood, so Kjartan became a restaurant owner.

Elísabet's Promise

The Sea-Baron is now owned by Elísabet Jean Skúladóttir, who joined Kjartan in 2005. Kjartan invited her to buy the business back in 2011. She made a promise to not stray away from the original idea of simplicity, fresh fish and friendly atmosphere. Thus, she became the proud owner, along with her husband Daði Steinn Sigurðsson.



The Sea-Baron, down by the old harbour, is in a green-painted fisherman's hut, where the seamen used to sleep, built during the Great Depression in 1936. There one gets a glimpse into their hardship all those years ago. -HH



Sea-Baron Restaurant

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Introducing the MULTIS PROJECT

Contemporary Icelandic art to view and purchase

MULTIS is an Icelandic company that specializes in the promotion, publication and sale of art works by contemporary Icelandic artists. Owned and operated by three Icelandic women with deep roots in the local art scene, MULTIS' goal is to make art accessible to the public and connect the professional field of art to the business community.

Art available for purchase

On the MULTIS website, www.multis.is, individuals can browse works by numerous Icelandic artists and can purchase directly from the website. However, MULTIS offers so much more than a portal to purchase art. The three owners have been extensively involved in the Icelandic art scene for many years and their passion for art is very clear. "Art is an investment and we want to make it accessible to people," said Helga Óskarsdóttir, owner and artistic director. "MULTIS makes sure people know where to go to buy art and helps people understand the concept behind the pieces. We are here to help."

Meet the artists

MULTIS works with an exciting array of artists, including Gjöorningaklúbburinn/The Icelandic Love Corporation, Guðjón Ketilsson, Hulda Rós Guðnadóttir, and Snorri Ásmundsson, among many others. "This is the only company that specializes in art and we are lucky to be working with so many talented artists," said Helga. "Recently we started working with Magnús Pálsson, an important figure in the Icelandic contemporary art world with a very long career. It's a great honour."

Immersive, interactive exhibition

MULTIS aims to have openings at cultural institutions and private parties for those who are interested in participating in and supporting the visual arts environment in Iceland. On site at Snorrabraut 54, MULTIS is currently exhibiting an exciting publication from Steingrímur Eyfjörð. The work, titled Hugform / Thoughtform, is based on experiments conducted by Robert Hanham Collyer in the 19th century. Two seated participants face each other as a large vase is filled with



water. The first participant looks into the opening of the vase, into the darkness, and sends a message.

The second participant then looks into the opening of the vase to receive the communication and draws the image that came through to them on a piece of paper provided to them. Looking at the surface of water or something that connects to the subconscious has a long history, and in this work the water and darkness of the vessel are used to send a mental image. The process is then reversed and repeated. It's a fun experiment that allows individuals to enjoy art in a different way.

Plan your visit

MULTIS welcomes locals and tourists to view the latest exhibition at their permanent space by appointment. Located in an inviting space on Snorrabraut 54,

the owners will guide you through the experience. Further information on how to book a visit can be found on the website: <https://multis.is/visit-multis/>

The future is looking bright for MULTIS. "There is a lot of interest among artists in Iceland and we are thankful to be collaborating with such great talents," said Ásdís Spanó, owner and artistic director. "We are growing and are hoping to introduce our artists worldwide in the next few years. It's a very exciting time."

By visiting The MULTIS project you can enjoy a tour of Icelandic art, visiting the office and exhibition space and meeting some of the artists who have created the works. The gallery also arranges studio visits, where the visitors get the opportunity to meet the artists and enjoy refreshments while discussing and learning about Icelandic contemporary art.

-JG

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A VERY STRONG BOND

Greenland and Iceland share many common interests



Tove Søvdahl Gant

Greenland and Iceland have enjoyed a strong bond for decades, sharing common interests in culture and business. “We have a very good relationship with Iceland”, said Tove Søvdahl Gant, the Greenland Head of Representation to Iceland. “We have a lot in common, including our geographical placement, high in the North Atlantic. As we are both Arctic nations, we also have a role in Nordic Cooperation and there are many platforms that we can work on together.”

Mutual business interests

The two nations have good cooperation when it comes to their respective fisheries and quotas they share, as well as managing their fisheries sustainably. “That is a value we share”, said Tove, adding that there are many opportunities where the two countries can further work together. On 23rd September, 2021, a joint declaration was signed by Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson, Iceland’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development Cooperation, and Pele Broberg*, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Industry, Trade and Climate Affairs in Greenland. “This report, ‘Cooperation between Greenland and Iceland in the New Arctic’ and its many recommendations are telling us that

we can enhance our cooperation even further”, said Tove.

Indeed, the declaration emphasizes the role of Greenland and Iceland in connection with climate change in the Arctic and the report lays a solid foundation for identifying new and further areas of cooperation. The increase in trade of goods and services between Greenland and Iceland in recent years, as well as the resumption of direct flights between the two nations is cited. Increased collaboration in the field of fisheries and a willingness to further strengthen cooperation between the countries in this field is also important.

Resumption of flights

Iceland and Greenland have had great cooperation within the tourism sector, but the pandemic has put things on hold. “A lot of things have stopped during the Covid pandemic”, said Tove. “Airlines servicing the east coast of Greenland have been very important for us. There were direct flights in the summer and we hope that resumes”, she said. Flights and freight carriers help move goods between Europe, Iceland and Greenland, which is key to the nations’ cooperation.

Cultural initiatives had to be put on hold as well. “This morning I had a visit from an organization that holds

chess tournaments and they are hoping to resume activities”, said Tove. “Also there is a swimming programme that brings children from Greenland to train in swimming. These are the type of activities that are important because these are people that need each other—athletes, artists, filmmakers, choirs, musicians. The cultural bonds between the Icelandic and Greenlandic people are strong.”

The Arctic Circle Assembly

The Arctic Circle Assembly is a very important forum for Greenland, as the nation doesn’t always have its own voice. “Because the Arctic Circle Assembly brings together government, researchers, business leaders, and scientists, it’s a forum where we can engage with many with our own voice”, said Tove. “It enables us to speak about many issues, climate issues included.”

Iceland is very supportive and respectful of the fact that Greenland is not an independent state. “On one hand, Iceland is supportive of our independent voice, but they recognize that Greenland is part of the Danish kingdom and they don’t overstep the rules of diplomacy”, said Tove. -JG

*Please note that Greenland’s Foreign Affairs portfolio now rests with the Prime Minister of Greenland, Mr Muté B. Egede, after reorganisation.



A BOY FROM BÍLDUDALUR BECOMES GREENLAND'S TOURIST CHIEF

Hjörtur Smárason is now the tourist chief of Greenland, where everything is huge. One by one, chains of the past are being broken and Greenlanders are on the path to independence



Greenland is Iceland's closest neighbour, across the ocean from the Westfjords. The shortest distance between Iceland and Greenland is less than 300 kilometres, between Scoresby Sound and the Westfjords. Greenland is Kalaallit, in Kalaallit Nunaat, the Inuit mother-tongue.

As the world's largest island, it is 2.1 million square kilometres — larger than Great Britain, Italy, Spain and France combined. Some 81% of Greenland is glaciers and 19% landmass, about 400,000 square kilometres. It's part of the North-American continent but its government and culture are European. Greenlanders live mostly in the south-west where the weather is mildest. The distance between Kapp Morris Jesup in the high north and Hvarf in the south is 2,650 km. Its coastline is just over 44,000 km—larger than the Earth's circumference. Greenland is huge!

On a path to independence

Greenland is part of Denmark. However, the nation is on a path to independence.

It got its home-rule in 1979 and autonomy in 2008. Nuuk – Góðvon in Icelandic or Good-Hope – is its capital, with 18,000 inhabitants. Greenland ceded from the European Union in 1983, which shrank in area by some 53%. There are 56,000 Greenlanders, of whom 20% are Danes. It is highly possible that the same will happen to Greenland as it did to Iceland when it was on the pathway to independence some 100 years ago. The Danes there became patriotic Icelanders. In due course, people will not talk of 20% Danes, rather 100% Greenlanders. That is this author's prediction.

The goal is to increase tourist numbers—a lot

After centuries of isolation under Danish rule, Greenlanders are opening up to the outside world and proclaiming, "Greenland is open for business." Before covid, some 100,000 tourists visited in 2019 and the goal is to increase that number, by a lot. Their simple slogan is, "Visit Greenland".

The new Tourist Chief

Greenland's new tourist chief is the Icelander, Hjörtur Smárason. Hjörtur Smárason is born and bred in Bíldudalur, in Iceland's Westfjords. Bíldudalur's sister-town in Greenland is Kulusuk on the east coast.

Born in 1975, he now lives in Nuuk with his wife Inga Rós Antóníusdóttir and their two youngest children. At the age of 14, the young Hjörtur travelled to Kulusuk in a student exchange programme and spent time there. He fell in love with the land and its people. He became passionate about Greenland. Now he is serving Greenland and its people.

Land of opportunities

Hjörtur arrived in Greenland in April 2021. The country was closed due to the covid-pandemic, so he had to get a special permit. It was reopened on the 1st October, after the tourist season. Hjörtur says that the 2022 season is promising. "Greenland is a country of opportunities, and the prospects are good as people hunger more and



more for encounters with nature. We are hopeful that next year, we get the same number of tourists as before covid, 100,000 guests," says Hjörtur.

The country needs to get infrastructure in place. It is difficult to travel between destinations. Icelanders are used to travelling the 1,500 km-long road around their country but the longest road in Greenland is 9 km. Dog-sledges north of Nuuk are the way to travel. Alternatively, there are flights and sailing. In fact, dog-sledges are the Greenlanders' cars and fishing-boats, as well. Hundreds of them are registered as such. They go onto the frozen waters and fish halibut through the ice.

Infrastructure is priority

"The emphasis is to get infrastructure in place before the influx of tourists really begins," Hjörtur says. It was huge improvement when Icelandair took over Air Iceland and started flying to Greenland via Keflavík Airport. It is now possible to book a flight from Copenhagen, London or New York to

Nuuk via Keflavík. Prior to that, flights to Greenland were from Reykjavík. This is crucial and an example of the opening taking place. Norlandair, based in Akureyri, uses Twin-Otter planes to fly to Kulusuk.

Now, Icelandic contractor, Ístak is enlarging and modernising two airports—in Nuuk and in Ilutissat – Ice-Mountain, 200 km north of the Arctic Circle. There, each day, the glacier crawls 40 metres and part collapses into the ocean, spectacularly breaking into colossal Ice-Mountains. There is a Best Western hotel in Ilutissat that is currently being enlarged. Ístak has already enlarged Nuuk's harbour, which is on the route of shipping company Eimskip. One by one, the chains of isolation are breaking, as Iceland and Greenland cooperate more and more.

Eric the Red

It is, of course, not possible to write about Greenland without mentioning Icelandic settler, Eric the Red's Brattahlíð – Steep Hill – in the south. According to the ancient Book of

Greenlanders and Book of Settlement, Eric the Red settled at Brattahlíð in 985 and he died in 1008, eight years after his son Leifur Lucky – discovered America.

Across the Eiríksfjörð is the Narsaruaq-airport and to north-east, the village of Narsaq. There, they built North-America's first church; the Hvalsey Church – Whale Island – that still stands. In the autumn of 1408, two Icelanders Sigríður Björnsdóttir and Þorsteinn Ólafsson were married. They had lost their way to Iceland from Norway, where the Plague Pandemic devastated the Norwegians. The couple then sailed to their home in Skagafjörður in the north of Iceland. Less than half a century later, as ships arrived from Iceland, there were no people to be found, still one of history's unsolved mysteries.

When Hjörtur's eldest son was confirmed in 2009, his father took him to Brattahlíð. "An unforgettable hiking tour for a week through history lane", says Hjörtur Smárason, who fell in love with Iceland's western neighbour as a youth and now serves as its tourist chief. -HH



64° REYKJAVÍK DISTILLERY: QUALITY CRAFTED SPIRITS

An independent distillery with unique spirits and liqueurs

64° Reykjavík Distillery is a family-run, independent micro-distillery that handcrafts unique Icelandic-inspired spirits and liqueurs. Popular among locals and visitors alike, the spirits feature flavours including blueberry, juniper, crowsberry and rhubarb. The distillery, which was founded in 2009, uses handcrafted processes to create the spirits including natural infusion and

small batch distillation. The ingredients are sourced sustainably, and are proudly foraged locally in Iceland. Great care is spent in selecting the best ingredients as the unique quality and intensity of the berries are key to the rich flavours of the spirits. There is a short window for foraging berries in Iceland, so the pickers must time the season perfectly to collect the best berries.



The spirits, which can be enjoyed in mixed drinks or on their own, can be found in the finest restaurants and bars in Iceland as well as in state-run liquor stores.

Something for everyone

There is a flavour to suit every taste: the blueberry, crowsberry and rhubarb liqueurs are on the sweet side and are great for cocktails or to enjoy along with a dessert.

Reykjavík Distillery's Einiberja (juniper) is a delicious gin that has an elegant, pure, yet intense and crisp flavour. Meanwhile, the company's Brennivín packs a bit of a punch. Distilled from the best organic caraway seeds and local angelica seeds, 64° Brennivín is enjoyed neat with traditional Icelandic food. Lately, local and international bartenders have discovered 64° Brennivín, along with other 64° Reykjavík Distillery spirits, to design fantastic cocktails. -JG

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A TASTE OF THAI

Krua Thai serves an enticing cuisine in the heart of the capital city

Reykjavík's culinary charm is quite impressive for a small city, with a growing number of choices to suit all tastes. While there are traditional Icelandic restaurants serving fresh fish and tender lamb dishes, there are also fantastic restaurants specialising in food that you may not expect to see in Iceland. For instance, Krua Thai features classic and inventive Thai food in Reykjavík.

Impressive Menu

Quality ingredients, friendly service and a comfortable environment make Krua Thai a favourite among locals and travellers. The menus feature many of the staples you expect to see such as savoury spring rolls, tasty rice and noodle dishes, and glorious plates of Pad Thai. Main courses include delicious options like Pad Grapow, which is a fried dish with chilli and basil leaf in oyster sauce, served with rice and either chicken, pork, beef or lamb. There are also soups and salads on the menu. There is truly something for everyone.

Vegetarian-friendly dining

Non-meat eaters will feel more than welcome as Krua Thai has a large vegetarian section that is big on flavour. For instance, guests can enjoy vegetable noodle and rice dishes, as well as fried vegetables with tofu in oyster sauce, and a spicy vya salad served with rice.

Central location

Krua Thai at Skólavörðustíg 21a, is conveniently located in the heart of city centre, and is a delightful location for a meal. It has a cosy atmosphere and friendly staff who are eager to ensure you have an ideal dining experience. It's the perfect place for a meal after some time exploring museums, shops, and cafes in the trendiest and liveliest part of Reykjavík. If you want to spend the evening in at your hotel or guesthouse, you can order food to take away, and with delivery. Delivery is available daily until 21:00. -JG



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THE DRUMMING BEAT OF PLAY EXCITES ICELANDERS

The steadfast drumming beat of FlyPlay... FlyPlay... FlyPlay has echoed throughout Iceland this year. Play Airlines' first take-off was in June 2021. This autumn, Play operates three brand-new, 192-seat Airbus 321 neo jets and plans to have a modest ten 320s and 321s by 2025 connecting America and Europe via Keflavík Airport.

Play's CEO is Birgir Jónsson, the former drummer of heavy rock band Darknes – Dimma in Icelandic, known amongst heavy-rock-fans around the world for their powerful beat and sophisticated performances, such as with the Icelandic Symphonic Orchestra. Birgir Jónsson holds an MBA from the University of Westminster and a BA from the University of Arts in London. He has extensive experience in international management and operations. He was CEO of Iceland Express and Deputy CEO of WOW Air until 2016; Össur's Regional Director in Asia, based in Hong Kong; he has worked in Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary, where he was CEO of the Infopress Group, one of the largest printing companies in Eastern Europe. He has been involved in many projects, restructuring and transforming a diverse range of industries.

Four thousand stock-holders

So convinced are Icelanders of Play's potential that 4,000 people put forward 82 million dollars to launch and run operations for the first five years. By Icelandic standards, that is a lot of money. It was one of Iceland's most successful entries into the Stock Market, with the offer oversubscribed 8 times over. Two months after its European launch, Play applied for authorization from the US Department of Transportation. North America has always

been a part of its start-up plans. Play will attempt to woo travellers on two fronts: low-cost routes across the Atlantic connecting Europe and America, with Keflavík Airport as the hub and the possibility of a trip to explore Iceland's breath-taking nature. The application does not specify routes. However, CEO Birgir Jónsson has made no secret of the intended destinations. Boston, New York and Washington are planned, with Toronto a possible fourth.

The people of Iceland know the potential of Keflavík Airport connecting the continents of America and Europe that Loftleidir Airlines brilliantly came up with in the sixties, operating their planes 24 hours through the calendar year, offering low prices to the people, for the people—much to the dismay of the super-carriers of the time, especially the state-run Scandinavian SAS. Planes leave Iceland for Europe early morning, landing at midday in European cities. Then they take off for Iceland after a couple of hours stop, landing in the afternoon. Then a couple of hours later they take off for America, landing early evening local time. The take-off from American airports is in the evening, with landing at sunset in the Land of the Midnight Sun, all made possible because of the time differences. It is a route of two circles, forming the magical number 8 with the planes being in operation 24 hours. It's as good as it gets.

"Play safe is the name of our game. Our other core values are on-time performance, simplicity, happiness, low prices, and safety. Yes, we say safety twice because that's how we play it", Birgir says in an interview with the Icelandic Times. Though dismayed by Covid restrictions, he's delighted with the response for the first few months with cheap flights to London, Paris, Berlin,

Copenhagen and seasonal flights to Spain's Barcelona, Alicante, the Grand Canaries and Tenerife. In December, Play will open routes to Amsterdam, Holland and Salzburg, Austria. Next year, Gothenburg, Sweden as well as Stavanger and Trondheim, Norway open as Play also enters America with destinations opening as the two circles forming the magical 8 come into play.

Entry ideal because of Covid

"I wouldn't have wanted to operate an airline at the height of Covid. Crises are an historically good time to start an airline, as barriers are lowered. We've come after half-time with a clear vision on how to operate. For us, the timing of our entry into the market is ideal as Covid has turned out to be a blessing, with brand new airplanes available at the best prices, lease rates nearly a quarter lower than before Covid, airports eager to fill gaps and laid off staff looking for work. Play is no dairy shop, so our planning had to be spot on for investors. The response reflects a strong belief, with four thousand stock-holders ensuring cash on hand for operations over the next five years. By then Play will have 500 employees and ten neo Airbus 320 and 321s", CEO Birgir Jónsson says.

Play does not see itself as a major disruptor for the likes of British Airways or United Airlines. Birgir Jónsson envisions the airline as something of a nimble, but niche business, filling a gap in the market, connecting North America and Europe via Iceland with its breathtaking nature luring people to the country. "We do not want to be big, operating big airplanes but serve our people in the best possible way at affordable prices in safe airplanes", he states. -HH

Photo: Páll Stefánsson





FUR STORE AND WORKSHOP

Feldur is a family run fur brand that specializes in the design of high quality fur products. The shop and workshop is located in the heart of Reykjavik where you will find a wide selection of our fur products.

Inside you can also see the furrier at work, altering and repairing old fur garments giving them a new life and style. “We believe in the quality and durability of fur as a material that can last a lifetime”.



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ANNA MARÍA Design

The influence of the Icelandic nature

Anna María Sveinbjörnsdóttir is an Icelandic jeweller and designer who runs her own jewellery store, Anna María Design, on one of the main shopping streets in the city, Skólavörðustígur 3, in the heart of Reykjavík. Anna María studied both in Iceland and Denmark and has run her own company for more than three decades.

Anna María's design is pure, timeless and modern at the same time. She stresses exceptional attention to detail and craftsmanship and has eye for the smallest detail.

The jewellery is both for women and men and encompass silver, gold, white gold, Icelandic stones as well as precious stones like diamonds. In the store, you can find one of the biggest selections of jewellery with Icelandic stones in the country like Agate, Mose-agate, Jasper, Basalt and Lava.

When it comes to emphasis and style, Anna María mentions free and organic forms based on the Icelandic nature. Iceland is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean and its waves inspire the jeweller and much of her jewellery where you can see the forms of the waves on rings, necklaces, bracelets or ear-rings.

Filigree represents a delicate form of jewellery metalwork usually made in silver and is well known regarding the traditional Icelandic women's costume. In some of Anna María's designs you can find this extraordinary delicate work, which reminds one of the Icelandic heritage. -SJ



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REYKJAVÍK

AUTUMN HAS ARRIVED IN HARPA



It was autumn, wind and rain at Harpa yesterday. To the left, you can see the Edition hotel, which will open soon.

The Harpa Culture and Conference Center, which opened ten years ago in May 2011, is one of Reykjavík's prominent landmarks. The house stands on the eastern edge of the entrance to Reykjavík Harbour. Due to fewer restrictions on the number of people allowed to gather, many concerts and events are on the agenda. Harpa has more or less been closed for a year and a half due to the pandemic. South of Harpa, two large and impressive houses are being built, the headquarters of Landsbanki Íslands, and Edition Hotel, the first five-star hotel in Iceland. These buildings will change the appearance of the capital considerably when they are completed.

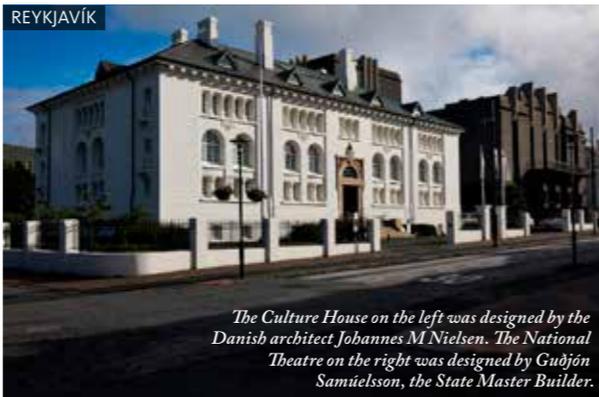
REYKJAVÍK



THE FRENCH STREET IN REYKJAVÍK

Frakkastígur (French Street) is one of the most beautiful streets in the city centre. It is situated north of Skólavörðustígur and travels down from Hallgrímskirkja to the sea. At either end of the street are works of art. The statue of Leifur Eiríksson stands at the top of Skólavörðuholt, and The Sun Voyager by Jón Gunnar Árnason stands by the shore on Sæbraut. Jón Gunnar won a competition for outdoor works for the 200th anniversary of the City of Reykjavík in 1986. The artwork was unveiled in 1990. Frakkastígur takes its name from the French wooden houses that were transported from Austurstræti in 1901 when the street was built. At the bottom of Frakkastígur, French shipping companies built a hospital in 1902, which is now used by a music school. Between 1830 and 1914, the French fished cod in Icelandic waters. It is estimated that around 4,000 French fishermen lost their lives by Iceland during this period.

REYKJAVÍK



The Culture House on the left was designed by the Danish architect Johannes M Nielsen. The National Theatre on the right was designed by Guðjón Samúelsson, the State Master Builder.

THE TWO CULTURE HOUSES ON HVERFISGATA

The Culture House on Hverfisgata was built between 1906 and 1909 to house the National Library of Iceland, the National Archives of Iceland and the National Museum of Iceland. The National Gallery of Iceland now operates the building, as the museums originally in the Culture House have received new and more suitable premises. The current exhibition in the house is "Fjárjóður Þjóðar" ("The Nation's Treasures"), pearls of Icelandic art from the second half of the 19th century to the present day. The National Theatre was opened in 1950, after being under construction since 1925, or for a quarter of a century. More than five million people have enjoyed performances in the National Theatre in the 70+ years since it opened. The house was designed by Guðjón Samúelsson almost a hundred years ago.



Hafnarþorpið Marketplace REYKJAVÍK'S NEW AND UPDATED KOLAPORT FLEA MARKET

In a large building in downtown Reykjavík, initially built for the Customs Office, you will find Iceland's biggest flea market, formerly known as Kolaportið. It has been updated and is now a marketplace with a brand-new name, Hafnarþorpið, which translates to 'The Harbour Village'.

The flea market, which you can often find on a 'Top-10-things-to-do-in Reykjavík' list, has had an update. The Kolaport flea market stalls with hidden treasures are still there, as are the stalls with used and new items such as Icelandic wool, art, crafts & accessories. There's the street-food court with Icelandic and international gourmet food and a café as well. In the evening it can all be changed into a concert and conference hall, an exhibition area, or a meeting room.

Ívar Trausti, one of the market updaters, says that the missing thing from Reykjavík was a proper trend port and marketplace. "Every time I go abroad, I specifically look for marketplaces. They are usually in or close to the city centre and very popular."

"The idea is over four years old, but the changes, for me, were a very logical thing to do. It was about time to update the old flea market, otherwise it would not have survived. The location is great for this kind of multi-functional marketplace. It should be a magnet for visitors from abroad and Icelanders."

One of the changes was to update the name, which has been changed from Kolaportið to Hafnarþorpið.

"It was necessary to modernise the market a little bit", Ívar said. "We won't remove anything; the stalls, with old and new outlets, gourmet food and the food court are still there. We're just updating it."

As of now, it is open during weekends. In the future, it is planned to open on Fridays and then hopefully during the lunch hours and then gradually more. "It is often cold in Iceland, and Hafnarþorpið is the perfect place to get in from the cold. Sit down, have a cup of coffee, a boost or a beer at Hafnarbarinn.is, maybe some Icelandic street-food and a beverage and then have a walk around and see all it has to offer", Ívar said.

"Hafnarþorpið is a great place for entrepreneurs and artists to come to introduce and sell their wares. That has already struck a chord and is fast becoming one of our most popular features. Various Icelandic music events and a Latino festival are already scheduled. Also planned are pop-up entrepreneur and artist markets and an Asian weekend to name a few. We plan to keep the old market busy, with plenty of fun."

Hafnarþorpið is right across from Reykjavíkurbíóið – the Reykjavík Harbour – and is open during weekends between 11 am and 5 pm and gradually will be extending opening hours. See the future of Hafnarþorpið by scanning the QR codes. -HDB



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Gaming IN ICELAND

The video gaming industry is thriving in Iceland, with numerous companies developing products

The gaming industry has grown by leaps and bounds in Iceland. There are several reasonably large companies currently operating in Iceland, providing good jobs in creating innovative products. The industry's growth can, in part, be credited to increased government support, such as higher reimbursement of research and development costs and incentives for individual investors to back startups. However, the Icelandic population itself is the biggest driver for innovation in the sector. In Iceland, 99% of inhabitants use the internet, the highest of any country in Europe. Iceland is a technologically advanced country, with good universities that produce an intelligent and productive workforce for the video game industry.

The people in the Icelandic gaming industry are a close-knit community who collaborate extensively regarding both knowledge sharing and investment opportunities. "Bigger companies like CCP have paved the way and made solutions that helped entrepreneurs who have come since", said Jóhann Ingi Gudjonsson, Marketing Manager at Solid Clouds. "In Reykjavík, we have bi-weekly gatherings, through Game Makers Iceland, where we share projects, ideas and solutions – making for a think tank of sorts. Iceland also has a very competitive government incentive programme that lessens the risk of developing new products and supporting entrepreneurs."

There have been many new opportunities in the gaming space, which makes it a very appealing market. "People of all ages and backgrounds play video games, and the industry is exciting in the sense that, even

the most niche groups still consist of a large number of potential customers", said Ólöf S. Magnúsdóttir, Producer at Arctic Theory. "We've seen in the past few years that an increasing number of people look for more social experiences in video games, and this has been especially true during the Covid-19 pandemic."

It's an exciting time for the gaming industry in Iceland. Below are profiles of a few companies making waves in the sector.

Solid Clouds

Solid Clouds is a Reykjavík-based video game developer, established in 2013 by co-founders Stefán Gunnarsson and Stefán Þór Björnsson. The company creates deep and meaningful gaming experiences for PCs and mobile devices, utilising a team with diverse and multidisciplinary talents. The company has 22 employees but has been growing lately as they are working towards fulfilling ambitious goals and entering new markets.



Stefán Gunnarsson, the CEO of Solid Clouds

Solid Clouds released its first game, Starborne: Sovereign Space, in 2016. The game is a massively multiplayer online real-time strategy game in gigantic maps with up to 500 players vying against each other for galactic dominance. Players will forge alliances, plot, scheme and fight their way to victory in unique handcrafted maps – each offering different challenges and victory conditions. The game has enjoyed success and was recently called one of the best strategy games of its genre by PCGames magazine.

"We are currently working on our first mobile game, Starborne: Frontiers, which opens us up to a market of roughly 2.2 billion gamers. Frontiers is a persistent MMORPG, where you navigate a web of complex alliances and conflicts among the stars. The game allows players to explore the dazzling, expansive universe while continuously surprising and captivating them. Starborne: Frontiers takes place in the same universe as Sovereign Space but offers radically different gameplay" said Ívar.

www.solidclouds.com

Miðeind

Miðeind, which focuses on Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications for the Icelandic language, has launched a new crossword game, Explo. Explo is based on the very successful Netskraft, a crossword web game for Icelandic, which over 20,000 Icelanders have played at some point and that now has about 7,500 monthly users. That amounts to about 2% of the population of the country. Miðeind has ten employees and is continuing to grow.



Vilhjalmur Þorsteinsson, founder of Miðeind

Explo (and Netskraft) are classic crossword games with a set of letter tiles in a virtual "bag", and players form their crosswords using these tiles. For Netskraft, Miðeind created a new tile bag for Icelandic using computer simulation to optimise the letter frequencies and scores. For Explo, they did the same for the English tile bag and designed a better game board that is downward diagonally symmetric instead of the classic centre-symmetric one.

The company has been operating in NLP and AI since 2015. It is a participant in the Icelandic Government's 5-year Language Technology Programme, intended to help save the Icelandic language from digital extinction. The technologies the company develops will hopefully also be beneficial for other minor, low-resource languages of the world.

Apart from Explo, which will be brought to market soon, Miðeind has developed services such as a machine translation website (velthyding.is) for translating between Icelandic and English, a spelling and grammar checking website (yfirlestur.is) for annotating text, and Embla, a voice assistant app for smartphones that can answer questions in spoken Icelandic.

miðeind.is



The Arctic Theory team in Reykjavík

talent, so we're very excited for the future of Arctic Theory," said Ólöf, Producer at Arctic Theory.

www.arctictheory.com/

Parity

Parity is a video game company founded in 2017 by CCP-veteran, María Guðmundsdóttir. The company is based on the principle that the gaming industry craves more diversity in development and the products themselves. They employ 14 people, and aim to create games with more parity and variety, which appeals to a broader range of people. "We at Parity are currently working our first title, Island of Winds, a story-driven adventure game inspired by 17th century Iceland", said María.



The team members of Parity in their Reykjavík office

Arctic Theory

Arctic Theory was founded to bring an innovative and exciting virtual world to life, giving players a unique take on the multiplayer space by focusing on collaboration over conflict. The founding team consists of four industry veterans, who have decades of experience building multiplayer games and have been an integral part of creating some of the most ambitious games on the market.

Founded in June 2020, Arctic Theory's team consists of nine people and is actively hiring to grow the studio. Arctic Theory is currently working on their, as yet, unannounced debut title. "We believe in open development, so we have a live prototype available on Steam called Project Existence as part of that philosophy. This proto-type acts as our testing grounds where we frequently implement and try out features and technology in a live environment. We've built a small and active community around the prototype which helps us tackle issues, validate our ideas and 'find the fun' much sooner than if we kept things internal."

Early next year, Arctic Theory will be announcing its debut title. "We're actively growing the team and looking for the top

In Island of Winds, the story revolves around the heroine, Brynhild, an herbalist who returns home after a long journey, only to find her clan missing and the island under a strange hex. Players are tasked with solving the mystery of the missing family and the peculiar hex through missions, puzzles and empathy-based combat filled with Icelandic history, folklore, and mythical creatures. "Island of Winds is a game with an astonishing open-world environment that explores the themes of self-doubt, violence, regret, and empathy", said María.

Parity just launched its first trailer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2r6FSxvrl-I> that got over 100,000 views in the first 24 hours. "The next step is to continue our marketing campaign, start with beta testing, launch our second trailer, and develop our game", she said. "Island of Winds will launch on PC next year and soon after on other platforms."

<https://parity.is/>

1939 Games

Developer 1939 Games publishes the digital collectible card game, KARDS, a game set during WWII. The game has been designed as a cross platform game and was released for PC on Steam. The company, which has 17 employees in Reykjavík and Helsinki, was founded by brothers Ívar and Guðmundur Kristjánsson, both veterans of the gaming industry. Ívar was one of three original founders of CCP and CEO of the company when it launched the hit game MMORPG EVE-Online back in 2003.

The company recently completed a \$5.3M funding round to finalise the development and launch of the mobile version of KARDS. “The biggest opportunity lies with the mobile version, so the future is exciting”, said Ívar, now CEO of 1939 Games. “Currently we only offer KARDS for PC but we are working on the Mac version and the mobile version. We will be busy with KARDS for the next 18-24 months to reach its full potential but after that, we have several ideas for our next game.”



Ívar Kristjánsson, the CEO of 1939 Games in his studio

1939 Games has some untapped opportunities in markets like South Korea and Japan that they are exploring right now but the biggest opportunity is with the mobile launch next year. KARDS has already attracted more than 700,000 players and generated about \$4M in revenue. “Games like KARDS can expect to add 5-10 more players to the game after the mobile release so the coming year will be super exciting,” said Ívar.

<https://www.1939games.com/>

Directive Games

Directive Games was founded by industry game veterans in Shanghai in 2014 and today, maintains a global presence in China as well as Iceland and the United States. The



Þorgeir Frímánn Óðinsson, general manager at Directive Games

company has grown significantly over the past three years and now has 17 employees in Iceland. Directive Games’ roster of titles includes Super Kaiju, The Machines, and Ready Player One: OASIS. “Right now, we are focusing on the game, The Machines Arena, a fast-paced PvP cross-platform multiplayer competitive game”, said Þorgeir Frímánn Óðinsson, general manager at Directive Games. “We are still testing the game, and as part of that testing, we had a global tournament a month ago where 16 teams competed. It was streamed and 150,000 people viewed it, which is great for it still being in alpha mode.”

The gaming industry in Iceland has seen a boost from the government in terms of tax incentives and rebates. “All startups in the IT industry have benefited immensely from these measures”, said Þorgeir, adding that this should not be taken for granted. “The next problem the industry will face is a scarcity of human resources. We need to bolster our education system when it comes to STEM courses and a more immediate goal would be to attract foreign talent to the country.”

www.directivegames.com



Halldór S. Kristjánsson, CEO and Game Director at Myrkur Games

Myrkur Games

Myrkur Games is a video game developer established in 2016 and based in Reykjavík. The company, which has 24 full-time employees, is currently developing an ambitious new action-adventure game for PC and consoles, called Echoes of the End. “We make high-quality action-adventure games for PC and consoles”, said Halldór S. Kristjánsson, CEO and Game Director at Myrkur Games. “We are currently working on Echoes of the End and it will be the first in a trilogy of games in the series.”

The company’s journey began when it was set up in 2016 by three founders who met in University. “We started working on game technology, but soon pivoted towards our passion, game development”, said Halldór. “We saw a huge opportunity in game technologies that would allow smaller studios to do so much more than anyone could have imagined.” Indeed, it’s an exciting time to be in the gaming industry. “Game technology has vastly changed over the last few years, which has opened the doors for new experiences”, he said. “There are more gamers than ever and the demand for high-quality gaming content is huge.”

As Myrkur Games develops Echoes of the End, the company is looking to increase its staff. “We are currently looking to expand the team by at least 11 more developers by summer 2022,” said Halldór. “Our largest task right now is finding great people and growing our team.”

<https://myrkur.is/>

-JG



REYKJAVÍK

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN REYKJAVÍK



The Cathedral of Christ the King, Landakotskirkja, stands at the top of Landakotsþæðinn in the western part of Reykjavík.

The National Church of Iceland is Lutheran, with 70% of Icelanders registered in it. The history of Christianity is as old as the settlement in the country, but Icelanders converted to Christianity (Roman Catholicism) in the Alþingi of 1000. The Reformation took place here in 1550 after Jón Arason, bishop of Hólar in Hjaltaadalur, was beheaded in 1550, along with his sons. The first Catholic priest since the Reformation, the Frenchman, Bernard, came here around 1860, bought the Landakot cottage on the outskirts of Reykjavík and built a small chapel near the town in 1864. After the First World War, Catholics in Iceland began to discuss building a new and larger church. The architect Guðjón Samuélsson was commissioned to design a church in the neo-Gothic style. When the church was consecrated in July 1929, it was the largest church in the country. Guðjón designed many historic buildings in the capital, including the Lutheran Hallgrímskirkja, the largest church in the country at the top of Skólavörðuholt.

REYKJAVÍK



Looking north up Bergstaðastræti towards Skólavörðustígur.

THE CHARMING PINGHOLT

Pingholt is a neighbourhood in the centre of Reykjavík. Bergstaðastræti can be called its main artery. The street extends from Landspítali University Hospital by Barónsstígur to Laugavegur, the primary and oldest shopping street in Reykjavík. Hotel Holt, one of the more luxurious and older hotels in the country, noted for its art collection, is on this street. The Kaffibarinn bar is on the street, too. It has been one of the most popular bars in the country for the last 25 years. The Gandhi Indian restaurant is there also, where you can even buy Greenland beer.

REYKJAVÍK



A workplace like the Boatyard in Reykjavíkurböfn (Reykjavík harbour) is a lively spot in the middle of the city.

LIVELY REYKJAVÍK HARBOUR

Iceland is the 19th largest fishing nation globally and number three in Europe, after Russia and Norway. In terms of per capita, it is by far the largest in the world, after the Faroe Islands, as the country catch measures just over a million tonnes of fish a year. The stern trawler Bergur VE 44 (pictured) was built in Denmark 23 years ago and arrived in the Westman Islands from Norway 6 years ago. Bergur is 36 metres long and 569 GT (Gross ton) in size. It was being repaired in the boatyard in Reykjavík recently. Visir, the Grindavík fishing company, bought the trawler from the Westman Islands, to be delivered to the company shortly. Forty-six trawlers fish around Iceland, but they are by far the largest fishing vessels fishing in the Icelandic fishing jurisdiction. There are 649 other fishing vessels, according to Statistics Iceland.



HAPPY HORSEMEN IN RAUÐHÓLAR

These German travellers had fun horse riding around Rauðhólar. Rauðhólar is a cluster of pseudo craters on the outskirts of Reykjavík. The craters formed about 5,000 years ago when the Elliðaár lava flowed over moorland and the water under the glowing lava exploded. Beautifully shaped red-coloured spatter cones then formed during the steam explosions on the surface of the lava. Sand quarrying was extensive in Rauðhólar in the middle of the 20th-century, to make, among other things, the underlay for Reykjavík Airport in Vatnsmýri during the Second World War. The Rauðhólar area was protected in 1961 and is now a public park. Many people and animals make their way around the area on days with good weather, as it is only a stone's throw from the capital.



SUN ON SÓLEYJARGATA

The Office of the President of Iceland has been at Sóleyjargata 1, or Staðarstaður as the building is called, from 1996. Since Iceland became an independent republic on 17th June, 1944, six individuals have served as President of Iceland. The first President of the Republic was Sveinn Björnsson 1944 – 1952, followed by Ásgeir Ásgeirsson 1952 – 1968 and the third President was Kristján Eldjárn 1968 – 1980. Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, the first elected female president in the world, was the President of Iceland in the years 1980 – 1996. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson was president from 1996 to 2016, when the current president, Guðni Th Jóhannesson, took over.



STRANGE CREATURES ON BALASTRÖND BEACH

On the beach by Bali, where Garðabær and Hafnarfjörður meet on Álftanes, there are about thirty strange creatures. An elderly fisherman and artist, Jón Guðmundsson, has been cleaning the shore of the rubbish that drifts ashore and creates these fine figures that stand there in Hafnarfjarðarhraun on Balaströnd. The lava is from an eruption from the Búrfell volcano in Reykjanes 7,500 years ago that flowed 12 km (7 miles) to the sea.



IN PEACE AND QUIET

In 1838, 183 years ago, Guðrún Oddsdóttir became the first person to be laid to rest in Hólavallagarður, a new cemetery in Reykjavík. Guðrún, born in 1780, is a watcher, the guardian of this beautiful cemetery in the western part of the city. Art historian Björn Th. Björnsson called the cemetery "Reykjavík's largest and oldest museum". It was nominated for the Nordic Council's Environment Prize in 2005. It is also an incredible source of the history of the art and symbolism, genealogy, architectural trends, crafts and horticulture of a growing town. By 1932, almost all the graves in the park had been allocated, and Fossvogskirkjugarður would take over as the capital's main cemetery.



SUSTAINABLE ARTISAN KNIFEMAKING IN ICELAND

One of a kind knives that will last you a lifetime

When people think about knife-making, nature and waterfalls are probably the last things that come to mind. However, that is precisely what you find when you visit Páll Kristjánsson's and Soffía Sigurðardóttir's world-renowned sustainable knife atelier. Situated in the idyllic Álafoskvos in Mosfellsbær, only a 15-minute drive from downtown Reykjavík, the atelier offers some of the best knives you will ever own.

Páll Kristjánsson, or Palli as he likes to be called, has been making knives for over 30 years. His craftsmanship is renowned worldwide, but his knives are unique because he only uses sustainable materials. "Soffía and I use materials that otherwise would be thrown away and

give them a new life", Palli says. "Some of the materials we use are birch, rowan, horses' hooves, reindeer antlers, sheep horns and whale teeth." As a result, every knife is one of a kind and made with Japanese Damascus steel or stainless steel from Denmark, Germany and Sweden.

Soffía Sigurðardóttir's artisan kitchen knives are made with only the best blades, which have to be handled with care. She is also the only kitchen-knifemaker in Iceland. "I get inspiration from nature and my surroundings when I'm creating the knives. One colour combination of rust-red and green, I got from a ship in the shipyard in the Old Harbour in Reykjavík", Soffía says.

"Sustainability and the environment are very important to us. No animals are hunted for us. The ram horns and horse hooves come from slaughtered animals, and the ivory comes from beached

whales. If we buy wood, we only buy from specially certified companies in the USA, which can reliably prove that the trees were legally chopped down." Additionally, they get wood from old trees in Iceland that need to be cut down.

It's not only Palli and Soffía who sell their art in the atelier. Palli's brother Bjarni is also an artist. His primary medium is ebony and ivory, from which he carves out small animals and other figures. Just like Palli and Soffía, his materials are sustainably sourced.

Visiting the atelier gives a particular sensation of calmness. It is evident the work done there is done with care. The smell of the different woods and leather of the sheaths, combined with the calm sounds of birds chirping and the waterfall, which is literally in their backyard, makes for an exceptional experience. One which is highly recommended. -HDB

Álafossvogur 29 • 270 Mosfellsbæ
 Páll Kristjánsson: +354 899 6903
 www.knifemaker.is
 Soffía Sigurðardóttir: +354 895 7654
 www.kitchenknives.is
 Bjarni Kristjánsson: +354 697 6294
 www.bj-art.is

SELTJARNARNES



The beach that connects Gróttá to the mainland is on the left of the picture.

**GRÓTTA
 THE PEARL AT THE END OF THE PENINSULA**

At the far end of Seltjarnarnes Peninsula is the small island of Gróttá with its magnificent lighthouse. The first lighthouse was built at the beginning of the 20th century, but the current lighthouse was built in 1947. Gróttá was considered an excellent place to fish until the great Básenda floods on 9th January, 1799 destroyed both the island's beach and fields. The area is now one of the leading outdoor recreation areas in the capital area. Gróttá is a place where people take their dogs for a walk, go surfing, end their cycling circle around Reykjavík, or just enjoy the breeze that seems to belong in and around Gróttá all year round, though it is only possible to access it at low tide. The island is also closed during bird breeding seasons from 1st May to 15th July to protect the wonderful birdlife that nests there on the headland.



**THE CULTURAL CENTRE OF GREENLAND,
 THE FAROE ISLANDS AND ICELAND**

Nordatlantens Brygge is a cultural and museum building for Greenlandic, Faroese and Icelandic cultures. The building also houses the embassies of the three countries. It is located by Christianshavn in the heart of Copenhagen, opposite Nyhavn. Nordatlantens Brygge was built as a warehouse between 1766 – 1767 by Det Almindelige Handelskompagni, which ran trade and services in Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Finnmark in northern Norway. Nordatlantens Brygge was renovated at the turn of the century. The building has housed the embassies and other cultural operations of the three countries since 2003. The Icelandic Embassy in Copenhagen was established in 1920 and is the oldest working embassy in the country, but relations between Iceland and Denmark have been greater than with other countries. Iceland was part of the Kingdom of Denmark for 564 years, from 1380 to 1918 when it gained sovereignty, and then complete independence, when the republic was established at Þingvellir National Park in 1944.



THE OLDEST HOUSE IN REYKJAVÍK

Aðalstræti 10 by Ingólfstorg is the oldest house in Reykjavík, built in 1762 by Skúli Magnússon (1711-1794), the first Icelandic Treasurer. He has been named the father of Reykjavík. This house was part of the Inntréttingar, eight buildings that housed the first textile workshops of Iceland. When it was built, Reykjavík was only a village. Icelandic society was still based primarily on self-sufficient farming in rural areas. 140 years later, Reykjavík had become the country's capital. Now this beautiful and remarkable house has become part of the Reykjavík City Museum, where you can get to know the city's history and its inhabitants. The house has been inhabited by the Bishop of Iceland, the Director of Health, and the Rector of the Reykjavík Junior College. Merchants Silli and Valdi bought the house in 1926.



Looking up Skólavörðustígur towards Hallgrímskirkja Church

A SUMMER EVENING IN THE CITY CENTRE

Skólavörðustígur is one of the two main shopping streets in the centre of Reykjavík, the other street being Laugavegur. Skólavörðustígur stretches from the intersection of Laugavegur and Bankastræti to the southeast up Skólavörðuholt Hill and ends at Hallgrímskirkja Church, which stands at the top of the hill. There are many companies and shops on the street as well as a prison. The prison is currently being renovated. It was built in 1872 and was in use until 2016. The idea is to turn the building into a dining hall. When the Icelandic Times visited Skólavörðustígur late last night, it was surprising how many people were out and about, especially tourists window shopping.

**COURTYARD IN REYKJANESBÆR
 THE FIRST MARRIOTT
 HOTEL IN ICELAND**

Of the famous Marriott Hotels of the world, the one at Keflavík must rank as one of the most strategically located, with the volcanic eruption at Fagradalsfjall – ‘Beautiful Valley Mountain’ –being visible from its bedrooms.

The hotel is located within the world-renowned Reykjanes UNESCO Global Geopark and is in close proximity of numerous geological wonders and attractions, such as Gunnuhver and the bridge between the continental plates of America and Europe, where one can literally walk from one continent to the other. Keflavík's Marriott is easy to get to, being only five minutes away from Keflavík International Airport and thirty minutes from the capital, Reykjavík.

The hotel offers 150 deluxe rooms that combine comfort and functionality, with crisp linen, blackout curtains, a walk-in shower, complimentary high-speed Wi-Fi, flat screen TV and a large desk. The hotel has a 24/7 gym and The Market, a convenience store, also open 24/7.

The Bridge Restaurant at the centre

The new state-of-the-art lobby at the Courtyard provides greater flexibility and choices for guests. At the centre of it all is The Bridge restaurant for a great breakfast, lunch or dinner and drinks in the evenings. Guests also enjoy inviting, flexible spaces, whether working or relaxing, free Wi-Fi throughout and easy access to the latest news, weather, and airport conditions. The Bridge, the on-site restaurant, brings a new standard and presentation for both local guests and international travellers, with exciting menus using fresh ingredients from local suppliers, offers endless opportunities for events, groups, business occasions etc.

Brand-new meeting spaces are perfect for interviews, corporate training, and other events. The hotel's two meeting rooms can be combined into one large event space with an accessible pre-function area, ideal for corporate meetings or smaller gatherings.

Whether visiting Iceland for business or pleasure, the friendly staff at Courtyard Reykjavik Keflavik Airport guide guests and help make visit to Iceland a success. -HH



Keflavik's Marriott
 Adalgata 60, 230 Reykjanesbaer
 +354 599 6100
 info@courtyardkeflavikairport.is
 www.Marriott.com/KEFCY



LEATHER DESIGNER

Ladies handbags, earrings and necklaces

Quality Icelandic design and leather handcraft is much sought after. “My first leather design was a handbag painted with colourful artwork and patterns,” says Guðrún Stefánsdóttir, a successful independent architect who found a second career in creative leather designs.

Guðrún designs leather handbags and now she’s added necklaces and earrings to her Ark Art accessory collection. “I wanted to use the leather cut-offs for something useful, when I came up with the idea to use them to make jewellery—earrings and necklaces.”

Guðrún’s Ark Art leather jewellery is recognisable by her use of thin leather rings or squares and use of colours. It is a sophisticated yet simple design, skilfully using geometric shapes and colours. Guðrún graduated from the Royal School of Architecture in Denmark in 1986.

After working at an architect’s office, she started her own business. “I’ve worked on some amazing projects, ranging from large buildings to single family homes. My favourite projects are those where I design everything from A-Z for private homes. Those projects would typically involve the house and interior design, the landscaping around the house and the furniture inside.” Her services are available upon request.

The Ark Art collection is available at the National Art Gallery, Snorrastofa in Reykholt, at Rammagerðin at the Keflavík International Airport, and directly from Guðrún. More information can be found on Facebook: Arkart-leatherdesign. -NHH



Arkart

Síðumúli 1 • 105 Reykjavík
 +354 8623355
 arkgunna@gmail.com
 www.icelandictimes.com/leather-designer/



TRAVEL IN STYLE WITH HREYFILL TAXI SERVICE

Why not skip the rental car in Iceland and book a taxi instead? Hreyfill taxi offers a personal experience, whether it is to be picked up from Keflavík International Airport or if you want to explore the country. Hreyfill is the largest taxi service in Iceland, as well as one of the oldest, founded in 1943.

Hreyfill is an excellent option if you want to travel to places off the beaten track or even if you just want a more intimate Golden Circle Tour. Longer or shorter trips are also available, and it is possible to book at short notice. The call centre is open 24/7, so there is always someone who can help.

One of the must-go places to visit in Iceland is the Blue Lagoon, near Grindavík. The lagoon is a great place to relax and eat good food, and having a driver and car from Hreyfill takes the whole experience to the next level. There is no need to plan your trip according to a company’s coach schedule.

No trip is too short or too long. If you just need a ride to the next street over, Hreyfill is



happy to help. It’s possible to order a taxi by phone, via email, through their app or just hail one from one of the many taxi ranks in the city centre. -HDB



Hreyfill Taxi

Fellsmúli 26, 108 Reykjavík
 +354 588 5522
 www.hreyfill.is



MUGGUR GUÐMUNDUR THORSTEINSSON 1891–1924

National Gallery of Iceland Between 2.10.2021 - 13.2.2022

At the National Gallery of Iceland is a newly opened exhibition that showcases the short career of Guðmundur Thorsteinsson or Muggur, as most people know him.

Muggur was a prolific artist despite his short life, but he managed to create a unique and personal world of art. His best-known work is probably the story of Dimmalimm, which he wrote and drew for his niece in 1921 when he was on his way from Italy to Iceland on a cargo ship.

Kristín G. Guðnadóttir, the exhibition’s curator, says that it was time to show Icelanders the works of Muggur again. “It’s been almost 40 years since we had an exhibition with his works. We felt it was time to show Icelanders his works”, she said. “He did much more than just illustration.”

The exhibition seeks to cover all aspects of Muggur’s imagery. He was an imaginative man and drew landscapes and Icelanders’ lives, travel memories from foreign countries such as entertainment in New York and rural life in Norway. He also drew a world of folklore and fairy tales where delicate princes and princesses live in beautiful castles, trolls live in the darkness and religious worlds where Christ heals the sick.

To bring his ideas to life, he used all kinds of media. He used everything from pencils, chalk and pens to watercolours and oil paints. In addition, he did needlework, made collages, embroidered, and carved in wood. He not only created art by hand but was a stage actor and

singer, too. He also played the lead role in the film Saga Borgaraættarinnar, which premiered in 1920.

He was born in Bíldudalur in 1891, but the family moved to Copenhagen in 1903 when he was 12 years old. There he studied at the Royal Academy of Arts from 1911-1915. His short artistic career spanned only about ten years, as he died of tuberculosis in 1924, at only 33 years old. He was diverse in his art and characterised by naturalism and humour.

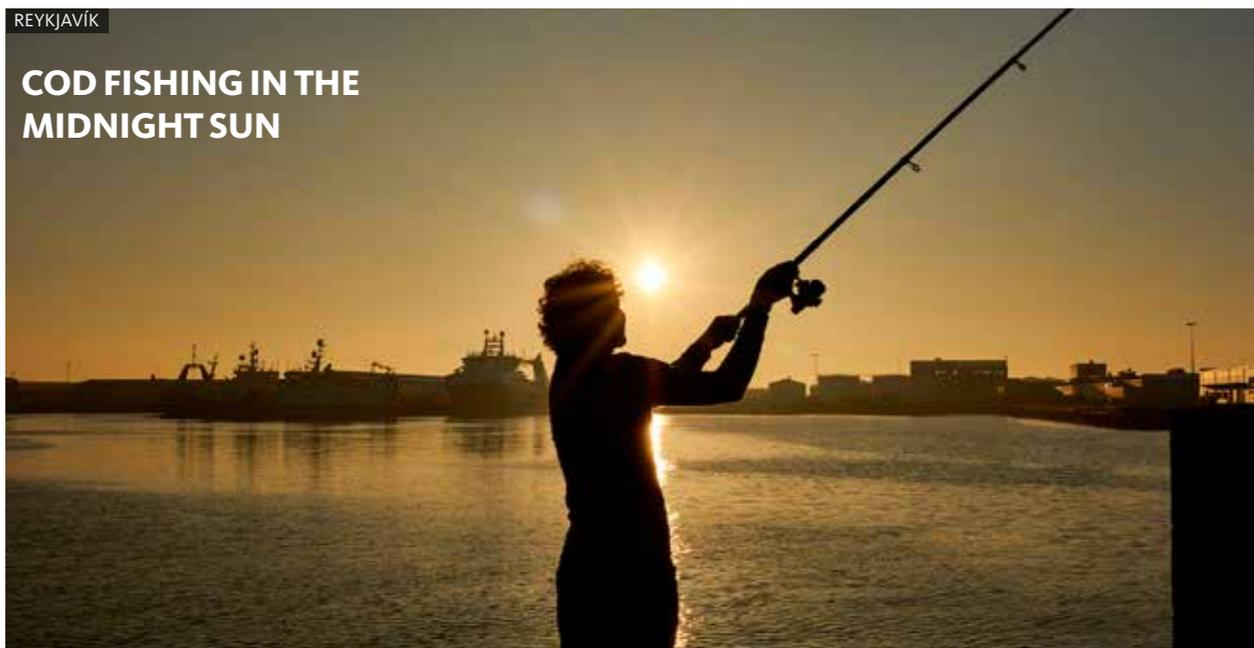
The works in the exhibition are both privately owned and from the collection of the National Gallery of Iceland. The museum received 46 pieces by Muggur as a gift in 1958 from the Danish painter and professor Elof Risbye (1892-1961).

The exhibition will run until 13th February 2022. -HDB



REYKJAVÍK

COD FISHING IN THE MIDNIGHT SUN



Summer sunset over Reykjavik Harbour is now a few minutes before midnight. This fisherman was just fishing for cod in the harbour, in the soft glow of the beautiful midnight sun. Cod has been our most valuable export for centuries. The quota for cod for the current fishing year, ending on 1st September, is 217 thousand tonnes, and now that two months are left, 191 thousand tonnes have been caught, or 88% of the total catch. The average price for cod from the sea is 372 ISK / kg or 3 USD / 2.5 EUR. The average weight of cod landed in Iceland on Friday, when the picture was taken, was 3.1 kg. Jigging, or fishing with a rod and line is, of course, not part of the cod fishing quota.

GUÐNÝ RÓSA INGIMARSDÓTTIR: OPUS-OUPS

2.10.2021 – 16.01.2022

The retrospective exhibition, opus – oups, of works by Guðný Rósa Ingimarsdóttir has opened in Kjarvalsstaðir. The exhibition covers Guðný's career over the last 25 years. This is the fifth exhibition in a row organized by the Reykjavik Art Museum in Kjarvalsstaðir, where an artist's career is examined. Particular attention is paid to artists who have expressed themselves in an interesting way and can be assumed to be in the middle of their artistic careers. A book has also been published reviewing Guðný Rósa's career.

The title of the exhibition, opus – oups, is descriptive of Guðný Rósa's artistic creation, her environment and her eternal amazement at the beauty and the art that can be found in everyday objects. The exhibition's title is in Latin and French. opus means 'work' in Latin, but 'oups' simply means 'oops' in French. Guðný Rósa lives and works in French-speaking Belgium. The title carries the hesitation and wonder that arises when small and even insignificant everyday objects become works of art.

"I go into a semi-trance when I work on exhibitions, and I plan them a bit like do my works, which is very emotional", says Guðný. "The whole process and the exhibition itself are a special experience. I regularly tried to plan it out, but it did not work. The works partly chose themselves for the exhibition, and there were many that I was sure would be there, but then they did not fit." The pieces are low-key but tell a powerful story. Many of the works are also interconnected, and she often uses material from one artwork in another, even years later.

During her career, Guðný Rósa has used various media such as sound and sculpture, but paper artworks have been prominent. Her paper artworks require a lot of precision work. They are often cut

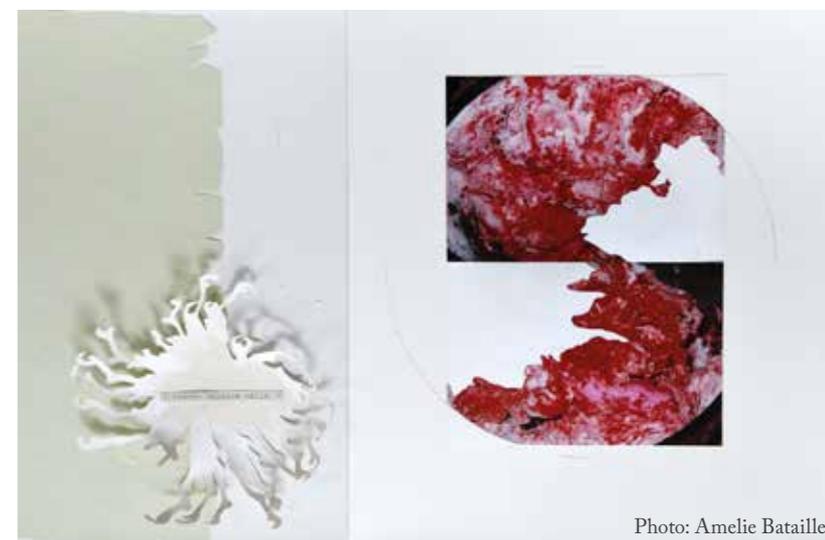
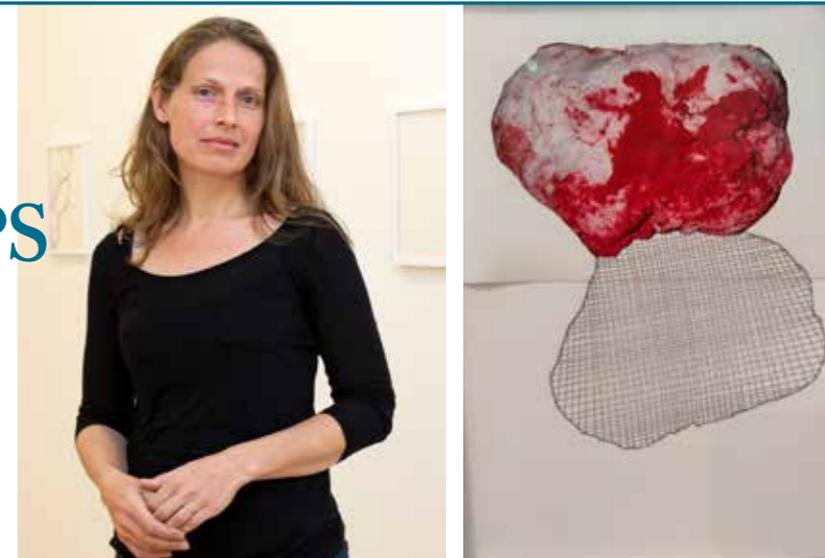
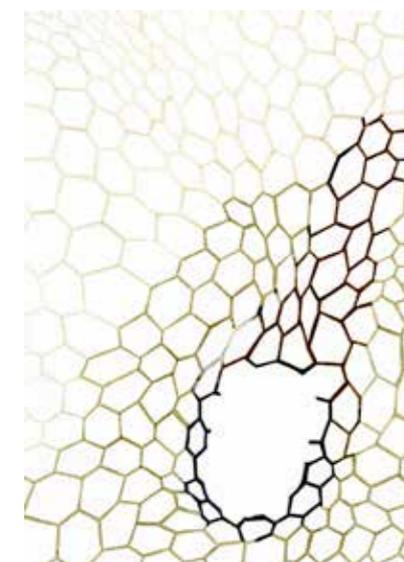


Photo: Amelie Bataille

out, drawn with a fine pencil, sewn with thread or even two different materials sewn together. Not only does she use plain printing paper for her work, but she also uses tracing paper, architectural paper, and wallpaper.

Guðný Rósa was born in Reykjavik in 1969. She studied at the Icelandic School of Arts and Crafts. She went to graduate school at L'Ensav La Cambre in Brussels and HISK in Antwerp, Belgium. Today, she lives and works in Belgium.

She has held numerous solo exhibitions in Iceland and throughout Europe. Her work can also be found in public museums in France, Belgium, Slovenia, and Iceland. The exhibition opus – oups is at Kjarvalsstaðir and is open until 16 January 2022. -HDB



BRYGGJAN KAFFIHÚS is a cosy little Café located on the Pier next to the Grindavik Harbour on the Reykjanes peninsula, minutes south from famous Blue Lagoon.

Bryggjan Grindavík
 Miðgarður 2, 240 Grindavík
 +354 426 7100
 info@bryggjan.com
 www.bryggjan.com



THE GRINDAVÍK CAMPSITE on Reykjanes peninsula is one of the more organised campsites in Iceland. They have BBQ's, electricity, playgrounds, a play castle, kitchen, laundry room and WiFi.

Camping in Grindavík
 Austurvegur 26, 240 Grindavík
 +354 660 7323
 camping@grindavik.is www.grindavik.is/tjaldsvaedi



FISHHOUSE BAR & GRILL in the romantic fishing village of Grindavík is an excellent seafood restaurant minutes south of the Blue Lagoon. They pride themselves on the use of delicious local produce.

Fishhouse bar and grill
 Hafnargötu 6, 240 Grindavík
 +354 426 9999
 kari@fishhouse.is
 www.fishhouse.is



SALTHÚSIÐ RESTAURANT in Reykjanes is the only seafood restaurant in Iceland that specialises in Bacalao, the salted cod. Once the staple food for the poor, now a sought after delicacy all over Iberia and Iceland.

Stamphólsveggi 2, 240 Grindavík
 +354 426 9700
 salthusid@salthusid.is
 salthusid-english.weebly.com/



GRINDAVÍK SWIMMING POOL is located in the middle of town, next to the lovely campsite. They have a 25m lap pool, a kid pool, waterslide, hot tubs, sauna, tanning beds and a gym.

Austurvegi 1, 240 Grindavík
 +354 426 7555
 ithrottir@grindavik.is
 www.grindavik.is/sundlaug



BRUIN RESTAURANT is a family run seafood place with delicious fish dishes and fish soup as specialities with a stunning view over the harbour. Their menu also includes pizza, burgers and a kids menu.

Hafnargötu 26, 240 Grindavík
 +354 426 7080
 bruin@simnet.is
 www.restaurantbruin.com



VOGA SEATOURS is a new tour company offering sea-tours such as whale watching, sea angling and Northern lights tours from Vogar on Reykjanes, 15 minutes from Keflavik airport.

Voga Höfn, 190 Vogar
 +354 833 9080
 info@vogaseatours.com
 vogaseatours.com



VOGAR CAMPING and Youth Hostel is located only 15 min from KEF airport. Open 24/7 all year.

Hafnargata 19 - 22, 190 Vogar
 +354 777-3222
 vidsjoinn@gmail.com
 www.vogarcamping.is



KRUATHAI IN KÓPAVOGUR is a favourite for many. With their reputation to always deliver fresh, tasty food, both at the restaurant & to your door, it is no wonder they are such a popular choice.

Bæjarlind 14, 201 Kópavogur
+354 552 2525
www.kruathai.is/en/
kruathai@kruathai.is



LISTASEL is a new art gallery in Selfoss' new town centre. The gallery has exhibitions and artwork for sale by a diverse group of professional artists. Come and see unique paintings, sculptures, ceramics, glass art and graphics.

Brúarsel 1, 800 Selfoss
+354-860-4472
info@listasel.is



SEA BARON is a seafood restaurant in the Old Harbour in Reykjavík. The lobster soup & the grilled fish on skewers are their signature dishes. Sægreifinn also has a variety of vegetarian dishes.

Geirsgata 8, 101 Reykjavík
+354 553 1500
www.saegreifinn.is/en/
seabaron8@gmail.com



VERA DESIGN is the collaboration of goldsmith Guðbjartur Þorleifsson who has 60 years of experience and stylist and designer Íris Björk Jónsdóttir who has 15 years of design behind her.

sales@veradesign.is
veradesignjewellery.com



THE MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ART COLLECTS, preserves, researches and exhibits Icelandic design from the beginning of the 20th century to the present day.

Gardatorg 1, 210 Gardabaer
Phone: (+354) 512 1525
honnunarsafn@honnunarsafn.is
www.honnunarsafn.is/en



FJÖRUKRÁIN is a Viking restaurant where emphasis lies on making the experience a genuine Viking experience with Viking food served by Vikings and Valkyries, all dressed up for the occasion.

Strandgata 55, 220 Hafnarfjörður
+354 565 1213
booking@vikingvillage.is
www.fjorukrain.is/



HAPPY TOURS is a small family company running an old and lovely fishing boat from Hafnarfjörður since 2009. Their goal is to give guests an intimate and informational experience.

Hlésgata, 101 Reykjavík
+354 85 33 111
info@happytours.is
happytours.is/



NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND One ticket – four museums. In the National Gallery is a unique collection of Icelandic art. New exhibitions open regularly, and the gallery aims to highlight the best of Icelandic contemporary art, as well as Icelandic art history.

Frikirkjuvegur 7, 101 Reykjavík
+354 515 9600
list@listasafn.is
www.listasafn.is



ÁRBÆJARLAUG is a beautiful swimming pool right in midst of a wooded area. Large swimming pool, kiddie pools, hot tubs, steam bath, waterfalls and two slides along with an indoor baby pool. Easy to get in and out of the facilities.

Fylkisvegur 9, 110 Reykjavík
+354 530-2200 • www.sundlaug.is
Open Mon-Fri 06:30 – 22,
Sat, Sun 09-22



BREIÐHÓLTSLAUG is a cosy pool with three really fun slides, hot tubs, kiddie hot pool and a great swimming pool. Indoors there is an additional pool for children that is very popular. Steam bath and sauna for both men and women.

Austurborg 3, 111 Reykjavík
+354 557-5547 • www.sundlaug.is
Open Mon-Fri 06:30-22,
Sat, Sun 09-22



GRAFARVOGSLAUG is often used for swim competitions for the younger generation as the indoor pool is the perfect size. Nice open space identifies Grafarvogslaus area, offering hot tubs, steam baths and sauna, and two fun slides.

Dalhús 2, 112 Reykjavík
+354 411 5300 • www.sundlaug.is
Open Mon-Fri 06:30-22,
Sat, Sun 09-22



KLÉBERGSLAUG is located in a short distance from Reykjavík, surrounded by nature. Small comfortable swimming area with two hot tubs. Sometimes there are Zumba and other fun activities going on, and then there is a gym close by.

Kléberg, 116 Reykjavík
+354 566-6879 • www.sundlaug.is
Open Mon-Fri 15-22,
Sat, Sun 11-18



LAUGARDALSLAUG is one of the most popular pools with various activities for the children. The slide is very popular for any age, as are the hot tubs, cold tub and the seawater tub. Steam baths and sauna are available. A cafeteria for after swim refreshment.

Sundlaugavegur 30, 105 Reykjavík
+354 411 5100 • www.sundlaug.is
Open Mon-Fri 06:30-22,
Sat, Sun 08-22



VESTURBÆJARLAUG is a small and friendly neighbourhood pool, located within walking distance of the city centre. The pool has an outdoor pool and children's pool, waterslide, four hot tubs, steam bath, sauna and gym.

Hofsvallagötu, Reykjavík
+354 411-5150 • www.sundlaug.is
Open Mon-Fri 06:30-22,
Sat, Sun 09-22



SUNDHÖLL REYKJAVÍKUR is the oldest public bath in Iceland. It opened in 1937 and is located in the centre of Reykjavík. It recently reopened after renovations that include a new outdoor pool area.

Barónsstígur 45a, Reykjavík
+354 411-5350 • www.sundlaug.is
Open Mon-Fri 06:30-22,
Sat, Sun 08-22



NAUTHÓLSVÍK GEOTHERMAL BEACH is a paradise for people who love splashing around in the ocean or sunbathing in the golden sand. The beach is equipped with changing facilities and showers, steam-baths and hot tubs.

Nauthólsvík 108 Reykjavík
+354 511 6630
www.nautholsvik.is/en
Open Mon - Fri, Sat-Sun 10-19



A trip to West Iceland is perfect if you want to see a bit of everything. Black-sand beaches, hot springs, quiet fishing towns and a glacier accessible by foot await you. The West is frequently referred to as 'Iceland in miniature' as it contains so many interesting landscapes and attractions.

Visit stunning waterfalls

The West is home to some spectacular waterfalls. Glymur, Iceland's second tallest waterfall, is a worthwhile detour before heading further west from Reykjavík. Glymur stands 198 metres high on the Botnsá river, the white water crashing down the side of Hvalfell mountain. The hike to the top can be a bit challenging for some, but it's worth it! The view from the top over Hvalfjörður is quite striking on a clear day.

Hraunfossar is a series of waterfalls streaming over 900 metres out of a lava field. The falls are beautiful to visit in any season and rainbows are frequently seen when the sun breaks through on showery days. There's a neighbouring waterfall very

close by, called Barnafoss. It's a stunning, wide waterfall, with water rushing over a rocky landscape, creating several cascades.

Enjoy Iceland's unique geology

Iceland is paradise for geology buffs. Be sure to take a look at Deildartunguhver, which is considered Europe's most powerful hot spring. It provides 200 litres of boiling—100°C (212°F)—water per second. Visitors will see water bubbling up and splashing against moss and rock, a reminder that Iceland is very much alive with pure geothermal energy.

If you want to get up close and personal with Iceland's interior, visit Viðgelmir, the largest cave in Iceland. With a guided tour, you can explore the beautiful ice formations, including scores of stalactites and stalagmites. It's a fascinating look at Iceland from the inside.

See spectacular Snæfellsnes

The Snæfellsnes peninsula is considered the jewel of the western coast, in part, because the region has a taste of everything,

including a mighty glacier. Snæfellsjökull, the king of Icelandic mountains, lies on top of a volcano situated in the centre of a national park. The glacier's peak reaches 1,446 metres and can be seen from Reykjavík on a clear day. The volcano is considered active, though it last erupted 1,900 years ago.

Meanwhile, the western edge of the Snæfellsnes peninsula is home to Snæfellsjökull National Park and small towns like Hellissandur, Ólafsvík, and Grundarfjörður. Charming fishing villages dot the peninsula and offer ample hiking routes and quirky museums. Other areas of interest include the beautiful rock formations and birdlife of Arnarstapi-Hellnar, and Kirkjufell, one of the most photographed mountains in Iceland.

It's possible to visit all these places in three days and enjoy others along the way, but it is recommended to allot more time to the West for the sheer beauty and uniqueness of the region.

Make sure West Iceland is on your radar for your next trip to Iceland. -JG

KRAUMA

Geothermal Baths

Experience Iceland's geothermal energy in these soothing hot baths

Enjoy Iceland's sublime naturally-heated waters while bathing in geothermal baths in West Iceland. Krauma, the newly opened bathing facility, offers five relaxing natural baths, along with a cold tub, two soothing saunas and a relaxation room, where you can lounge by the fireplace while listening to calming music. This is the perfect way to experience Iceland's renowned waters in a more intimate setting than the more crowded Blue Lagoon.

Powerful hot spring

The water for the baths is heated by Deildartunguhver, which is considered Europe's most powerful hot spring. It provides 200 litres per second of hot water at 100°C (212°F). To achieve the perfect bathing temperature, Krauma mixes the hot water with cold water from Rauðsgil, which originates in what was the Ok glacier, Iceland's smallest glacier. Visitors can see Deildartunguhver next to the baths, with its water bubbling up and splashing against bright green moss and jagged rocks. Seeing where the heated water comes from adds to this unique experience. Be sure to keep your distance, though, to avoid being splashed if you get too close.

Important hot water source

Deildartunguhver is crucial to the comfort of the region. Most of the water used for central heating in the West Iceland towns of Akranes and Borgarnes is taken from Deildartunguhver. The hot water pipeline to Akranes is 64 kilometres long, which is the longest in Iceland. It's still about 78-80°C when it reaches the town.

West is best

Krauma is conveniently located in West Iceland, where there are numerous attractions. Starting from Reykjavík, you can make stops at the popular fishing town of Akranes and climb to the top of its lighthouse for spectacular views, before continuing to



Borgarnes to visit the Settlement Centre to get a taste of the famous Sagas. In Reykholt, one of Iceland's most notable historical sites, you can stop at the Icelandic Goat Centre before visiting Snorrastofa, dedicated to Snorri Sturluson, one of the most famous and important figures in Icelandic literature. Snorri penned the Edda, Egil's Saga, and Heimskringla before his death in 1241. There is so much to see and do in West Iceland and Krauma is perfectly positioned.

Visit Krauma

Geology enthusiasts and spa lovers alike will enjoy a visit to Krauma. You can experience nature from its core while bathing in these unique geothermal baths in beautiful West Iceland. Make sure you pay a visit to Krauma during your visit to Iceland. -JG




Krauma
 Deildartunguhver, 310 Borgarbyggð
www.krauma.is


INTO THE WILD WESTFJORDS

Discover Iceland “the Westfjords Way”

The Westfjords are an unmissable region of Iceland. Here, you will find steep cliffs with millions of nesting birds, well-maintained hiking paths, quirky museums, and some of the most breathtaking beauty on the island. To explore this beautiful slice of Iceland, there is a convenient new touring route called Vestfjarðaleiðin, or the Westfjords Way. This driving route encompasses a 950 km circle around the edges of the Westfjords and there are eight different types of route experiences to help travellers navigate the region.

Driving highlights

Vestfjarðaleiðin pinpoints locations where the landscape views are impressive and the driving experience is thrilling. Examples include the pass between Hrafnseyri and Þingeyri, the road around Klofningur and the Neshringur loop.

Quirky experiences

Many experiences are unique to Iceland, with unexpected places, museums, and attractions. Examples on this route include the Samúel Jónsson Sculpture, the Museum of Sorcery & Witchcraft and the Sea Monster Museum.

Tours to iconic sites

There are numerous opportunities to tour remote natural spots like the Hornstrandir Nature Reserve, the Látrabjarg cliffs and the Rauðasandur beach. You can spend your time roaming these gorgeous natural sites, soaking in the spectacular scenery.

Getting wet

Water is abundant on the island and can be experienced by bathing in hot pools like Guðúnarlaug, visiting waterfalls such as Dynjandi, or getting into it by kayaking and whale watching.



Taking the air

There are countless sky-high viewpoints where you can marvel at mountains, ascend hiking routes and enjoy skiing in the winter months. Examples include: Bolafjall, Dynjandi waterfall, the experience of flying into Ísafjörður, or hiking the old road to Bolungarvík.

Stories

The Westfjords have a rich history and travellers can explore this through the sagas, visiting longhouses and museums. Examples include: Hnjótur Museum, Eiríksstaðir Viking Museum, Eldsmiðjan Iron making, and the Jón Sigurðsson Museum.

Taste the place

Foodies rejoice, Iceland has so many tasty options to enjoy and the Westfjords is no exception. The Vestfjarðaleiðin route leads you to the best eating places, coffee stops, excellent restaurants and farm shops. Examples include Erpsstaðir Dairy, Tjöruhúsið, and Sætt og Salt specialty chocolate. The Westfjords is also home to cosy cafes like Kaffi Sól, Litlibær, and Simbahöllin.

Instagrammable icons

Get your phone ready as there are so many views and experiences that capture the essence of Vestfjarðaleiðin. Examples include: the aircraft at Hnjótur; Garðar BA64 Steel Ship; the red roofed A-frame sheep hut in Arnarfjörður, as well as wildlife like puffins, whales, seals, and Arctic foxes.



Easier to navigate

Vestfjarðaleiðin was created following the opening of a tunnel between Arnarfjörður and Dýrafjörður, an important link between the north and south parts of the Westfjords. The opening of the tunnel ensures the new Westfjords Way will be open year-round as travellers can now avoid the Hrafnseyrarheiði mountain pass, which is unpaved and closed for many months of the year.

In a country full of beauty, the Westfjords may be the most beautiful region of all. Endless coastlines, jaw-dropping cliffs, and spectacular mountain landscapes await those who make the trip. Discover Iceland the Westfjords Way. -JG





VISIT THE GREAT NORTH

Explore the culture, beauty and history of North Iceland

North Iceland is a beautiful part of the country, encompassing breathtaking nature, unique history and some of the best bathing spots in all of Iceland.

Navigating the Diamond Circle

The Diamond Circle is a popular tourist route that covers five key destinations in the north, starting with the picturesque Goðafoss waterfall. In a country full of spectacular waterfalls, what sets Goðafoss apart is the sheer width of these powerful falls. White water surges over the rim, thundering down and crashing into rocks and the water below. Next are the striking blue and green landscapes of Lake Mývatn, followed by the stunning Dettifoss, the most powerful waterfall in all of Europe. Continuing on the route takes you to Ásbyrgi, an enormous canyon full of fascinating rock formations, lush grass, well-maintained walking paths, thriving birdlife, and several bodies of water. The final destination is Húsavík, the whale-watching capital of Iceland, with deep blue seas and several boat departures every day.

Arctic Coast Way

For travellers who have a bit more time to allocate to the north, North Iceland's newest tourist route spans 900 km and has been dubbed the Arctic Coast Way. This route leads travellers on a journey across 21 towns and villages close to the Arctic Circle. The route, which debuted in 2019, is recommended to take 9 days. Along the way, you will see spectacular landscapes of mountains, steep cliffs, charming fishing villages, glacial river deltas and even crossings to islands like Grímsey and Hrísey. For more information on the route, visit www.arcticcoastway.is/en.

Rich bathing culture

Bathing opportunities are plentiful in the north and it is worth visiting as many as time allows. These swimming pools are heated by natural geothermal energy, at the perfect temperature in which to relax and enjoy some conversations with the locals. Icelanders love their pools! There are also fantastic bathing centres for a more extensive experience like the Mývatn Nature Baths and the GeoSea Sea Baths in



Húsavík. For something truly unique, visit the Beer Spa in Árskógssandur. Here you soak in a bathtub filled with beer, water, hops and yeast, an unforgettable soothing experience for your skin.

Don't forget about the wildlife

Getting on a whale-watching boat and viewing the gentle giants up close is an extraordinary experience and there are several harbours in the north that offer trips. You can board whale watching vessels in Akureyri, Dalvík, Hauganes, Hjalteyri and Húsavík to get a glimpse of these spectacular creatures. For seal watching opportunities, be sure to visit Hvammstangi and for puffins, taking a ferry to the island of Grímsey, straddling the Arctic Circle, is highly recommended to spot these iconic birds.



Experience North Iceland's culture

The locals of North Iceland are proud of their history and eager to introduce travellers to their art and culture, which stretches back to the Viking Age. Some museums to put on your radar include the Húsavík Whale Museum, which presents not just 11 real whale skeletons, including a 25-metre-long blue whale but an educational overview of these fantastic beasts. Another museum of note is the Icelandic Herring Era Museum in Siglufjörður, which examines the region's rich maritime history. For those after an interactive experience, the newly opened exhibition, 1238: The Battle of Iceland, uses technology to bring history to life. The exhibition tells the tale of Iceland's dramatic clash of family clans which led to a fatal civil war.

There's something for everyone in the north, whether it's charming towns and villages, well-maintained hiking paths, spectacular bathing centres, soaking in the culture at museums or getting up close to Iceland's wildlife. The North awaits! -JG



LANDSVIRKJUN

TAKING ON CLIMATE CHANGE WITH RENEWABLE ENERGY AND GREEN PRODUCTION



Ljósafossstöð - It is planned to add an electrolyser to the hydroelectric plant to manufacture green hydrogen.

Developing solutions for emerging green energy opportunities

Green energy-intensive industries are critical in the fight against climate change, and Iceland-based Landsvirkjun is actively working toward solutions to supply renewable energy into this market. “The international opportunity in renewable energy and industrial production more generally is to fully take on solutions that mitigate climate change”, said Ríkarður Ríkarðsson, Executive Vice President of Business Development and Innovation at Landsvirkjun. “That really is what the renewable industry is trying to achieve internationally.” Iceland has numerous opportunities for business in green energy industries, including data centres, manufacturing batteries, food production and increasing production of environmentally-friendly electrofuels (e-fuels). “Landsvirkjun is actively developing its capabilities to develop and supply renewable energy solutions to future green industries”, he said.

Producing environmentally-friendly fuels

In order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, more green-energy sources need to be found. The production of green fuels, such as hydrogen or other e-fuels in the form of e.g. ammonia, methanol or methane is a central example of the many green opportunities waiting to be seized. “E-fuels are emerging as a likely huge sector”, said Ríkarður. “The strain on earth’s resources and climate is too great with our current paradigm of relying on fossil fuels for energy and massive land and freshwater use to support our food

production. This needs to change and evolve into a future system where we significantly increase renewable energy generation while reducing fossil fuel, land and freshwater use. This is a necessary tradeoff and balance we need to achieve to realise sustainable development. Roughly two thirds of Europe’s emissions can be addressed and managed through use of e-fuels. The remaining one third can be addressed through direct electrification and batteries. Both e-fuels and electrification rely on large increases in renewable energy generation.”

As noted, hydrogen and e-fuel production require a great amount of energy, and the demand for green hydrogen is expected to increase in the coming years. According to Iceland’s energy policy, the country intends to be free from using fossil fuels as the main energy source for transport by 2050. Iceland and other nations are in a position to benefit greatly from this development in economic, social and environmental terms. In Iceland, green fuel production will decrease petrol and diesel imports which leads to reduced greenhouse gas emissions and foreign currency reserve savings for the national economy. Over time, Iceland could become completely energy independent.

Data centres

In Iceland, the data centre industry is well established and has been growing rapidly in recent years. A large reason why is the fact that the country is proven to mitigate risks, ensuring secure and stable operations for data centres. In recent years, Landsvirkjun has signed agreements with several international data centre service providers to supply certified and competitive renewable energy. These operations utilise 100% renewable hydro-electric, geothermal and onshore wind energy that allow them to provide certified green data services to their respective customers and end users.

Iceland has a young, educated and internationally-minded workforce, with high site availability and favourable business conditions, making Iceland an increasingly compelling option for data centres. The combination of competitive



Ríkarður Ríkarðsson



One of the hydroelectric plants in the Sog-area is Steingrimsstöð but it opened in 1957. It utilises water from Efra-Sog, which falls from Þingvallavatn Lake to Úlfjótavatn Lake.



Landsvirkjun has seven hydroelectric plants in the Þjórsá River area. Five in Þjórsá River itself, one in Tungnaá River and one in Köldukvísl River, which run across Þjórsá.

natural and human resource means there is strong potential for continued data centre growth and associated job and value creation in Iceland.

Battery manufacturing

Battery manufacturing is another interesting opportunity as the number of electric vehicles is growing rapidly and exponentially, which calls for a significant increase in the production of batteries. Numerous battery manufacturers are currently looking for suitable production sites across Europe and Iceland has attracted attention with potentially competitive sites.

Iceland's advantage

Land is a big issue when it comes to renewable energy. "Land use is essential for producing competitive renewable energy

and green energy carriers such as e-fuels", said Rikarður. "Therefore places that have the combination of land and infrastructure to build on have an opportunity and Iceland is one of those countries." Iceland has great hydro and geothermal resources, but also a fantastic wind resource which, if harnessed, has the potential to competitively serve the island's future renewable energy needs to accomplish total energy transition and independence as well as potential for export. "The land-use percentage for renewable energy generation in Iceland is currently around 0.3-0.4% while in Norway and Denmark it is around 1.5-2%", he said. "If we go for land utilisation percentages similar to our neighbours in Norway and Denmark, we could become 100% renewably powered and help other countries get closer to the same goal of full energy transition."



Turbines in Fljótsdalstöð, the biggest hydroelectric plant in Iceland.

Fighting climate change

There are three main solutions to combatting climate change. "The first and most impactful is to significantly increase renewable energy generation as we need to switch over to renewable energy and away from fossil fuels", said Rikarður. "Secondly, society needs to reduce the carbon footprint of production, thereby reducing our consumption footprint, using innovation and new or revised production processes. The third solution is capturing and using or disposing of the remaining carbon dioxide emissions. "These three factors are absolutely crucial for us to manage and master to get to a carbon neutral future", said Rikarður. "If we can do this efficiently, we will solve climate change."

There are huge investment opportunities in the renewable energy and carbon management sectors. "There is an ongoing massive transformation", he said. "We want Landsvirkjun, Iceland and our partners to capture a share in these emerging and high-growth green energy markets while remaining competitive. We envision a future including our current customers and partners as well as new e-fuel customers, battery manufacturers, food producers, and data centres. Hopefully people connect to this vision in mind and spirit, seeing this will bring three key things most of us want for the future—clean air and water, a stable climate, and meaningful employment opportunities for us and next generations. This is how we sustainably strengthen our society, environment and economy and ultimately improve our quality of life." -JG

BATHE IN BEER

Björböðin is a unique, exhilarating spa in a scenic slice of North Iceland

Iceland is home to some of the cleanest, purest water on earth. Travellers are encouraged to drink water straight from the tap and to enjoy the island's bathing facilities, from hot springs to swimming pools to luxurious spas. For a truly unique experience, The Beer Spa, Björböðin is the perfect place to visit. Located in North Iceland, Björböðin is the first beer spa outside Eastern Europe, where the owners got the idea. Björböðin is one of the few places in the world where everything revolves around beer, even the spa and hot tubs.

The beer bath experience

The owners wanted to focus on providing a relaxing experience for guests, who can soak in a beer bath for 30 minutes, followed by 30 minutes in a relaxation area. It is recommended you do no shower for at least 4 hours after the bath in order to get the full benefits of the experience. The tubs are made from Kambala wood and they can hold up to two people. The beer bath is filled with beer, water, hops and yeast which creates a soothing mixture for your skin. If you are travelling with children, you'll be pleased that there is no age limit for the

beer bath because the water is undrinkable. However, those under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

Sample the beer, stay for food

For those interested in some food and drinks, there is a restaurant on site as well as Kaldi beer on tap. The restaurant has a succulent menu to cater to the hungry crowds, ranging from small plates like bacon fries and chicken wings to burgers, steaks and fish and chips.

Family roots in the beer business

The Icelandic family behind The Beer Spa opened the first microbrewery in Iceland in 2006 and travelled to the Czech Republic two years later, enjoying a beer bath. Returning home to Iceland, the idea started brewing to open a beer spa. In 2017 that dream was realised when The Beer Spa opened in the small North Iceland town of Árskógssandur, close to Dalvík.

A must for any beer lover is to bathe in beer, savouring a pint while enjoying a wonderful view of the fjord from one of the outdoor tubs. Be sure to stop by The Beer Spa during your next trip to Iceland! -JG



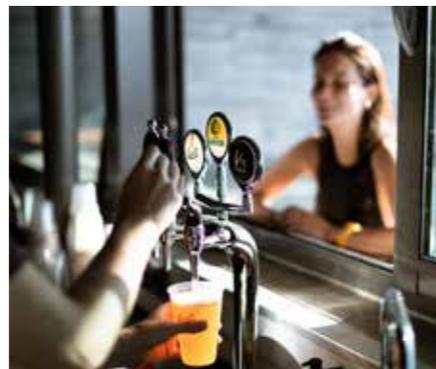
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Geothermal SEA BATHS

Húsavík's unique hot baths



At the awesome GeoSea baths, set on top of Húsavíkurhöfði – ‘Húsavík Cliff’ – bathing guests view a majestic range of mountains to the west, old oak fishing boats silently sailing Skjálfandi Bay, the Puffin and Flatey Islands, the Arctic Circle on the Horizon and the serene town of Húsavík, with its majestic wooden Church. Húsavík, the whale watching capital of Europe, with its population of 2,500, is one of Iceland’s main tourist attractions. Simply magical and unmatched anywhere else.

Health benefits of GeoSea

The geothermal heat north of Húsavík has been well known to residents, who have used it for bathing and washing for centuries. Drilling for hot water at Húsavíkurhöfði in

the mid-20th century revealed water that turned out to be hot seawater, too rich in minerals to be suitable for heating houses.

Instead of letting the hot water go to waste, an old cheese barrel was installed at Húsavíkurhöfði. There, Húsavík residents could enjoy the health benefits of bathing in hot seawater. Many suffering from skin conditions such as psoriasis have found relief by bathing in the water, which is at an optimal temperature of 38°-39°C.

The bore holes provide purity

The water in the GeoSea baths comes from two bore holes, one located by the cheese barrel and the other by Húsavík harbour. There is no need to use any cleaning agents or equipment, as the steady flow of water

from the bore holes, between the pools, over their edges and into the sea ensures that the water stays within the limits stipulated by health regulations.

The GeoSea sea baths enable guests to enjoy nature in a unique manner. Thanks to the underground heat, the seawater in the baths is warm and comfortable and the mineral-rich water caresses the skin. While warm sea works its miracles, guests enjoy the spectacular view and health benefits. -JG



GeoSea
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 +354 464 1210
 geosea@geosea.is
 geosea.is



HARBOUR RESTAURANT AND BAR

A Welcoming New Addition to Skagaströnd

In the small village of Skagaströnd in Northwest Iceland, you can find a brand-new restaurant, Harbour. The restaurant opened on 17th June 2021, the Icelandic National Day. It is in an old industrial building by the harbour and is the perfect spot to enjoy good food and watch the harbour life. You can often see the fishermen docking their boats with the catch of the day.

Harbour Restaurant and Bar is cosy and has a friendly atmosphere. It is owned by two couples Birna Sveinsdóttir and Slavko Velemir, and Hafðís Hrunn Ásgeirsdóttir and Stefán Sveinsson.

It is important for every town to have a restaurant and there was a gap that needed to be filled in Skagaströnd. “We wondered what we were waiting for and decided to open the restaurant ourselves. We wanted a welcoming restaurant, where people could sit for a long time and enjoy themselves”, Birna said. In the wintertime, people might get lucky and get a Northern Lights show with their dinner.

Fresh Local Food

Asked about the menu, she said that everyone would find something to their liking. “Our most popular dish so far is the fish and chips, but we put emphasis on using fresh local produce. We get much of our food products very locally,” she said smiling. “Vörusmiðja BioPol is next door, where local farmers can process their produce, and on the other side, we have a fish market.”

There is a large choice of meals on the menu. Dishes range from side dishes such as smoked trout, onion rings and a shareable party platter with cheeses, fruits, crackers and more, to hamburgers, pizzas, chicken salad, falafel salad and Icelandic lamb chops.

Harbour Restaurant and Bar is not only a restaurant, but also a cultural house. We recommend checking out their Facebook page to see upcoming events. The Christmas buffet in December is sure to be a feast filled with the Christmas spirit.

Halfway between Reykjavik and Akureyri

Skagaströnd is a part of the beautiful Arctic Coast Way and only a brief 15-minute drive from the Ring Road. It is also just about halfway between Reykjavík and Akureyri and a great place to stop.

The Arctic Coast Way stretches 900 kilometres along the North Atlantic Ocean. It is the first officially opened tourist route in Iceland. It gives people a different way to travel the Ring Road and see less-travelled areas. Along the way are some of Iceland’s most beautiful sightseeing spots.

In Northwest Iceland, after having visited Skagaströnd and Harbour Restaurant and Bar, we recommend you travel north to Kálfhafarsvík. The beautiful lighthouse, nestled among columnar basalt, with incredible birdlife, is a sight not to be missed. -HDB



Harbour Restaurant & Bar

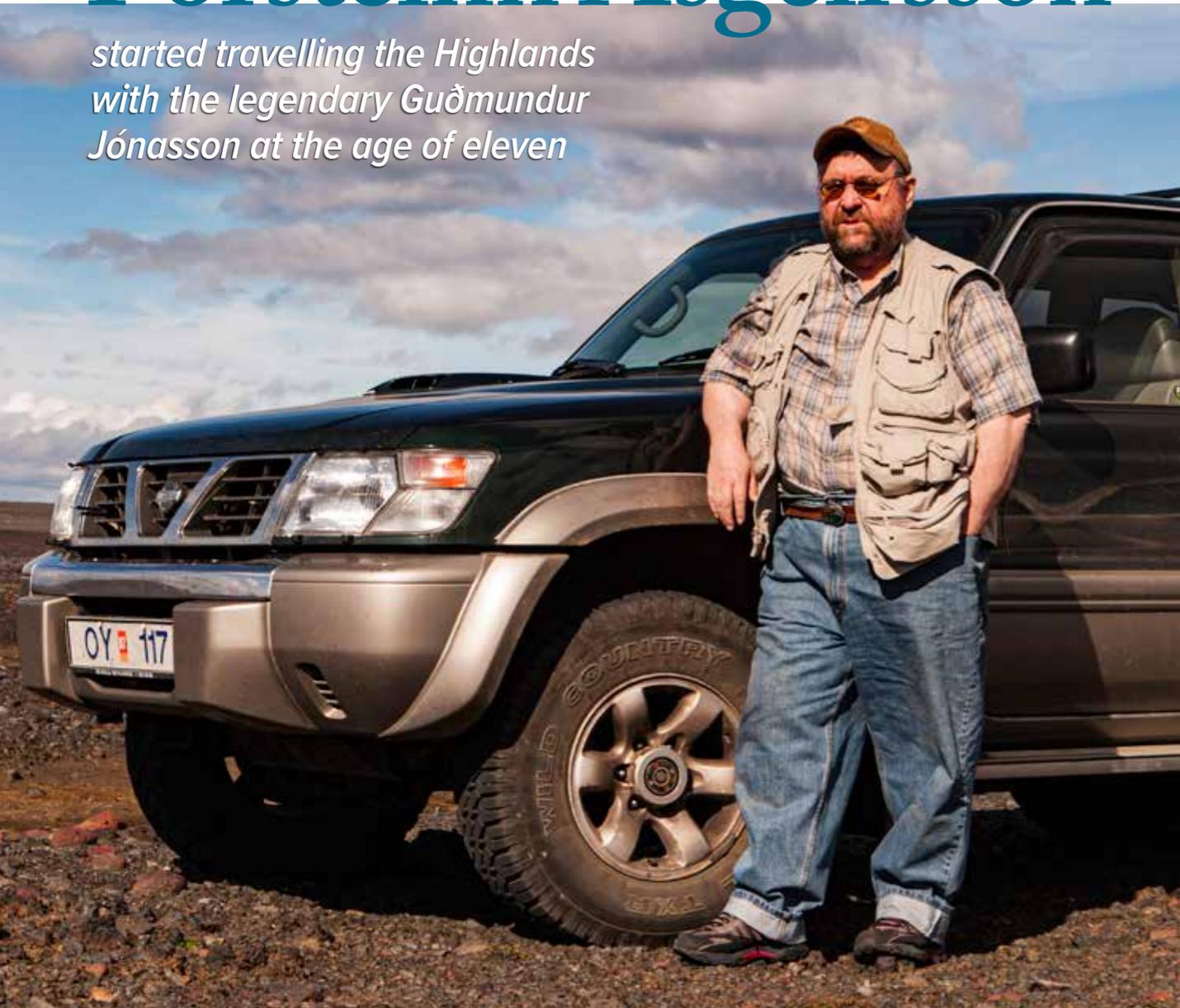
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THE PLUMBER WHO BECAME THE AWARD -WINNING PHOTOGRAPHER, STEINIPÍP

Þorsteinn Ásgeirsson

*started travelling the Highlands
 with the legendary Guðmundur
 Jónasson at the age of eleven*



Award-winning photographer, Þorsteinn Ásgeirsson [b. 1952], at the age of eleven, started travelling Iceland's majestic Highlands, the largest undeveloped area in all of Europe, covering some 40,000 square kilometres of Arctic desert, glaciers, rivers, waterfalls, geothermals and mountains. They are a point of pride for many Icelanders. It was during the early sixties. Þorsteinn had the best possible teacher in Iceland's legendary bus-driver and highland-explorer, Guðmundur Jónasson [1909-1985] from Múla in Húnavatnssýsla – Bearcub Water County – in the North. The youth listened intently to his teacher telling stories of the land and its people. He bought his first camera and started photographing at early age.

In one of his first travels with the grand old man, they went to the amazing Landmannalaugar – Land-Men Warm Pools. The young man would listen intently to how the first generations of Settlers would herd sheep into the mountains for the summer and that Landmannalaugar was then already a meeting place. He learnt of Hattver at Jökulgil – Hat Place at Glacier Ravine – deep in Landmannalaugar, where Torfi (the rich) Jónsson from Klofi in Landsveit sought shelter from the Plague in the late 15th century. Close by is Frostastaðavatn – Freezing Place Lake. Late into the 19th century or even 20th century, people would be wary of the útilegumenn – Outlaws, who were claimed to live in the Highlands.

Neil Armstrong & Sir Edmund Hillary

When NASA chose Iceland as their training ground for the first moon landing in July 1969, due to its lunar style landscape, Guðmundur was chosen to take them into the Highlands. It was 1965 when he met with Captain Neil Armstrong [1930-2012] and his fellow astronauts. The young teen followed the news intently since, for obvious reasons, he was not allowed to accompany them. Armstrong's words on the Moon would travel the world: "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." When Sir Edmund Hillary [1919-2008] had visited Iceland back in 1954, Guðmundur had guided Sir Edmund, who had climbed Mount Everest the year before. Such was Guðmundur's status as a true legend, the world's trailblazers would meet him when visiting Iceland.

"The majesty and the freedoms of the Highlands would draw me again and again to the bounteous and serene wild. I became a pípulagningamaður – pipe laying man or plumber – known as Steinipíp, but my passion was exploring the Highlands with my camera in hand".

Punched the great man in the nose

"I learnt a lot from that great man. I've often wondered why we became such good friends; I, a teenager and Guðmundur, a seasoned legend. I remember him picking me up by my ears. It was quite common at the time that grown-ups would do such things. I was twelve and it hurt so I punched him in the nose. I believe that was when our friendship got stronger", Þorsteinn Ásgeirsson says, smiling in the interview with the Icelandic Times. "The majesty and the freedoms of the Highlands would draw me again and again to the bounteous and serene wild. I became a pípulagningamaður – pipe laying man or plumber – known as Steinipíp, but my passion was exploring the Highlands with my camera in hand", he continues. Steinipíp – Stone pipe – has become his artist's name. Steinipíp feels that there are dark skies on the horizon, as the Highlands are in danger of being run by all-controlling autocrats, using sweet-talk to hide their true intentions.

National Highland Park

The government of 2017-2021 wanted to make the Highlands a national park, with the stated goal of improving and strengthening Iceland's image as a nation supporting the preservation of pristine land and wildlife for the benefit of those who visit Iceland; a sanctuary for those who wish to enjoy the natural environment of the central highland, take pleasure in outdoor activities and relish experience of nature. Many feel that this is meaningless sweet-talk hiding a takeover. Establishment of national park is being advocated by the far Left-Green party, formerly the Communists. Those who oppose it have been called "a

whining minority" by former Parliamentary President, Steingrímur J. Sigfússon, the founder of Vinstri-græn, or Vg as the Left-Green party is referred to.

However, Icelanders who have travelled and enjoyed the freedoms of the Highlands for decades are sceptical and have put up concerted criticism of the plan. They are putting up a fight against the State taking over the Highlands and, many feel, basically everything in the country. They feel that the signs are there already, controlling bureaucrats, overreaching their powers. The establishment of the national park was met with heavy resistance in Parliament and the plans did not go through before the Parliamentary Elections in September.

Municipalities, not a paralyzing State

Steinipíp is highly critical of plans for a Highland National Park. He says that he has met with landverði – land-guards – overreaching and abusing their powers. Steinipíp has written on the issue and warned against the State taking over the Highlands. "It is absurd that people can't travel the Highlands without having controlling guards policing all over the place. It goes against the very nature and freedoms of the Highlands. The all-controlling Left wants to take over the country and the Highlands included. People have to be wary of their intentions. It is a much better solution that the Highlands are administrated by the many municipalities involved and have an interest in promoting their local treasures such as Landmannalaugar, instead of an all-engulfing, paralyzing State, the municipalities with invested interest would ensure respect for our national treasures, promote competition and divide power", Steinipíp claims. -HH



It is fun to travel in the Highlands, explore them and get to know their history a little better. All roads should be preserved and used; they have become monuments and have significant cultural value.

Folktales from the turn of the 20th century say that the Landmenn and Skaffellingar quarrelled. They considered each other to be outlaws if they were seen in Veiðivötn, and it happened that the two groups fought, even with guns. I suspect, however, that they were only fetching trout in Lake Veiðivötn.

There was a strong belief in outlaws at the time. If someone was seen in the Highlands, it was generally thought that the person in question was either a sheep thief or an outlaw. Today they are called 'off-road good-for-nothings'.

STEINIPIPI



From the source of Blákvísl Stream, we continue on Öldufellsleið road. There we come to Blákvíslarfoss Waterfall, where we cross the waterfall's edge. If you are driving towards Mýrdalur, go down a small road that turns below the stream. You really can't skip this slight detour because the waterfall is magnificent, and the water is cold and tasty. When travellers have enjoyed the beauty of the waterfall, they continue along the cliff's edge.

Not far away, you can see Hafursey and even drive around it. Nearby Þakgil should not be missed.



Öldudalsleið is real eye candy and a unique experience, and you can only find a similar experience in the Highlands. Botnjökull Glacier is on the right in the picture. Öldufell is in the middle of the photo and the source of Bláfjallakvísl Stream, Mt. Bláfjöll is to its left.

Torfajökull Glacier is a bit to the north. This place is connected to Torfi í Klofa (a figure in Icelandic history). It is said that he travelled the area with an abducted girl. Her cousin gave chase and followed them, and it is said that Torfi had no choice but to jump over the

narrowest part of the gorge to escape, which he did. However, the girl's cousin did not make the jump and hung on a small tree on the gorge's edge. The girl asked Torfi to cut down the small tree, but he decided to save the man. They then reconciled wholeheartedly and Torfi got his girl. Place names that are said to be named after Torfi are: Torfajökull, Torfatindur, Torfamýri, Torfafit and Torfavatn. Blesamýri and Faxi are said to be named after his horses.



Mt. Mælifell in Mælifelssandur Desert is in the middle of the picture. Mælifell is a good landmark and can be seen from far away. Right next to the mountain is a stream called Brennivínskvísl Stream. Its name is considered a good reason to have a shot or two of Brennivín while resting tired bones before a continued journey. It is said that Brennivínskvísl got its name when Bishop Þorlákur went there with an entourage. When they arrived at the stream, the men dismounted, and Þorlákur picked up a small flask of Brennivín and said: "You see, boys, that the wine does not kill us on the mountain". Then they all drank from the flask.

It's hard to travel across the Mælifelssandur Desert in the first half of the summer due to flooding. It is hardly passable until the middle of July. I was there on a trip with my friends in perfect weather and the state of the roads was optimal. However, we decided to drink coffee and have a fun chat instead of Brennivín when we arrived at Brennivínskvísl Stream.



Skælingar's environment is unique, like nature's amusement park. To get there, drive to Nyrðri-Ófæra just east of Eldgjá and up the eastern edge of Eldgjá along the road to Gjátindur. Soon after reaching the edge, there is an intersection to drive down a slope towards Skaftá. Follow the path that leads to the hut.

If you continue from Skælingar up to Langasjór, you drive about one kilometre in the water at Blautulón lake. Drivers must take care because the lake is deep, so keep as close to the bank as possible. This route is more difficult and needs to be travelled on well-equipped jeeps. You should not drive the Blautulón route on unmodified jeeps. This route is well worth taking, though.

When I first visited Skælingar, I was fascinated by the place. You can find these unique lava formations in other areas, and it is always worth stopping and taking pictures. The lava formations formed when lava flowed from Eldgjá. Blockages formed in the lava flow, and a large amount of lava then accumulated in ponds. Usually, the blockages break away reasonably quickly. In Skælingar, the clogs have cooled quicker than the lava in the pond, probably due to accumulations with a different coagulation process. These lava plugs remained, but the lava from the pond continued to flow.

This photo was taken with a drone over Langisjór, with the permission of Vatnajökull National Park. Up along the middle of the picture by Langasjór are Fögrufjöll mountains which end in the Vatnajökull Glacier. You can also see the Skaftá River flowing past Fögrufjöll. Farthest to the right on Vatnajökull Glacier, you can see Grímsfjall. To the left of the picture, there is a mountain range by the water. Breiðbakur towers the highest there, but it is possible to drive there. Next, Niðri- and Syðri-Hágöngur can be seen, which are prominent in many parts of the Highlands. Bárðarbunga can be seen in the picture. A plane named 'Geysir' was forced to had to make an emergency landing on the sloping top of the Vatnajökull Glacier. The story goes that the landing was so soft that the passengers did not feel anything and had no idea they had landed.

My father was one of the rescued people, and he said that he lost 7 kilos during that trip. He also told me that there was gold in the plane he picked up. Later I got a pod camera found in Geysir; from then on, I started taking pictures.



Few places compare to Tungnaá River in beauty. The photo was taken with a drone in a southwesterly direction. The picture shows Hekla towering in the far right. To the west, smoke (like snow) can be seen in the mountains, the Landmannalaugar pools are located there. The mountain ridge called Barmur stretches from there, and then to the far left is the Torfajökull Glacier area. Then there is Ljótípollur Lake (Ugly Pond), correctly named, and Frostastaðavatn Lake, a little further to the right. Frostastaðavatn is probably the most photographed lake in the highlands. It is unsurprising since the area is breathtakingly beautiful.



The picture is taken above a series of craters called Lakagígar and ends in a tuff mountain called Laki. It is not known if the craters in the crater series have separate names. But I have been told that locals know what many craters are called. One is called Tjarnargígur, for instance.

Lakagígar is a series of craters on a 25 km long eruption fissure west of Vatnajökull Glacier. The series of craters is named after an old tuff mountain called Laki and is close to the middle of the picture. Lakagígar was protected in 1971, but the area was created in Skaftáreldur in 1783-1784, one of the largest eruptions in Icelandic history. Previously, the series of craters was called Eldborgir.

The eruption of Lakagígar began on Whit Sunday, June 8, 1783, following a series of earthquakes. Lakagígar lies on ten parallel cracks, each 2-5 km long. At the southern end of the crater series

by the Hnúta mountain, the first crack opened. Then started a wave of eruptions that all began with earthquakes. The eruption formed about 135 craters and a 2-500-metre-wide rift valley from the roots of Laki and reached two kilometres southwest of it. Ash and volcanic fumes caused a thick fog and mist over Iceland, spreading over Europe, Asia and America. Heavy pollution accompanied the mist that caused poisoning to the vegetation, so almost half of all livestock perished in Iceland, leading to famine among the people. The mist and eruptions also caused cold weather because they reduced the sun's radiation and dimmed the sunshine. These were the so-called Mist-hardships, the greatest hardships that have befallen Icelanders. The eruption is one of the most devastating eruptions in human history.

The lava from Lakagígar covers about 600 km².



One of the most amazing places in the Fjallabak area is the Rauðibotn crater: a red and green emerald surrounded by volcanic deserts between Torfajökull and Mýrdalsjökull glaciers. Rauðibotn is more spectacular, seen from the Hólmháls river and its waterfalls. Rauðibotn is part of a chain of volcanic craters that stretches through the central highlands from Mýrdalsjökull to Vatnajökull glaciers. The volcano is connected to the Katla volcano, where both are part of the same volcanic system. The volcano has only erupted once since the Settlement. In the 10th century or more precisely in 934, Eldgjá erupted. It is the largest eruption in Iceland in recent millennia.

The eruption of 934 was about 18 kilometres in volume and covered about 800 square kilometres. The tephra

from the eruption is about 5-7 square kilometres. The lava is so large that it would cover the entire city of New York. The impact of the eruption on the world's meteorological system was catastrophic. It caused crop failures and famine in Europe, and temperatures dropped throughout the northern hemisphere.

The easiest way to reach Rauðibotn is from Syðri Fjallabaksleið in the Highlands. It is possible to park at Mælifellssandur Desert or on the road closer to the crater to better protect the area from walking. There are magnificent views over the crater from the mountain ridge south of the crater. Those who have become tired from walking can view the crater with good drones and take pictures as I did. By doing so, more people can enjoy this magnificent nature.



Hvalvatn, at the end of Hvalfjörður, is a gorgeous lake, as are its surroundings. Hvalvatn is the second deepest lake in Iceland and covers a 4.1 km² area. It is 180 metres deep at its deepest and lies at 378 metres above sea level.

The road from Uxahryggjavegur to the lake is difficult to cross and cannot be driven in smaller jeeps. Mt. Hvalfell is in front of the lake in the picture, surrounded by a spectacular and beautiful environment. The mountain that rises on the south side up from the lake is Botnssúlur. Botnsá River flows from Hvalvatn Lake to the sea in Hvalfjörður fjord.

There are two species of trout in the lake and one of them can become huge. Trout up to 12 pounds in size have been heard of, but the other char species are considerably smaller.

Botnssúlur are popular for hikers; there is a cluster of tuff peaks called Háasúla, Miðsúla, Norðursúla, Syðstasúla (1093m) and Vestursúla. They have in common that they are all located between Botnsdalur Valley in Hvalfjörður and Þingvellir National Park. The route between Þingvellir and Botnsdalur is called Leggjabrjótur, and it is a famous hiking trail.



THE PEARLS OF *East Iceland*



Explore the vast beauty of the East



East Iceland is home to some of the most remote, spectacular nature on the island, with breathtaking attractions and numerous hiking opportunities. The region offers sweeping landscapes with backdrops of looming mountains, narrow fjords, and rugged coastlines. If you're looking for unspoiled beauty, it's here.

There are several itineraries to help you determine the best way to explore East Iceland on www.east.is. Below are some of the highlights of the eclectic east.

Djúpivogur, a town of fewer than 500 people that has a history of fishing and trading dating to 1589, is a recommended place to visit. The picturesque landscape is the backdrop to countless hiking trails, which are free to roam and explore.

Fáskrúðsfjörður is a small village, also with fewer than 500 people, nestled on a long fjord of the same name. It's the most 'French' part of Iceland, as the village was originally a base for more than 5,000 French fishermen, who came every year to fish the rich Icelandic waters. Some settled here in the late 19th century. The village had a hospital, chapel, and cemetery that were built by the French, and both the buildings and the history

remain, as the streets of Fáskrúðsfjörður are marked in both Icelandic and French.

Egilsstaðir is considered the unofficial capital of East Iceland, but don't let that fool you; it's a 'capital' with fewer than 3,000 residents. The quaint town earned its name based on a reference to the nearby Egil's farm, which appears in the stories of the Sagas.

If you're interested in exploring a bit more of the interior, consider a drive through the highlands. There are the hot natural pools at Laugarfell, the towering Snæfell mountain, and the vast beauty of the Vatnajökull National Park.

While surveying the landscape, you will have certainly noticed that trees are a rare sight in Iceland. Hallormsstaður has the distinction of being the largest forest in the country, though it would be considered small by other standards. It stretches along banks of the 35-kilometre-long Lagarfljót glacial lake. It's beautiful to roam among native birch trees that have survived inclement weather and found a way to thrive.

Seyðisfjörður is well-known for its variety of cultural events, its diverse community and the town centre that is adorned with beautiful wooden houses that are quite rare in this country, as well

as the ferry port that brings visitors from Europe with the cars, motorbikes or bikes. Opportunities for outdoor activities are varied in Seyðisfjörður and for those who are interested in hiking, you can find both short and longer hiking trails.

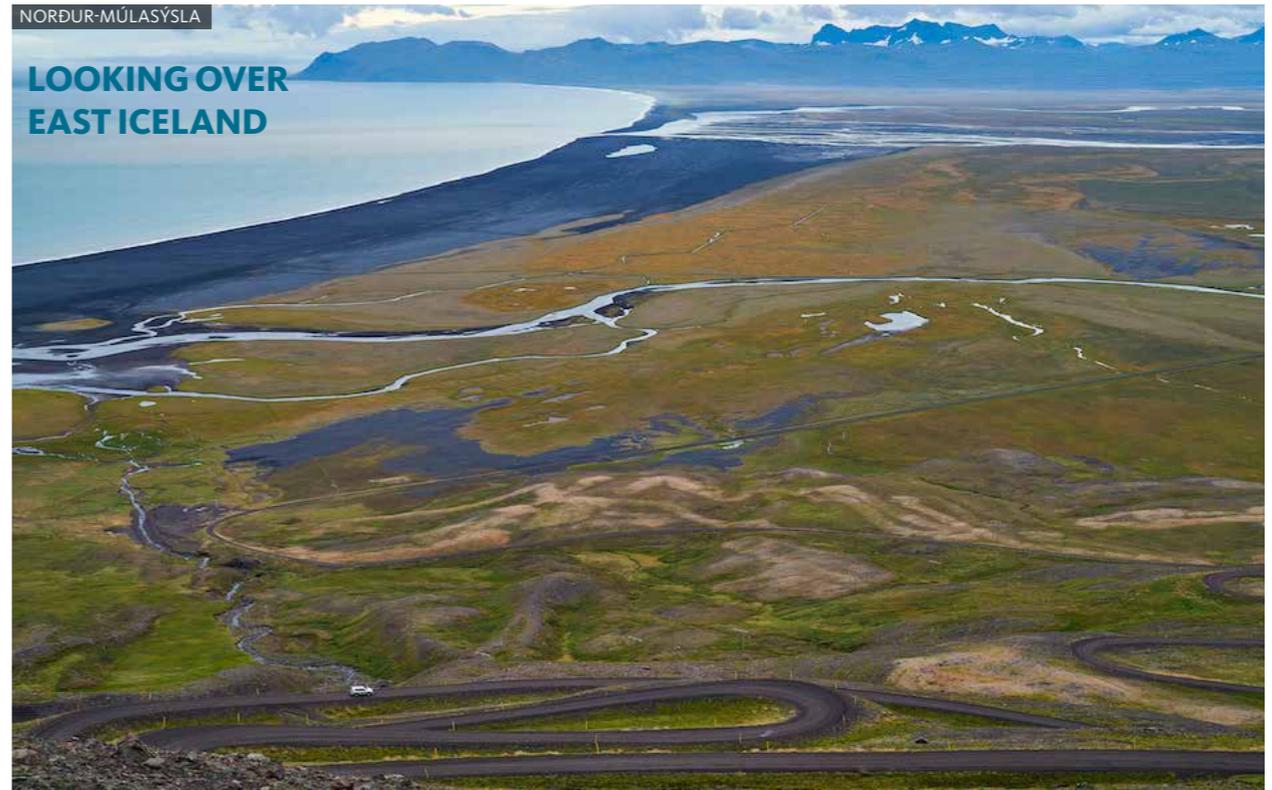
Convenient App

To help you discover and navigate the magic of East Iceland, an app called Austurland, is a valuable resource to get the most out of your trip. Austurland includes information about attractions, hiking trails, swimming pools, as well as discounts, special offers, local secrets, services and announcements. The Austurland app, which is available for both Apple and Android products, is a great guide to help you find inspiration for places to eat, activities or ways to unwind in the east of Iceland. East Iceland is often overlooked by first-time visitors to the country, but it has some of the most pristine, untouched nature in Iceland. On your next trip to Iceland, be sure to spend some time visiting, hiking and photographing the east coast and Eastfjords. Even during the high season, there's a good chance you won't bump into many other tourists. The East can be your own private treasure. -JG

PHOTO AND TEXT: *Páll Stefánsson*

NORÐUR-MÚLASÝSLA

LOOKING OVER EAST ICELAND



Road 917 from Vopnafjörður over Helliðeyri to Egilsstaðir is one of the steepest and highest mountain roads in the country. The road is impassable all winter and into spring since there is no winter service on the mountain road over the heath. Here we look southeast of Landsendafjall over Eyja. The river that is closer is Jökulsá á Dal. Further away, you can see the estuary of Lagarfljót. Between the rivers is Húsey, where Héraðssandur Sand has one of the largest seal populations in Iceland. Krossfjall is furthest to the left, Dyrfjöll to the right. Behind them is Borgarfjörður Eystri, but between the mountains is road 94, which connects Borgarfjörður Eystri to the outside world.

EGILISSTAÐIR



WARM WEATHER AND WATER

This photo is taken in Vök baths on the banks of Urriðavatn, Egilsstaðir, on its second anniversary in July. What makes the bathing place so unique is that the hot springs in and by Lake Urriðavatn are the only hot springs in the country where the water is suitable for drinking. No chlorine or other toxins are used in Vök Baths, but the purity is achieved with a high flow of this pure water. The weather was not bad for visitors and residents of East Iceland, but the air temperature at the bathing place at noon today was 22 ° C / 72 ° F. The only thing to beware of when taking a bath in Vök is the proximity to the Lagarfljót worm. It can go to Urriðavatn for a swim when it fancies, but it probably happens more often in the winter.

REYÐARFJÖRDUR



TREASURES OF EAST ICELAND

There are about 7000 reindeer in the country, all in East Iceland, and they all roam free. They were transported to the country in four groups between 1771 and 1787. The stock remains in the country's eastern half, from Langanes in the north to Jökulsárlón in the south. They mostly stay in the highlands in the summer, in the wilderness north of Vatnajökull, around Snæfell. The reindeer come down from the mountains in the winter, like this beautiful group I met in Reyðarfjörður.



SURVEY THE SCENIC SOUTH

Arguably the most popular region of Iceland that never disappoints

The South is home to glaciers, volcanoes and well-known sights like Þingvellir National Park and the Geysir geothermal region (both on the popular Golden Circle tour), lesser-known gems like Þórsörk (an area with its own micro-climate), colourful mountains, waterfalls, canyons, and lava-shaped landscapes.

The classic Golden Circle

Encompassing the three most visited sights in South Iceland, the Golden Circle gives you a slice of Icelandic history at Þingvellir, a spectacular view of Iceland's bubbling geothermal activity at Geysir, and the experience of a roaring, powerful waterfall at Gullfoss. Many travellers visit Þingvellir for its geological significance, offering a rare view of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, the meeting point of the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates. It's also home to Þingvallavatn, the largest natural lake on the island.

The next stop on the Golden Circle route is the Geysir hot spring area. While Geysir itself currently lies dormant, its neighbour, Strokkur, erupts every seven minutes or so. Crowds gather to watch as the churning, gurgling pool of hot water erupts into a fountain of boiling water 15-20 metres high. The final stop is at the mighty Gullfoss waterfall, where the Hvítá, meaning 'white river', a perfect name for the turbulent white

water, plunges into the deep canyon below. The falls consist of three steps, ranging from 11 to 21 metres, ending in the 70-metre-deep gorge.

The scenic South Coast

The south coast has a bit of everything: waterfalls, black sand beaches, charming villages and vast canyons. Two of the most popular waterfalls, Seljalandsfoss and Skógafoss, stand near the coast, and they are unmissable.

Meanwhile, a stop at Reynisdrangar provides a rare experience before heading to the quaint village of Vík. Reynisdrangar is a cluster of striking basalt sea stacks that jut out from a black sand beach. The stacks sit under the Reynisfall mountain just outside Vík. It's popular pastime to climb on the stacks and take photos, then roam the black-sand beach picking up stones and admiring the rock formations. Reynisfjara, from which Reynisdrangar is visible, is probably the most famous black-sand beach in Iceland. The juxtaposition of the white waves crashing on the stark black sand and pebbles is beautiful, with towering basalt columns along the shore next to a small cave.

A lesser-known attraction, Fjaðrárgljúfur canyon, is worth a visit. The canyon, which is believed to have been formed during the last ice age, has been hollowed by the Fjaðrá river, creating narrow walls. The canyon is about 2 kilometres long and about 100

metres deep and visitors can walk on a foot path along the canyon's edge to admire the view and take photos.

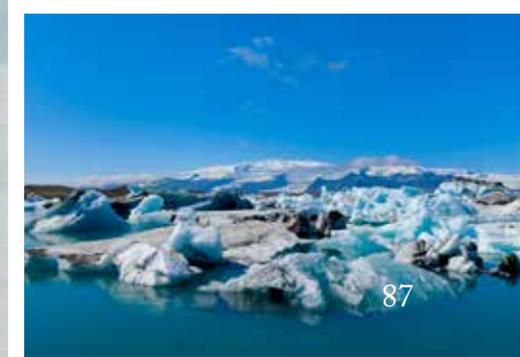
The vast, striking beauty of the Vatnajökull region

The South is home to yet another unmissable attraction, Jokulsárlón Glacier Lagoon. Situated in the Vatnajökull region, the lagoon features massive chunks of ice scattered about, walls of ice jut from the sea, and icebergs of various sizes float on the water. Huge blocks of ice constantly break off the Breiðamerkurjökull glacier into the lagoon which, though not very wide, is up to 250 metres deep—the deepest lake in Iceland.

Meanwhile, Svartifoss waterfall is another spectacular site. After a short hike, you can see Svartifoss (Black Falls) waterfall, where thundering white water cascades over striking black basalt rock columns.

A lesser-known gem is Vestrahorn, an area approximately a ten-minute drive away from Höfn. The shore features stunning lava dunes, that are constantly being shaped by the natural forces of water and wind. Down towards the sea, it is possible to get perfect reflections in the wet sand, a favourite for photographers.

South Iceland has something for everyone and is a must-see region. Waterfalls, glaciers, national parks and black sands await! -JG



ON TOP OF THE WORLD *Glacier Jeeps*

The largest glacier in Europe



The weather report was looking good—a full day of sunshine ahead of me and temperatures above 10°C. I was on my way to a face to face encounter with the world's 3rd largest glacier, the mighty Vatnajökull. This trip would mark a couple of firsts for me—my first time ever to set foot on a glacier, and my first time to travel by snowmobile. Needless to say I was really excited!

I first met Kristján and Bjarney, of Glacier Jeeps, at our pre-arranged meeting place: Vagnsstaðir. This is the official meeting place for all Glacier Jeep summer tours. Glacier Jeeps has years of experience conducting jeep, snowmobile and hiking tours on the glacier since 1994. (Bjarney has been helping run the family business since she was 14 years old.) I parked my car and joined them in their sturdy 4WD, which wound its way slowly every upwards on road F985 after a short drive on Route No. 1. The gravel road twisted and turned around hairpin bends, past waterfalls and deep canyons. My guides fill me in on the details of the landscape, pointing out how the glacier has crawled across the terrain, devastating everything in its path along with other interesting facts.

It is about a forty minute drive from Vagnsstaðir to the roots of Vatnajökull Glacier where we suit up with boots, warm overalls and helmets for the snowmobile excursion.

Now it's time to test drive the snowmobiles. I am a little hesitant at first and Kristján shows me the ropes. It looks easy enough but I decide that I prefer to let him drive over the glacier with me sitting safely behind him on this 'skidoo for two', at least until I get a better feel for it. 'Off we go over the wild white yonder, climbing high into the sun' to paraphrase an old song, with cloudless blue skies above us and the wind in our faces. Further along we stop and dismount, to take in the magnificent panoramic views over the glacier, the Atlantic Ocean and the town of Höfn far below in the distance. I felt like I was on top of the world and it was truly a cause for celebration!

Kristján jokes that we cannot go onwards unless I drive. By now I am feeling a little more sure of myself and agree to give it a try. This time we are off to inspect a massive sheer rock face that rises straight up from the glacier at an elevation of 1200 metres. Finally, our one

hour snowmobile adventure comes to an end and it is time to return to base.

Glacier Jeeps also offers a hiking tour of the glacier that comes with all the equipment such as safety helmets, climbing irons and ice axe, instruction and a guide, included in the price.

In case you just don't think a strenuous hike or a thrilling snowmobile adventure is for you, then Glacier Jeeps offers an alternative to see the glacier in a comfortable, specially equipped 4WD and is available year round, weather permitting. Each tour is only 3 to 4 hours in total, giving you plenty of time to do other things with your day, even though once you are up there you may not want to come down. Although it's best to book one day in advance, you can also just show up at Vagnsstaðir at either 9.30 am or 2.00 pm and join the tour from there.

Vatnajökull Glacier Jeep tours: a must for your bucket list! -EMV



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THE HOUSE THAT DISAPPEARED

None of Heimaey's 5,300 inhabitants had ever expected that a volcanic eruption could make them homeless. But on 23rd January 1973, earthquakes started to shake the small island south of the Icelandic mainland. Only hours later a 2,000 metre-long crevice opened just outside the town and close to the church, pouring fountains of lava and ash over Heimaey's houses and streets.

In less than one hour all the inhabitants had been evacuated, without any chance of saving their belongings. Some people never returned to the island.

Heroes Saving a Home

Two hundred brave men stayed in the danger zone to fight the devastation, and finally succeeded in slowing down the lava flow by cooling it with seawater and thus saved the port. However, when 5 months later, the eruption came to its end, around 400 houses had been completely destroyed.

This volcanic eruption made headlines worldwide, bringing back memories of the Italian town of Pompeii which, in

73 AD, was buried under thick layers of ash and lava from Mt. Vesuvius. Huge parts of that historic site have since been excavated—so people on the Westman Islands rolled up their sleeves and started doing the same.

'Pompeii of the North' deserves its name: 40 years after the disaster some 10 houses have been raised from the ashes, and an impressive museum tops off the excavation site that had been open to visitors since the very first dig.

A Museum as a Mirror

Eldheimar's design is unique, rather ominous, and yet austere. It is an architectural masterpiece made of volcanic stone that perfectly mirrors the inexorability and harshness of nature. Its beating heart right in the centre of the building is Gerðisbraut No. 10, the house that had been situated on the slope of the lava-spewing volcano. Having been fully excavated, it displays life on the day of the eruption and now serves as a memorial for a lost homeland.

In Eldheimar's over 1,000m² museum, visitors are presented multimedia shows and exhibitions about the Westman



Island's Eldfjall volcano that, in 1973 rose up to a height of 220 metres out of the blue, not existing before its eruption.

It was similar to the submarine volcano that erupted in 1963 and lasted four years creating the island of Surtsey, south of Heimaey.

Nature protection laws protect Surtsey and only scientists are allowed to access the island for research reasons. The island is part of the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage since 2008.

The Eldheimar museum is quite open in both design and guidance in the exhibition halls as well as in the café and shop. It leaves enough space for walking around and contemplating the natural disaster and its impacts on the economic and cultural life of the Westman Islands, creating respect for the determination of its fearless inhabitants, who still brave the elements today. -DT

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A BRAND-NEW RESTAURANT IN HÖFN

Filled with local and seasonal ingredients

A new restaurant has opened its doors to customers in the beautiful fishing town of Höfn in Hornafjörður in Southeast Iceland and Birki Restaurant has already gained popularity among the locals and tourists alike. The menu focuses on seasonal ingredients, including meat and vegetable dishes, fish of the day, langoustine and langoustine soup. Höfn in Hornafjörður is, after all, the langoustine capital of Iceland.

The family-owned place was opened in June, but Þórhildur Kristinsdóttir and Einar Birkir Bjarnason had been

renovating the space since January this year. "My grandfather bought the house in December and invited me and my partner, Einar Birkir Bjarnason, who's a chef, to open a restaurant in it", says Þórhildur Kristinsdóttir. Þórhildur has family in Höfn, while Einar was raised in the area. "His parents are sheep farmers in Hlíð í Lóni, so he's born and raised here."

The house is well known and liked in the town, and there has been a restaurant in it for many years. "The house, Gamla kaupfélagið, was built in



1937, and we wanted to keep the spirit of the place, while still making it ours", says Þórhildur.

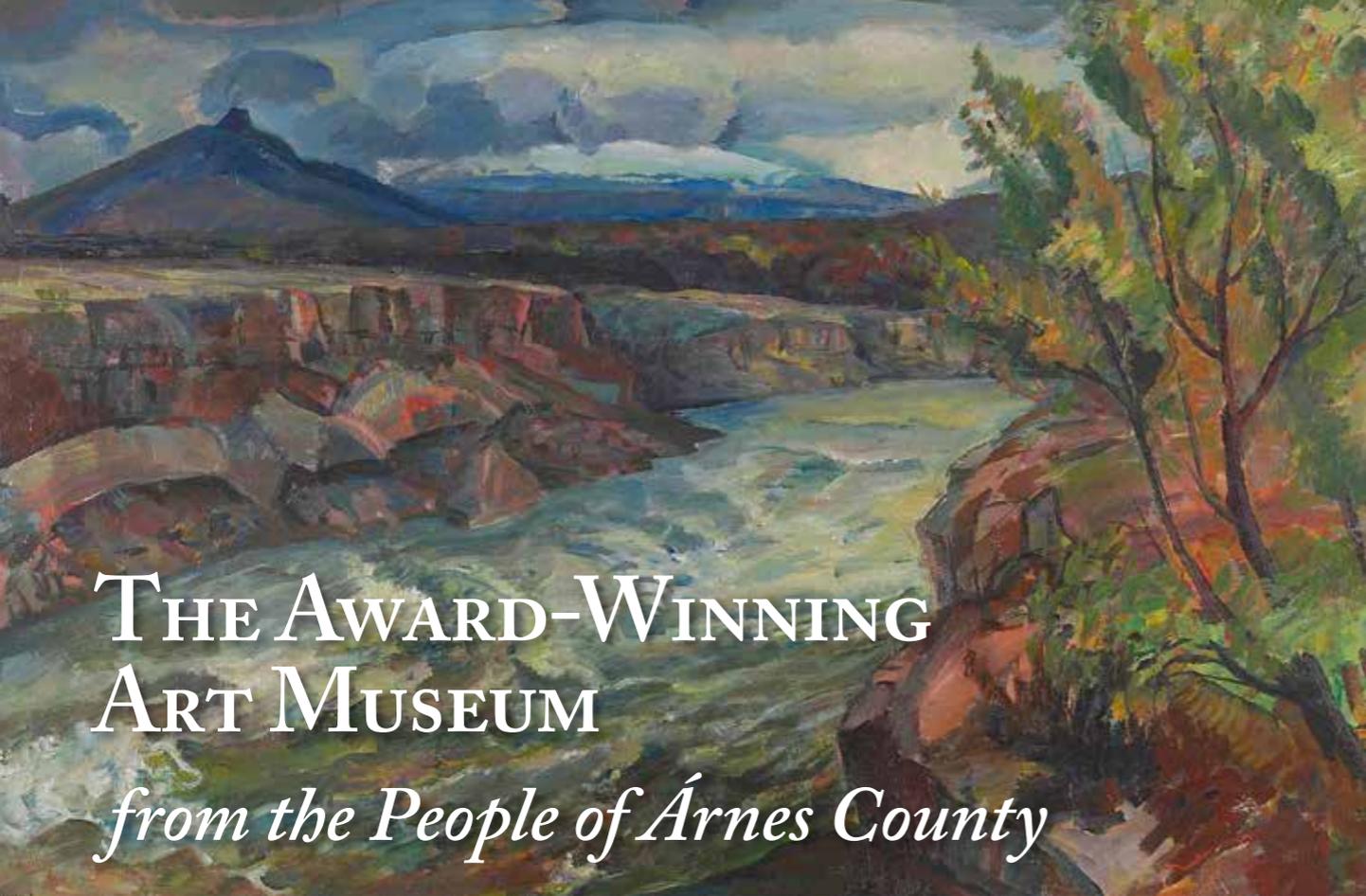
Fresh, local and seasonal ingredients are the focus of Birki Restaurant. "We focus on using locally-sourced ingredients as much as we can, as well as materials that are in season. The langoustine comes from Höfn, as well as the fish. The beef is also from farms in Southeast Iceland."

The name 'Birki' means birch, and it is the most common tree in Iceland. "We chose the name because of its connection with Icelandic nature. It is also good to use it for cooking. Our arctic char, for example, is birch-smoked. Additionally, we use the leaves and branches of the tree", says Þórhildur and adds "Einar's middle name is, of course, Birkir. So, it has a personal connection as well".

Þórhildur and Einar have been going out to collect plants for their dishes. "Our friends here have allowed us to raid their gardens for various plants and spices", Þórhildur says, smiling. "But this autumn, we intend to change the menu to reflect what is in season. The slaughtering season begins in August, and that's the same time as the mushrooms are in season. Later in the year, we'll get reindeer and geese."

Birki Restaurant is a fun, new addition to the rich restaurant scene in Höfn in Hornafjörður. It is open every day from 11:30 to 22:00, so it is a great place to have everything from lunch to a late dinner. -HDB

Birki Restaurant
Hafnarbraut 4, 780 Höfn
+354-478 1200
birki@birkirestaurant.is
www.birkirestaurant.is



THE AWARD-WINNING ART MUSEUM

from the People of Árnes County

Listasafn Árnesinga – LÁ Art Museum, is situated in Hveragerði, in Árnes County, South Iceland, half an hour drive from Reykjavík. It is an art museum that preserves a collection of modern and contemporary art mainly by Icelandic artists and has contemporary art exhibitions in various media.

The museum is owned by eight municipalities in South Iceland and was awarded the Icelandic Museum Prize of 2018. Back in 1963, Bjarnveig Bjarnadóttir [1905–1993] and her two sons, Loftur [1930–2019] and Bjarni Markús Jóhannesson [1939–] generously donated 41 artworks to the county and laid the foundations of the museum. Over a span of a quarter of a century the family continued to make donations, totalling 75 works in all. Ásgrímur Jónsson [1876–1958], a pioneer in painting the wonders of Iceland’s majestic nature and to this day one of the most celebrated Icelandic artists, was Bjarnveig’s uncle. Among the works given to the museum were nineteen paintings by Ásgrímur, the oldest one from 1900.

At the beginning, the museum was situated in Selfoss but moved to its current location in Hveragerði in 2001. The collection consists of over 500 artworks. Exhibitions are important part of the museum as well as events such as artists’ performances and workshops for families. Every year, the museum puts up several temporary

exhibitions, solo and group shows of contemporary artists from Iceland and abroad. They represent the most current art tendencies showing video works, site-specific or sound installations. In connection with the exhibitions there are educational programmes on offer such as workshops, guided tours, and artists’ performances. -HH



SAGNAHEIMAR FOLK MUSEUM *in the magical Westman Islands*

The Folk Museum of Vestmannaeyjar – the Westman Islands – is a museum built on old traditions. In addition to the many artifacts housed there, today’s technology gives the history and culture a new dimension. While the adults are learning about the stories of fishing, cliff hunting, the Eldfell eruption of 1973 and the Algerian pirate raid of 1627, the children can dress themselves in pirate costumes and search for hidden treasures in the Pirate Cave. Displays and exhibits showing the deep connection with the Mormons, the colourful sports history of the Islands, the reconstructed fishing shack from yester-year or the “Festival” tent where islanders entertain during the annual Þjóðhátíð – National Festival can also be investigated.

At the end of the 19th century, when the population was about 600, great changes took place. In 1904, the first motorised boat was purchased, and more followed soon afterwards. By 1930, the population had risen to 3,470. Now the Westman Islands are Iceland’s most productive fishing centre.

The Volcanic Eruption of 1973

The volcanic eruption in Heimaey shook the Islanders and indeed Icelanders almost fifty years ago. In the early hours of 23rd January 1973 the volcano, Eldfell,

erupted on Heimaey and the whole population of 5,300 had to immediately be evacuated to the mainland. That fateful night and the following days are chronicled in an array of photos. There are recordings of Islanders telling their personal experiences of the eruption and the rebuilding of their town in the aftermath.

The Turkish Abduction

Another traumatic event befell on the Islanders 16th July 1627, when three Algerian ships sailed north up the Atlantic to the eastern shores of Heimaey. It is known as the Turkish Abduction because Algiers was under the control of the Turkish Ottomans. Three hundred Pirates disembarked and captured 242 islanders whom they brought to Algeria where they were sold into slavery. The story of this fateful day is vividly captured. The pirate cave is a wonderland for children. One of the captives, Lutheran minister Ólafur Egilsson returned in 1628 and wrote a book about the event. In 1636, ransom was paid for 34 of the captives but most spent the rest of their lives in bondage in the Muslim world. After this, a small fort was built at Skansinn – The Bastion – as armed guards kept watch from Helgafell mountain.

The Islands are famed for their annual Þjóðhátíð – National Festival – which attracts thousands of people from the mainland. The festival was first held in 1874, at the commemoration of the millennium of the settlement of Iceland. For the first time, a Danish King was visiting Iceland: Christian IX, who brought the Icelanders their Constitution that paved the way to sovereign statehood. The Westman Islanders were prevented from sailing to the mainland for the festivities by bad weather, so held their own celebration locally and have done so ever since.

The Mormon connection

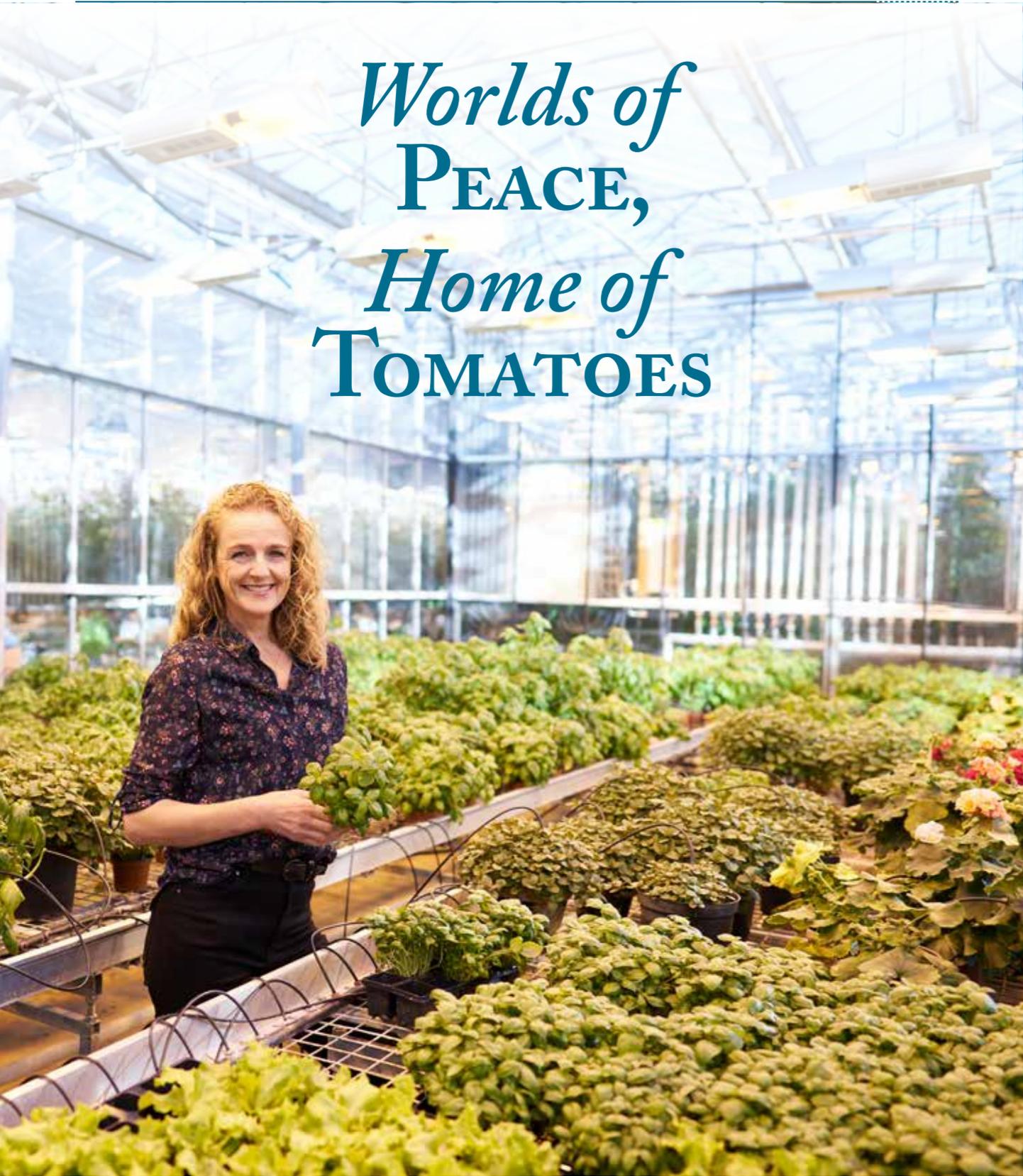
The Mormons also have their historical story exhibited at the museum. The first Icelandic Mormon missionaries, Þórarinn Hafliðason from Vestmannaeyjar and Guðmundur Guðmundsson from Rangárvellir on the south coast, worked in Vestmannaeyjar. Between 1854 and 1914 about 200 Islanders emigrated from the island to the Western World. The Mormon exhibit is in collaboration with Brigham Young University in Utah, along with a large group of enthusiasts who have researched the history and destiny of these pioneers. -HH



Sagnaheimar – Folk Museum
Ráðhúströð Safnahúsi,
900 Vestmannaeyjum
+354 488 2050
sagnaheimar@sagnaheimar.is
sagnaheimar.is



Worlds of PEACE, Home of TOMATOES



Helena Hermundardóttir

The phenomenal rise of Friðheimar, in South Iceland, where tomatoes, horses and tourism make a perfect combination

Back in 1995, Knútur Rafn Ármann and Helena Hermundardóttir, a couple from Reykjavík, bought a farm called Friðheimar in the tiny village of Reykholt in the South of Iceland. They had fallen in love at the age of seventeen and made their plans. By 1995 they had just graduated at the age of 25, he as an agronomist from Hólar University in the North of Iceland and she as a horticulturalist from Reykir's Horticultural College at Hveragerði. Friðheimar – 'Worlds of Peace' – was really rather desolate in the middle of nowhere at a time when people were seeking opportunities in Reykjavík rather than in the countryside. Their aim was to combine their passions for horses and tomatoes, and Friðheimar was the ideal place for doing exactly that.

Horticulture, using natural hot water, had been introduced at Friðheimar back in 1946, two years after Iceland had become an independent nation. The farm had two modest greenhouses and a large house that had stood unoccupied for five years when Knútur and Helena arrived. A quarter of a century has now passed since they started developing and expanding the operations with the aim of combining their different areas of expertise – horses and horticulture. They have five children and a grandchild on the way.

While the place hums with life today, it hasn't always been easy. The process of development at Friðheimar can be divided into several phases. The first six years were spent renovating old greenhouses and building new ones. The next period of ten years began when they started building new greenhouses and putting lights in all of them, enabling them to grow tomatoes all year around. During this time, Knútur and Helena were also adding to their knowledge and expertise, making frequent visits

to Finland, for instance, where they benefited from collaboration with Finnish experts. Horticulture under artificial lighting is highly advanced in Finland.

From 900 to 180,000 visitors

In 2008 they took a big step and decided to open the farm to visitors, wanting to introduce the unique traits of the Icelandic horse to their guests. A stable for 20 horses was built, with reception facilities, as well as an outdoor arena with a stand for 120 spectators. A horse show for tourists was launched.

In 2011 the crop-growing space was enlarged by 60%, and a visitor centre was built in the middle of a greenhouse, with a restaurant located in between the tomato plants. They were inspired to create something special and unique, something they hoped people had never tried before. Their focus is on food experience where a simple menu is offered – tomato-based dishes from the plants. The main idea is to spread knowledge about the background of the food which is grown in the greenhouse and offered in the restaurant, in a sustainable and eco-friendly way.

In 2012-2013, a range of food products and souvenirs were developed, made with tomatoes and cucumbers. The Little Tomato Shop opened next to the Atrium selling souvenirs and in 2014 an online

shop was introduced. "We looked upon tourism as a side business but it turned out to be bigger than our main business. In 2012 we had six employees, and 900 visitors and in 2019 we had 48 employees and 180 thousand visitors. To say that we moved faster than anticipated, is certainly an understatement! The challenge was to ensure quality and training of the staff, but we have managed to do so," says Knútur in an interview with Icelandic Times.

Greenhouse constructions in midst of covid

After all that success, they were faced with extreme challenge, as tourism all over the western world was shut down. Iceland was no exception. It was covid. "Yes, at the start of the pandemic in March 2020 we were faced with a dilemma. We were 48 people working in Friðheimar, and three quarters of us were working in tourism. How to respond as our staff is the heartbeat of the company. We were not prepared to let our people go and lose knowhow, so we decided to build a greenhouse of 5.600 square-metres and double our production. We asked our people whether they were prepared to face the challenge with us and to turn into builders. Luckily, everyone said yes. We needed more land, so the owners of Birkilundur, our neighbours were gracious to sell us land. The municipality



Knútur Rafn Ármann

fast-tracked permits through the system. Work began in May 2020 and in January 2021, the first tomatoes were produced and delivered to customers. So now we produce 2 tons of tomatoes every day in 11.000 square-metres under glass, 700 tons per year. We are optimistic for the future,” says Knútur and points out that “Icelandic horticulture is unique on a worldwide scale with the world’s cleanest water, the geothermal hot water and sustainable energy. In early summer 2021, when tourism started again post covid, we got back to our feet quickly because the staff were able to return back to their old positions and therefore we could keep our knowhow and infrastructure inside the company”, Knútur continues.

Sustainability and Responsibility

Knútur emphasises that the strategy of Friðheimar focuses on Sustainability and Responsible Tourism. The direction is to ensure that production and services continue to fulfil the expectations of customers, with the same quality standards being maintained into the future as the business grows. Maintaining good connections with customers and fellow growers into the future is also of key importance. Friðheimar has been a proud member of Vakinn, the official quality and environmental certification for Icelandic tourism since 2017, using that as a guideline to build infrastructures. All employees participate in continuously improving the quality system, so that they can maintain their high quality products and services in the best way possible.

“As we all know, companies have a major impact on their surroundings and community with their activities. Our company is no exception and that is why Friðheimar wants to offer an environmentally and socially responsible service for our guests. We want to set a good example for our colleagues within the tourism industry by taking responsibility and help making our business as sustainable as possible,” says Knútur Ármann.

-Hallur Hallsson

Photo: Páll Stefánsson



SKÓGAR MUSEUM

THE CROWN JEWEL AMONG REGIONAL MUSEUMS

This year its former director, Þórður Tómasson celebrated his 100th birthday

Skógar Museum can be found by the majestic Skógafoss waterfall in South Iceland, 150 kilometres east of Reykjavík. It is a cultural heritage collection of over 18,000 artefacts exhibited in three museums. The Museum displays a variety of tools used for fishing and farming, as well as some artefacts dating back to the Viking Age. There is also the Open Air Museum, showcasing historic buildings from the area, and the Technical Museum, which exhibits many historic vehicles and features from the transportation history of Iceland. This museum is the Crown Jewel of Icelandic regional museums.

Fisheries and Agriculture

The Maritime section of the Folk Museum contains a large collection of objects related to fisheries along the south shore of Iceland. Fisheries in this region were unusual because Iceland’s sandy south coast has no proper harbours; boats had to be launched from beaches open to the North Atlantic waves. The centrepiece of the section is Pétursey, the eight-oared fishing boat, built in 1855 and used until 1946.

The Agriculture section contains tools and utensils used on farms in past times; riding gear, haymaking tools, wool-working and iron-working equipment. In a subsistence economy, farming households had to be self-sustaining, making and repairing all their own tools and utensils.

The Folk Museum also has an esoteric collection of everything from textiles to natural history to rare books.

Turf houses & Technology

In the original turf houses rebuilt in the Open Air Museum one can catch

the atmosphere of times long gone and experience the living conditions in Iceland throughout the centuries. The Technical Museum tells the story of technology and transportation and its development in Iceland in the 19th and 20th century. Among the many automobiles and two airplanes on exhibit is the world’s best preserved Kégresse P15N track – a must-see for all car enthusiasts!

The Pioneer: Þórður Tómasson

Þórður Tómasson was born in 1921 and developed an interest for folk culture from a young age. Growing up in the countryside in South Iceland he started to notice the swift changes taking place in the daily life of what was essentially a farming culture that had not changed for centuries. As working methods modernized and old equipment became redundant, the tendency of the farmers was to get rid of it. Þórður started from a young age to collect old equipment that was being discarded. He also spent a long time listening to the elderly as he was growing up and later started to document this oral history.

In 1944, the residents of the two farms at Ytri-Skógar donated 69% of their land to the counties of Rangárvellir and West Skaftafell, to construct a new boarding school. At the first meeting of the school board in 1945, it was suggested that a folk museum also be established. Skógar Museum was founded in 1949, and the first exhibit was set up in the school basement on December 1st the same year. Initially Þórður Tómasson took responsibility for the museum, and in 1959 he was appointed as director. He was an organist in two churches and, for many years, he was a member of the parish councils of both areas. For ten years he was also a member of the Rangárvellir county council. In 1997 Þórður was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Iceland for



his contribution to research in the public interest. Þórður continued his work for the museum until he retired in 2014.

Þórður has written more than 28 books about the old Icelandic farming culture, folklore and the artefacts that can be found in the museum. This year Þórður Tómasson celebrated his 100th birthday.

-Hallur Hallsson



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861 Hvolsvelli
+354 487 8845
booking@skogasafn.is
www.skogasafn.is



REYKJAVÍK

THE HRINGBRAUT TRAFFIC ROUTE



This bus was on its way from Skerjafjörður to Hlemmur and from there, on to the eastern part of the city.

It's getting darker outside. At the beginning of August, the darkness swoops in, as can be seen in the photo. Taken at half-past ten, east of Hringbraut, the twilight is well on its way to complete darkness. Hringbraut is the main road to and from the western part of the capital. On the far left of the picture, you can see six construction cranes. This is the largest construction project in Icelandic history; the new Landspítali University Hospital is being built. In the middle of the picture, at the top of Öskjuhlíð, a small hill in the city, you can see the illuminated Perlan (the Pearl) resting on six hot water tanks. There is a museum in Perlan as well as restaurants, and of course a good view of the capital area. The Pearl was opened 30 years ago, in 1991. To the left of the picture, you can see the landing lights at Reykjavik Airport. The British built the airport during World War II and it has been the centre of domestic flights in Iceland since 1945. The airport's location has been a matter of much controversy in recent years, as many do not think it is appropriate for the city's best building land to be used as an airport.

THE HOMELY HERD'S LAIR

Hotel Hjarðarból lies in the South-West between Selfoss and Hveragerði, 30 minutes from Reykjavik

Hotel Hjarðarból – Herd's Lair – is a friendly family-run guesthouse in the countryside close to Hringvegurinn – The Ring Road or Route #1 – midway between the towns of Hveragerði and Selfoss in South West Iceland, just 30-minutes drive from the capital, Reykjavik. Hotel Hjarðarból has a homely atmosphere reminiscent of a bygone era. Rooms come with shared or en-suite bathrooms. It provides a good base for sight-seeing and exploring around South Iceland and the Reykjanes peninsula and for day trips to Reykjavik, as most of the major attractions are within a relatively short driving distance.

Old farm buildings

Hjarðarból is set in reconstructed farm buildings surrounded by woodland. This laid-back accommodation is in an amazing area of hot springs and waterfalls in Hveragerði's Geothermal

Park with various activities, such as horseback riding and hiking, nearby. Hotel Hjarðarból features 30 comfortable, down-to-earth and homely rooms with rustic furnishings that vary in size and set up, with double, triple, quadruple, and special family rooms with private or shared bathrooms suitable for all types of travellers.

Built in the 1950s

The Hjarðarból farm was a part of a government project to give people who wanted to be farmers a chance to do so. The Old House was built in the 1950s, a beautiful farm with cattle, horses and sheep. Today's main building was a barn with two sour-hay towers and a cowshed. The towers are still standing, the barn is now the main hall and the lounge is in the old cowshed. There is also the old sheep shed, where the horses most likely stayed with the sheep. The last 'original' house

is the shed where tools were kept. This has been converted today into rooms #13-14.

Helga & Guðbrandur

Sigríður Helga, known as Helga, runs this unique hotel with her husband, Guðbrandur Sigurðsson. They have raised three children, lived in Denmark, where they started a restaurant, before returning and taking the risky decision to move their family from Reykjavik and 9-5 work. Guðbrandur is a carpenter. As he has worked in that field for most of his life, renovations haven't been a problem.



-HH



Hotel Hjarðarból
Hjarðarból, 861 Ölfus
+354 567 0045
info@hjarðarból.is
GPS: 63.961894, -21.104263



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www.husavikgreenhostel.is/



THE HÚSAVÍK WHALE MUSEUM is a non-profit organization, founded in 1997. The museum is also running an educational program for children. It is expected that every pupil visits the Children's Whale School at least four times during their schooling.

Hafnarstétt 1, 640 Húsavík
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www.hvalasafn.is/en/



KALDBAKSKOT COTTAGES on the Diamond Circle offers peace, tranquillity and breathtaking views. Great for sightseeing and birdwatching, as well as to recharge and connect with nature.

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cottages@cottages.is
cottages.is



BÁRAN BAR/RESTAURANT in Þórshöfn, northeast Iceland offers local cuisine like fish, lamb, vegetables or for those who dare, whale or Puffin. During summer they also serve breakfast.

Eyrarvegur 3, 680 Þórshöfn
+354 468 1250
knaveitingar@gmail.com
baranrestaurant.is/en/



B&S RESTAURANT is a family operated restaurant in Blönduós, north Iceland. Ever since the start in 2007, they have put an emphasis on fresh produce and no white sugar nor MSG.

Norðurlandsvegur 4, 540 Blönduós
+354 453 5060
info@bogs.is
bogs.is/



SJÁVARBORG RESTAURANT is by the harbor in Hvammstangi and has a spectacular view of the ocean. Sometimes guests can enjoy their meal while watching whales swim in the sea. Our menu has various dishes with an emphasis on fresh Icelandic ingredients.

Strandgata 1, 530 Hvammstangi
+354 451 3131
info@sjavarborg-restaurant.is
www.sjavarborg-restaurant.is



ÁRNESSÝSLA HERITAGE MUSEUM has one of the oldest buildings in Iceland. "Húsið" was built in 1765 for a Danish merchant. During that time, the house was the centre of European art & culture in Iceland.

Eyrargötu 50, 820 Eyrarbakki
+354 483 1504
info@byggdasafn.is
www byggdasafn.is/english/



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