

# RANGÁ REVIEW

WWW.HOTELRANGA.IS

ISSUE N°13

page 22/23

## SUSTAINABILITY

Hotel Rangá is passionate about sustainability. Learn more about our environmentally friendly solutions.

page 30/31

## AROUND THE WORLD

Hotel Rangá's unique continental suites are designed to transport our guests to another continent for the night.

page 20/21

## ARTWORK HUNT

Did you know that Hotel Rangá is filled with unique art? Go on a scavenger hunt to find some of our favorite pieces.



# FUN FACTS ABOUT THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

Shorter days and longer nights give us more opportunities to see the northern lights. We made a list of fascinating facts about the aurora—read on to learn what we found.

## DON'T LOOK UP!

Many years ago, pregnant women in Iceland were told not to look at the northern lights. Why? Because there was a fear that their child would be born cross-eyed.

## A COLORFUL COMBINATION

Every northern lights display is unique. The color and movements change all the time, meaning you can see the lights again and again and still feel inspired.

## AROUND THE GALAXY

Earth is not the only planet that has auroras. In fact, astronomers have seen the lights on Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Jupiter.

## THE FIRST PHOTOGRAPH

Nowadays, professional photographers fly to Iceland just to take photos of the aurora. But the first photograph of the northern lights was taken on January 5, 1892 by German astronomer and physicist Otto Rudolf Martin Brendel.

## A ROMAN GODDESS

The name aurora borealis actually has Greek and Roman origins. Aurora is the goddess of the dawn and Boreas is a Greek word for the north wind.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Cultures from around the world have associated the northern lights with a variety of meanings. The British and French thought they were a bad omen whereas Scandinavians believed they foreshadowed good things.

Front cover photo by Stefan Liebermann // Picture by Herman Desmet



# YOUR GUIDE TO NORTHERN LIGHTS PHOTOGRAPHY

## Preparation and Equipment

- Have the camera ready before going to sleep and make sure it is fully charged. The cold can reduce the battery power.
- Scout out a good location before nightfall. Keep in mind that the lights will be visible towards the north. We can recommend a good location.
- Find your fastest wide-angle lens.
- Use your tripod or borrow one from our lobby.

## Settings for your camera

-  Pre-focus your lens on infinity or use live-view with loupe.
-  F Stop wide open (f/2.2 - f/4).
-  Set your ISO  
Fast Lights: ISO (800-4000).  
Slower Lights: ISO (400-800).
-  Experiment with exposure: from 5 sec for fast lights to half a minute for slow lights.
-  Shoot in RAW image format for more options in post editing.
-  Set the timer to at least 2 sec or use a remote control to shoot.



SCAN ME TO SEE MAP

## HOTEL RANGÁ GUIDES SOUTH COAST

Iceland's south coast is one of the most beautiful regions in our country. The area features incredible waterfalls, amazing black sand beaches and unique rock formations. A drive down this stunning route is highly recommended while staying at Hotel Rangá. Before your journey, take a look at our South Coast Guide to learn more about our top sights.

Iceland is filled with epic waterfalls, but the south coast's Seljalandsfoss and Skógafoss are considered to be some of the most beautiful. We also recommend that you explore Gljúfrabúi and Kvernufoss—two waterfalls that are a bit off the beaten path. End your trip with a visit to the striking black sand beaches at Reynisfjara and Vík.

Picture by Robb Leahy

## HOTEL RANGÁ GUIDES GOLDEN CIRCLE

The Golden Circle is a self-drive route that consists of three incredible natural landmarks in Iceland: Gullfoss, Geysir and Þingvellir National Park. As you drive, you will have the opportunity to stop at delicious restaurants, interesting local businesses and even geothermal hot springs. What's more, the Golden Circle is just a short drive from Hotel Rangá.

Check out the Hotel Rangá Golden Circle Guide to learn about all our top places to visit. Enjoy freshly churned ice cream straight from the cows at Efstidalur Farm. Or if you are in the mood for something savory, eat homemade tomato soup and fresh bread in a greenhouse filled with tomato vines at Friðheimar. It is always a good idea to take a relaxing dip in the geothermal hot spring at the Secret Lagoon.



SCAN ME TO SEE MAP



Picture by Olivia Synnervik



SCAN ME TO SEE MAP

## HOTEL RANGÁ GUIDES WESTMAN ISLANDS DAY TOUR

The Westman Islands, or Vestmannaeyjar in Icelandic, is an archipelago of 15 islands located just off the south coast of Iceland. Out of the 15, only one is inhabited year round: the island of Heimaey. There you will find a community of 4.000 that has prospered from a thriving fishing industry. With stunning landscapes, a charming village and the largest puffin colony of the world, these small yet enchanting islands offer a variety of activities and attractions for visitors.

Take a look at our helpful Westman Islands guide to get an idea about the best spots to enjoy on your visit. Heimaey is home to several interesting museums including Eldheimar, a museum dedicated to the 1973 volcanic eruption. If you are interested in sea life, take a boat tour—there is a good chance you'll see birds and maybe even a few seals. We also highly recommend taking a hike to see some stunning vistas of the island's coves and the surrounding ocean.

Picture by Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir

## HOTEL RANGÁ GUIDES RELAXING DAY CLOSE TO HOTEL RANGÁ

We made a special guide for guests looking to experience a relaxing day close to Hotel Rangá. This is an excellent route for rainy weather or if you want to explore the nearby area. Want to bring home a special Icelandic souvenir? There are several local stores that sell beautiful handcrafts and woolen goods. Stop by the carpentry workshop at Tré og List or Sveitabúðin Una to buy unique wool art and local products.

If you are interested in wool processing, Uppspuni Mini Mill & Yarn Shop is the place to go. Get an idea about how wool is turned into yarn and buy woolen products made by locals. A visit to the Caves of Hella is always a good idea. Explore mysterious caves and learn possible theories about their creation. Or why not learn all about volcanic activity at the Lava Center in Hvolsvöllur. There are plenty of fun activities just minutes from Hotel Rangá's front door.



SCAN ME TO SEE MAP

THIS ITINERARY IS GREAT FOR  
A RAINY DAY OR IF YOU WANT  
TO DRIVE LESS



Picture by Ása Steinarsdóttir

## HOTEL RANGÁ FAMOUS WILD MUSHROOM SOUP

Servings for 4 people

### INGREDIENTS:

- 400 g Icelandic mushrooms or fresh field mushrooms
- 2 large white onions
- 100 g dried mushrooms
- 200 g mixed frozen mushrooms (ceps, porcini or similar)
- 5 tbs vegetable oil
- 300 g butter
- 100 g plain white flour
- 100 ml white wine
- 100 ml madeira
- 500 ml water
- 2000 ml double or heavy cream
- 3 tbs mushroom powder (you can make your own or buy)

### METHOD:

1. Slice the mushrooms and onions thinly
2. Take a large heavy-based saucepan and gently heat the oil
3. Gently fry the fresh mushrooms, onions and frozen mushrooms for 5 minutes
4. Pour all the wine into the pan and let it boil until the wine has reduced to almost nothing
5. Add the water to the pan
6. Now add the dried mushrooms and stir
7. Add the mushroom powder into the pan and let the mixture simmer for 20 minutes
8. Now add the cream into the pot and let it simmer for 60 min
9. In a small pan place 100 g of butter, heat gently and let it melt, then add the flour and combine to make a roux. Whisk the roux mixture into the soup until the soup thickens
10. Let the soup simmer for 10 min and then add the remaining 200 g of the butter
11. Blitz the soup with a hand-held blender
12. Season with salt and pepper
13. Optional: Drizzle over with sherry vinegar at the end

Serve with delicious bread of your choice



Picture by Ása Steinarsdóttir

## SMALL LUXURY HOTELS

Excellence and individuality, that is what you can expect time and again at Hotel Rangá, a proud member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World. To learn more about this prestigious affiliation, we sat down with hotelier Friðrik Pálsson, the owner and managing director of Hotel Rangá.

"Before joining the hotel industry, I spent time traveling with my late wife around Europe, and we usually stayed at chateaus or other small hotels," says Friðrik, who took over Hotel Rangá in 2003. "We loved the smaller hotels because they are individually run and more private -- you feel more at home. So, when Small Luxury Hotels approached Hotel Rangá in 2015, I found it very interesting and after some discussions we decided it was the way to go."

Founded in 1989, Small Luxury Hotels of the World (SLH) is a community of over 500 luxury accommodations in more than 80 countries. Properties range from rural resorts nestled in the countryside to boutique hotels located in the city center.

Each year SLH receives over 1,000 hotel applications but accepts only 5 percent. Their criteria are strict, and each property is inspected thoroughly to ensure a consistently high standard. As Friðrik explains, those inspections are not limited to first-time applicants: "They do a mystery visit at Hotel Rangá every year and closely check about 350 to 400 items on their list -- everything from big to small, they leave nothing untouched. They keep us on our toes."

Friðrik knows a thing or two about meticulous quality standards, as he has 30 years of prior experience with the Icelandic seafood export business and ISO 9001 certification. "That taught me a lot," he says, "and since then I have been a big supporter of very thorough standardized procedures. Of course, flexibility is also very important to us, and we are always willing and ready to meet whatever challenge there is." "Their individually minded approach is another thing I like a lot," says Friðrik, noting that it mirrors the values of Hotel Rangá. "More and more people want to have a tailor-made travel experience, so we are always working with local activity companies to come up with something new and different."

In a competitive industry like tourism and hospitality, Friðrik feels strongly that the SLH partnership has been a boon to Hotel Rangá and its guests.

"I have always believed in cooperation because alone, you are very small. What they offer us is the opportunity to be part of a much bigger brand name, with more visibility to potential guests, as well as recognition for excellence in the luxury market."



Picture by Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir

# THE STORY OF HRAMMUR

One of Hotel Rangá's most popular staff members and certainly the fuzziest is Hrammur the resident polar bear. Hrammur, who is originally from Greenland, has the special role of greeting each and every one of Hotel Rangá's visitors as they enter into the lobby.

He is not shy, but he is quiet, so we asked hotelier Friðrik Pálsson to share the story of how Hrammur came to live at Hotel Rangá. It all started with a visit to Manuel's Taxidermy Parlor on the outskirts of Reykjavík.

"As we are looking around at birds and foxes and so on, I notice a picture of the polar bear from the Nanoq in Kringlan mall," says Friðrik, referencing the outdoor sporting goods store that opened in 1999 but went bankrupt in 2002. At the time, the polar bear was one of the mall's main landmarks along with a 49 feet tall, fully functioning climbing wall. "I asked Manuel if the polar bear was his work. He said yes, so I asked where he was now but he did not know," Friðrik says. "I can not remember how I found him but I finally learned that he was holed up in a warehouse owned by Baugur group, the investment company behind Nanoq." He contacted one of the company's directors, Finnur Árnason, who said the bear was not for sale but Friðrik wouldn't budge. He had made up his mind so he pleaded with the director to at least let him borrow the bear.

"Finnur asks me if I even realize how big it is. I reply that of course I know he is quite big but I ended up going to the warehouse to see him in the flesh," Friðrik says. "I will admit, his height was a bit of a shock, but I got to measure him and took the measurements back to Hotel Rangá." This was before the west end of the hotel, where Hrammur now lives, was built. According to Friðrik's measurements, he would just barely get into the foyer where the Iceland Quilt now hangs, and he would almost touch the ceiling. "So, I went back to Finnur and said: I have a space for him." In the end, Friðrik got his wish. The bear arrived in a large moving truck and even though the staff had to remove a ceiling light to get him in, Hrammur found his new home at Hotel Rangá. But of course, he was not named Hrammur then – in fact, he did not have a name at all. Hotel Rangá decided to get the local children involved and invited them to partake in a naming competition.

"There were dozens of excellent suggestions and one girl suggested Hrammur," Friðrik says. "There was a very distinguished panel of judges and we invited all the kids to come celebrate with us."

Hrammur means "paw" in Icelandic, and today Hrammur stands with his two front paws and huge grin in a new part of Hotel Rangá's lobby, specifically designed for his 13 feet stature.

He is happy to be photographed and especially enjoys selfies. If you share any on social media, remember to use the hashtags #Hrammur and #HotelRanga so he can add them to his own collection.



Picture by Missy Rich photography

Picture by Christian Trustrup

## TIPS FOR ECO-FRIENDLY TOURISM

### DRINK STRAIGHT FROM THE TAP

This one is a no brainer – Icelandic water is among the cleanest in the world. Bottled water is an unnecessary expense and plastic bottles harm the environment. Drinking from the tap is a win-win!

### STAY ON MARKED PATHS WHEN DRIVING

It is illegal to drive off-road in Iceland. Make sure to always stay on roads and marked trails. Cars can leave permanent damage in our fragile landscape. Icelandic nature is much better enjoyed on foot anyway – a true adventure includes feeling the elements on your skin and under your feet.

### BUY LOCAL

It is almost impossible to buy only local 100% of the time in Iceland as much of our food items and most of our clothing is imported. Ordering local dishes at restaurants, such as Icelandic lamb or seafood, is a great start. Buying souvenirs that are actually made in Iceland also helps because they have a smaller carbon footprint. We especially recommend Icelandic wool sweaters and socks.

### CARRY SMALL REUSABLE BAGS FOR TRASH

There aren't many trash cans stashed in the highlands or even by Route 1 for that matter. It's a good idea to carry a small reusable trash bag in your backpack. Then, you can safely dispose of your trash in a bin or hand it over to Hotel Rangá's reception staff.

### PLANT TREES

Donating to the Kolviður fund is a great way to compensate for emissions made through travel. You can use their carbon calculator to figure out how many trees it would take to offset the carbon footprint of your travel - be it by plane, boat or car. When you make a donation to the fund, Kolviður's staff and volunteers plant the trees. You can find more about Kolvidur on their website: [www.kolvidur.is](http://www.kolvidur.is)



Picture by Christian Trustrup



# SOUTH ICELAND: A HIKER'S PARADISE

Guests at Hotel Rangá can choose easy paths perfect for families as well as more advanced treks with elevation gain. As you walk, you'll see fantastic views of cascading waterfalls, tumbling rivers and more. There is also excellent birdlife in the area. Weather in Iceland is unpredictable, so all hikers should bring warm clothes, rain gear and good shoes. It is also smart to pack a water bottle and some snacks. Stop by the Hotel Rangá reception for directions, and let us know your hiking plans before you start your adventure.

## EASY EAST-RANGÁ RIVER WALK

A beautiful river walk can be found just outside Hotel Rangá's back door. The lovely Rangá River meanders just behind our hotel, and our guests are free to walk beside its peaceful path. This easy walk is a wonderful option for families or guests who want to take a leisurely stroll. What's more, the Rangá River is one of the best salmon rivers in all of Iceland. As you walk, you might even see someone land a catch.

## INTERMEDIATE - SUMMER ONLY ÞRÍHYRNINGUR

If you stand in front of Hotel Rangá and look towards the northeast, you will see a mountain in the distance. This is Þríhyrningur, an ancient volcano that has long been extinct. The Icelandic word Þríhyrningur actually means triangle, and the mountain's distinct three points are said to resemble this shape.

There is a well-established trail from the base of Þríhyrningur to its peak. On a clear day, the view from the summit is incredible. You will see excellent views of the south coast all the way to the sea. The hike itself is moderate though quite steep at some points. The trail can be covered in small stones and loose gravel, so be sure to watch your footing.

## EASY TUMASTAÐIR FOREST PATH

If you are looking for a leisurely hike near Hotel Rangá, we highly recommend that you visit Tumastaðir forest. Beautiful paths wind through stately pine trees, many of which were planted in the 1940s. Small streams flow beside the forest paths, which creates a truly relaxing atmosphere. There are even several picnic tables where you can rest and enjoy the natural beauty. Beloved by local families, Tumastaðir is a wonderful place to meander and explore.

## INTERMEDIATE STÓRI DÍMON

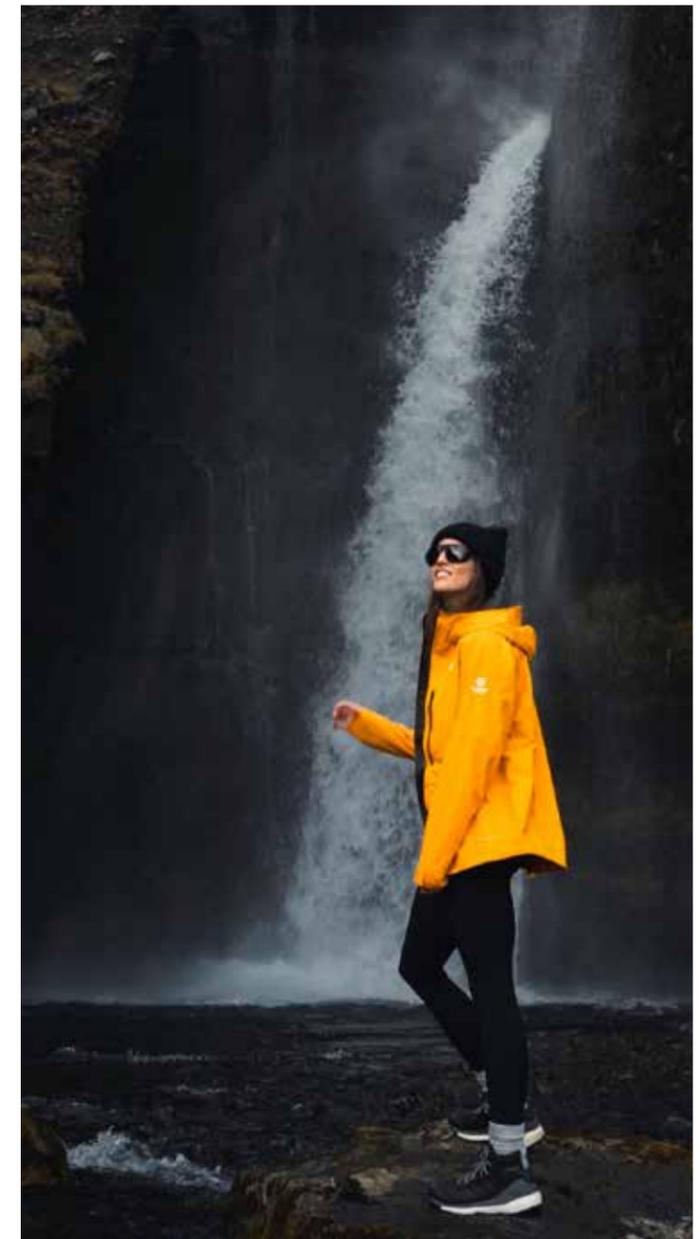
Stóri Dímon is a small but mighty mountain which offers incredible views over the valley of Fljótshlíð. The trail up the mountain is very steep but quite short. Depending on your speed, you can reach the top in anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes. The history of this little mountain is rather interesting. In fact, several important battles were fought near Stóri Dímon during the settlement of Iceland. Stories of these ancient conflicts are told in the most famous of Icelandic sagas, Njáls Saga.

## EASY GLUGGAFOSS WATERFALL IN FLJÓTSHLÍÐ

Gluggafoss or "window waterfall" is a beautiful waterfall in the valley of Fljótshlíð. The waterfall gets its name from the way the water pours in between crevices in the rock, almost as if through a window. Gluggafoss has both an upper and lower falls, and visitors are able to walk and see both levels. Visitors are also able to climb higher above the falls on the right side. This path is less established and quite steep, but it offers wonderful views of the valley below.

## INTERMEDIATE - SUMMER ONLY ÞÓRÓLFSFELL IN FLJÓTSHLÍÐ

If you are looking for a strenuous but rewarding hike, try the mountain Þórólfsfell. The elevation gain is very gradual, but it takes about three hours to reach the mountain's summit. From the top of Þórólfsfell you can see stunning views of the Fljótshlíð valley and three glaciers: Fjallajökull, Eyjafjallajökull and Mýrdalsjökull. You will also find a summit marker from Landmælingar Íslands dating back to 1958.



## INTERMEDIATE - SUMMER ONLY BEGINNING OF FIMMVÖRÐUHÁLS

The Fimmvörðuháls trail is one of the toughest trails in Iceland. Ever-changing weather conditions can make the trek quite dangerous, and we strongly recommend that you join a guided tour if you want to do the entire 25 km (15 mile) hike. However, it is possible for the novice hiker to get a small taste of this beautiful trail. Simply start the hike from the top of Skógafoss waterfall but turn back after 30 minutes up to two hours. This part of the trail is somewhat strenuous but still safe to experience on your own. You will pass incredible waterfalls and see wonderful views of the south coast.

## EASY YTRI-RANGÁ PATH IN HELLA

For relaxing hiking near Hotel Rangá, try the Ytri-Rangá riverside path. This is an easy walking route that begins in the town of Hella. The path meanders for several kilometers just beside the stunning Ytri-Rangá River. It is easiest to access the path from a public park near the center of town. What's more, if you head south, you can walk all the way to Ægissíðufoss waterfall. This route to the falls is about 3-4 km each way.



Picture by Milan &amp; Seila

# HOTEL RANGÁ OBSERVATORY

In Iceland, the night sky truly comes alive in wintertime. Whether you are on a quest to view distant galaxies or trace the outlines of constellations, the high-tech Hotel Rangá Observatory is the perfect place to stargaze with an expert astronomer's assistance.

"We all share the same sky, which is beautiful," muses Sævar Helgi Bragason, one of the regular guides at the Hotel Rangá Observatory. Nicknamed Stjörnu-Sævar ("Star Sævar") in Iceland, his curiosity and enthusiasm about the night sky is infectious. He has been involved with the operations of the observatory since it opened in early 2014. Designed in collaboration with The Amateur Astronomical Society of Seltjarnarnes, the observatory was the first of its kind in Iceland. Boasting state-of-the-art astronomical telescopes and a roof that rolls back to reveal a 360-degree view of the night sky - with virtually no light pollution - the structure has garnered a lot of attention by stargazers far and wide.

## MILLIONS OF LIGHT YEARS AWAY

"It was a bigger success than we had anticipated," explains Sævar, "so we have since upgraded the telescopes in the observatory." One is a 160-millimeter diameter refractor, while the other, bigger telescope is a celestial 14-inch HD reflector. Both are computerized, featuring excellent optics for viewing objects in stunning detail, and are set on advanced mounts to follow the movements in the sky. They are also perfectly suited for astrophotography.

The observatory is located just 150 meters (492 feet) from the main hotel building, making it a convenient and unique winter experience for Hotel Rangá guests. To stargaze, we need clear skies with no chance of high clouds or rain, as moisture and high winds can damage our telescopes while high clouds blur out otherwise spectacular views. We open our observatory in the wintertime when the forecast shows that the sky will remain clear for several hours. During this time, the guide - either Sævar or another local expert with an equally fascinating background - points out planets and far away galaxies while talking about the legends and history of the constellations.

"We can point our scopes at different galaxies to show people they are just like the system we live in, only much, much further away. And if there is anyone else over there looking back, they see us as we looked like in the past and they have a similar view of our galaxy that we find so incredibly big," says Sævar. "The furthest object I have seen is a group of galaxies called Stephan's Quintet, about 300 million light years away, which means the light left the galaxies 300 million years ago before the dinosaurs even existed."

## A LITTLE CLOSER TO HOME

Sævar emphasizes that such far away objects tend to look like faint blobs to the untrained eye, so the guides mostly show objects that are "close to us and hopefully beautiful to look at", like Andromeda, the closest galaxy to The Milky Way. Guests can also see dense, cloudy nebulas, the places where the stars are being born, for example, the Orion Nebula, which is part of the Orion constellation roughly 1,350 light years away from Earth. The moon is another popular subject, and people like to find out where the Apollo landing site is located. "We can magnify the images a lot so we can easily see things like valleys and mountains on the moon," explains Sævar, noting that the exact landing area itself is far too small to see. He also says that full moons, surprisingly, do not provide the best viewing. Rather, it is easier to see the contours in the moon's terrain during waxing or waning phases.

Of course, it is not all science talk during the tour. "The thing I kind of like when I am showing people the stars is to mix mythology and cultural references with the science," says Sævar, "because then the sky really becomes alive."



Picture by Gísli Már



Picture by Tom Stahl

# STARGAZING THE NORSE WAY

The main source for Old Norse mythology is the Prose Edda—a text written by scholar Snorri Sturluson in the early 13th century. He enjoyed skywatching from his own geothermal hot tub in east Iceland—why not follow in his footsteps? On a clear night, our guests can enjoy stargazing sessions in Hotel Rangá's modern Jacuzzis. The night sky is home to not only the gods, but also birds, animals, places and even a heavenly tree.



Picture by Gísli Már

## SKULL SKY

According to the legends, two divine brothers, Vilji and Vé, slew the titan Ymir and fashioned the cosmos from his corpse. The Earth was created from Ymir's flesh and his sweat and blood became the oceans. The mountains grew from his bones, the clouds from his brain, the trees from his hair and the sky from his skull.

## HEAVENLY TREE

In Nordic Mythology, the Milky Way is the white tree trunk of the World Tree (Ash of Yggdrasil). This tree is said to spread its branches over the world and extend across the sky, connecting us to different worlds. What's more, the great Ash held up the heavens and was the road leading to Valhalla. Nowadays, Icelanders call it Vetrarbrautin, the Winter Way. After all, it's only visible in the winter when the nights are truly dark.

## WOLF WITH AN OPEN JAW

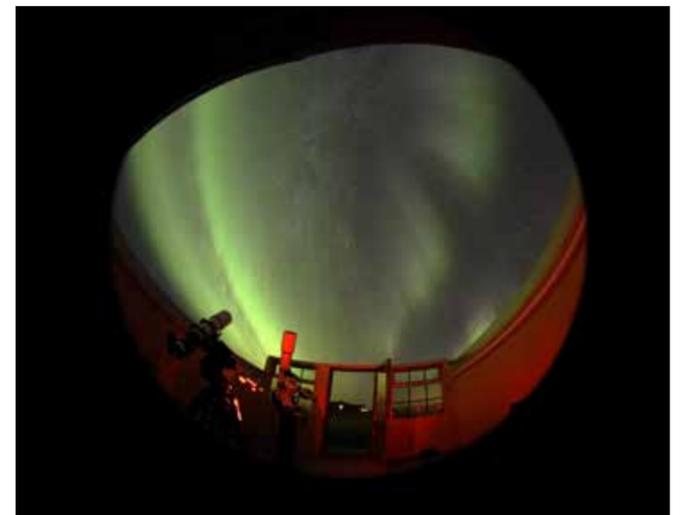
The V-shaped part of the constellation Taurus the bull is actually a wolf with an open jaw. The sun moves just above it and in front of it in June, escaping the wolf's mouth once a year. This is said to be a reason for our summertime celebrations.

## THE NORSE PLANET GODS

In modern times, the five visible planets bear the names of Roman gods in western cultures. However, when continental astronomical texts were translated in Iceland around 1200, it was found that the planets were called by the Norse gods' names. Mercury is Óðinn, Venus is Freyja, Mars is Týr, Jupiter is the mighty Þór and Saturn is Njörður.

## EAGLES, DRAGONS AND GOATS

A giant eagle decorates the sky close to the Milky Way. That constellation is called Aquila (the Eagle). In Norse mythology, the eagle is said to stay close to the Ash of Yggdrasil. A dragon called Níðhöggur gnaws at one of the roots, perhaps as the constellation of Scorpio. There is also a goat said to be living on top of Valhalla's roof. However, we don't know exactly where that goat is located in the heavens.



Picture by Gísli Már



Pictures by Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir

# VIKING FEAST IN AN ICELANDIC CAVE

Hotel Rangá is offering our guests the chance to have a truly unique dining experience, only available as private dinner. Feast like Vikings in a mysterious Icelandic cave just minutes from Hotel Rangá. Enjoy delicious dishes prepared by Hotel Rangá chefs in a setting from another time.



## THE CAVES OF HELLA

The Caves of Hella are a fascinating mystery. What we do know for certain is that the caves were made by humans. What's more, there are signs that indicate the caves were in existence when the Vikings came to Iceland in 850 A.D. These underground spaces were almost certainly used as a dwelling place, but we can only guess at their inhabitants. Walking through the cool underground rooms, it is easy to feel connected to the past. Little signs of human existence can be seen—there are some wall carvings of unknown age, a small altar and what is perhaps an old stove. Yet, the space emanates a particular atmosphere, making it easy to imagine what it might have been like in days of old.



HOTEL RANGÁ ALSO ARRANGES WEDDINGS IN THE CAVES. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR WEDDING COORDINATOR.



## GOURMET FARE AND LIVE MUSIC

For our guests who want to experience something truly unique, we offer a Viking feast inside one of the Caves of Hella. Hotel Rangá chefs will prepare a delicious three course meal inspired by Icelandic cuisine. Enjoy live music as you dine by candlelight. Sip local beers, enjoy handpicked wines and think about those who once made these caves their home.

Because the caves are underground, they are pleasantly cool. However, we have Icelandic lopapeysa for our guests to borrow while in the caves. Children are welcome to participate in the cave dinner, and we offer their admission at half-price. Whether planning a romantic dinner or a family adventure, you will be sure to remember this unique dining experience inside an Icelandic cave.

To book your Icelandic cave feast, contact the Hotel Rangá reception. We do need at least one-week advance notice to prepare this dining experience. Starting rate from approximately €3000 for private cave experience.

**ONLY AVAILABLE AS A PRIVATE DINNER**



## HOTEL RANGÁ PLAYING CARDS

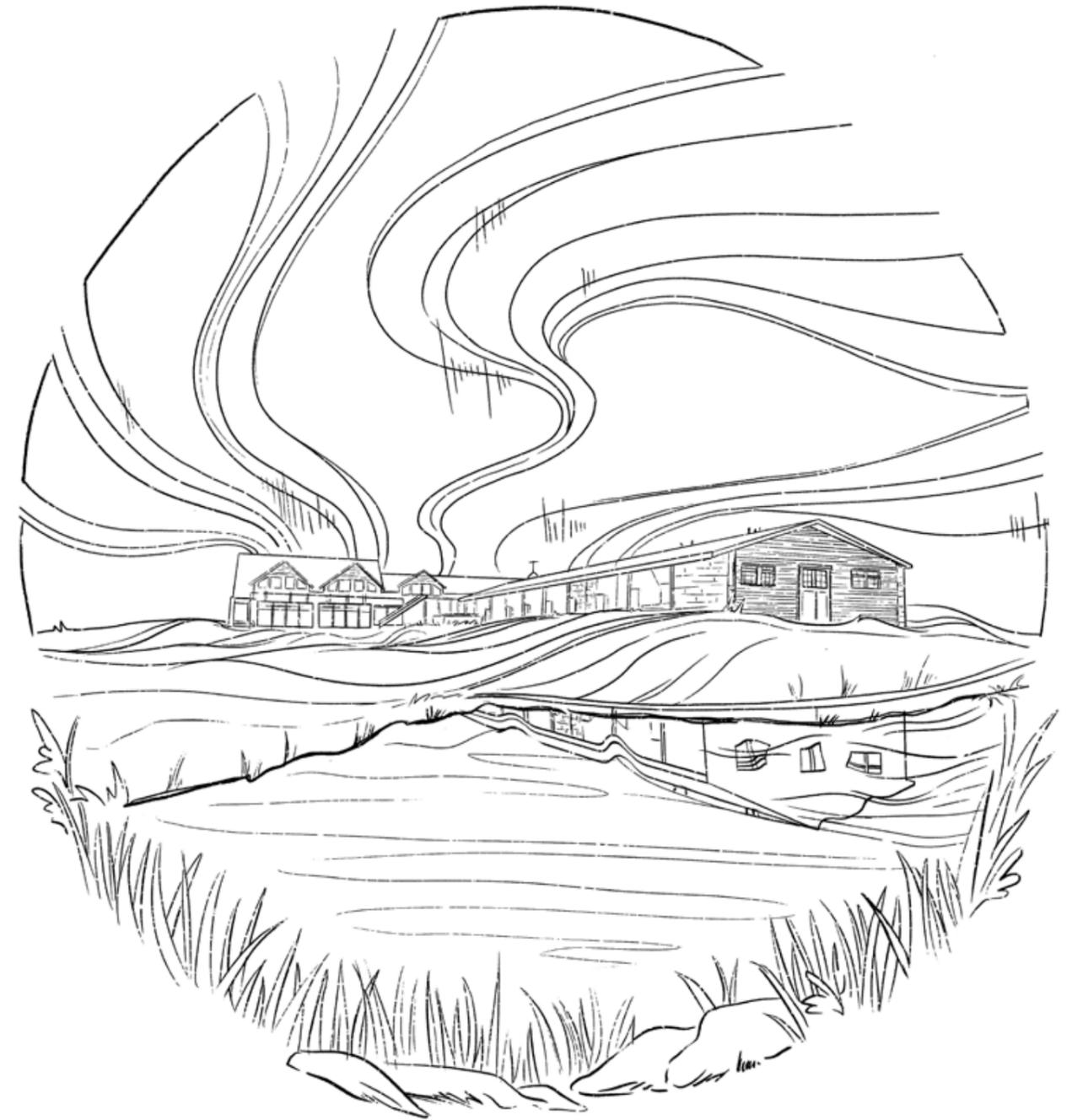
It's always a good idea to have a deck of cards handy - so we decided to create our very own.

Now, Hotel Rangá has our very own personalized deck of cards. We made the playing cards to highlight the incredible artwork and design located throughout Hotel Rangá. Thumb through the deck to see the unique wall murals that can be found in many of our rooms. These murals were created by local artists and depict Icelandic stories and symbols. Our deck of cards also features photos of our luxury suites and the stunning northern lights. Winter is the perfect season to get together with loved ones and play a card game. Pick up a deck of Hotel Rangá playing cards and take a tour of our property while you play.

## HOTEL RANGÁ COLORING BOOK

We are big fans of coloring books at Hotel Rangá, so much so that we decided to create our very own.

**FEEL FREE TO COLOUR THIS PAGE**



When you thumb through its pages, you will find beautiful illustrations by artist Natalie O'Brien. The illustrations show depictions of Iceland's fantastic tradition of folklore and myth. Learn about the Trolls of Reynisdrangar as you fill in their outlines on the page. You can even choose the colors to create your version of Iceland's national costume.

There are also drawings of things you might recognize around Hotel Rangá. Our friend Hrammur the polar bear has a place in the spotlight, as well as the famous northern lights. Coloring is a great way to de-stress, practice mindfulness and kick-start your own creativity. Ask our staff for a copy of our coloring book today.



# ART AT HOTEL RANGÁ: A SCAVENGER HUNT

At Hotel Rangá, we are passionate about showcasing Icelandic artwork. In fact, our property is filled with incredible pieces of art in a multitude of styles and forms. Below, you will find a list of ten unique pieces. Take a walk around the hotel and try to find each artwork—just ask in the reception if you need a hint.

## THE HARP CHAIR BY LÁRUS SIGURÐSSON

Look around Hotel Rangá's upstairs lounge to find a special wooden chair that is more than it seems. If you look closely, you will notice that the chair's back is set with piano strings. Take a seat and have your companion strum lightly against the strings. You will feel the resulting vibration, which is intended to make you calm and relaxed. The chair is actually a therapy chair meant to build trust. It was made by Lárus Sigurðsson, the former music director and carpenter at Sólheimar in Grímsnesi. This unique, sustainable community is home to a diverse group of people, many of whom have special needs. Anyone is welcome to visit Sólheimar and enjoy a coffee in the on-site café or purchase artwork and crafts handmade by residents.

## THE ICELAND QUILT BY JÓNÍNA HULDA GUNNLAUGSDÓTTIR

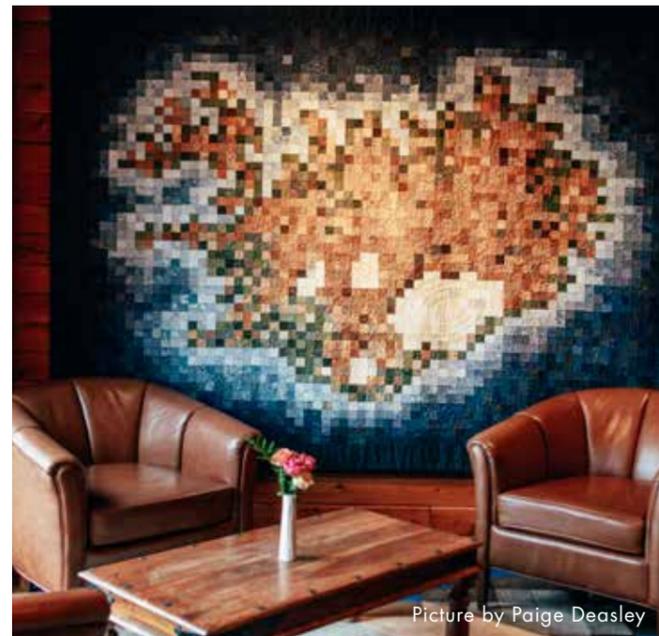
Walk around the Rangá Reception and see if you can spot the Iceland Quilt, a handmade piece of fine art that is far too beautiful to decorate a bed. Over 3000 quilt squares are sewn together to create an incredible, almost pixelated image of Iceland. Notice the intricate patchwork of colors including whites and beiges used to indicate Iceland's mighty glaciers. The quilt was purchased by Hotel Rangá at a charity auction to benefit the Save the Children fund.

## ROOM NUMBER 13

If you pay close attention as you walk down Hotel Rangá's hallways, you will spot our unique take on room number 13. This woven chair piled with comfortable pillows invites guests to get cozy and relax. And as Hotelier Friðrik Pálsson says, "It's always free and almost always available." Friðrik first spotted the chair in a store window while driving around Reykjavík. However, on his next drive, he noticed that the chair was missing. Friðrik rushed into the store and asked if someone had bought this special chair. Luckily, it had simply been placed in the back for storage and Friðrik was able to negotiate a deal.

## POLAR BEARS HAVE BABIES BY INGIBJÖRG ÁGÚSTSDÓTTIR

On one of Hotel Rangá's walls you can find a lovely carving of a polar bear and a little girl. But this piece of art has a secret. If you press just beside the little girl's feet, the carving will flip, revealing a polar bear cub. According to Icelandic folktale, polar bears are actually enchanted humans. The tale says that the female bear gives birth to human babies; however, if she manages to pass her paw over them, they change into bear cubs.



Picture by Paige Deasley

## ICELANDIC SCENES BY DEREK KARL MUNDELL

Derek Karl Mundell has enjoyed painting with watercolors since 1985 and features Icelandic scenes in many of his paintings. Several of his works are featured throughout Hotel Rangá including the upstairs lounge and various guest rooms. To see a few of our favorites, head up the staircase toward our second floor suites. There, you will find Mundell's delicate depiction of the mysterious aurora reflected over Kleifarvatn, a lake on the Reykjanes Peninsula. Just beside it hangs another striking painting of the geyser Strokkur as it erupts high into the air underneath a sunny sky.

## THE WOODEN COMPASS

Walk up the wooden stairs beside the Rangá Bar and see if you can spot the compass inlaid into the wooden floor. The compass is not only beautiful but accurate; however, there is a funny story behind its positioning. In fact, the carpenters who installed the compass all had different ideas about north and south. To have a little bit of fun, hotelier Friðrik Pálsson decided to make a game of it. Everyone placed a mark on the parquet where they believed north should be. Then, a member of the Icelandic rescue team was called in to give his expert opinion about true north. Only one of the carpenters was completely spot on and won the contest.

## THE LADIES LEGS

Beside the Rangá Bar are two unique wooden chairs carved like ladies legs. Perch in one of these fabulous seats and pretend you are different person for a moment. Hotelier Friðrik Pálsson spotted these special stools on a trip to Italy and knew they would be perfect for the Rangá Bar. He was bound and determined to transport the chairs back to Iceland in one piece so decided to carry them home in his hand luggage!

## HEKLA UNDER THE NORTHERN LIGHTS BY ARNGUNNUR ÝR

Visual artist Arngunnur Ýr creates unique pieces that are inspired by both the delicate beauty and immense power of Icelandic nature. In this piece, Arngunnur Ýr experimented with different materials, using French pigments with Icelandic volcanic ash on very thin silk prepped with emulsions. In an ode to Hekla's unpredictability, Arngunnur Ýr created the artwork without knowing exactly how the materials would react once combined. The result is truly stunning, combining ethereal elements with a dynamic energy.



## WATERCOLORS BY ÓLÖF PÉTURSDÓTTIR

As you walk through Hotel Rangá, you are bound to notice detailed watercolors featuring Icelandic nature and village scenes. These lovely paintings were made by Ólöf Pétursdóttir, the late wife of hotelier Friðrik Pálsson. In addition to a long career as a lawyer and judge, Ólöf was a talented artist. Her watercolors highlight the natural beauty of the Icelandic landscape and village life. Many of Ólöf's paintings portray scenes from the Westman Islands, known as Vestmannaeyjar in Icelandic. In fact, there is a bit of a story behind this featured setting. It was Ólöf's friend Gudda who first asked her to create a painting of Vestmannaeyjar. Ólöf was a bit of a perfectionist and wanted to paint something special for her good friend. She decided to paint many different watercolors of Vestmannaeyjar to be sure that Gudda would find a favorite.



## THE PLANT PRINTER BY HALDÓR ELDJÁRN

This interactive piece acts and grows like a hanging plant. Each day several centimeters of algorithmic plants print onto a piece of paper that grows at a slow speed. In fact, the amount of light processed by the printer actually dictates the size and shape of the plants' leaves. This inorganic plant helps viewers to understand time in longer intervals than minutes and hours. During your stay at Hotel Rangá, watch as life progresses on the printed paper and remember to pause and enjoy the moment.

Pictures by Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir

# SUSTAINABILITY, AT HOTEL RANGÁ

Hotel Rangá is passionate about sustainability. We constantly look into our day-to-day operations and make every effort to utilize environmentally friendly solutions.

## SLH CONSIDERATE COLLECTION

Hotel Rangá is proud to be a member of the Small Luxury Hotels Considerate Collection, a handpicked group of hotels that strive to go above and beyond in measures of sustainability. To be part of the collection, hotels must be community minded, cultural custodians and environmentally conscious.

## REDUCE, RENEW, RECYCLE

Our policy focuses on three key tenets of sustainability – reduce, renew, recycle. First, we strive to minimize our environmental impact by reducing waste. We use motion sensor lights and energy efficient light bulbs. Second, we prioritize renewable energy sources. Finally, we always recycle as much waste as we are able.

## GO GREEN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Iceland is a land of fire and ice, but these dramatic elements are more than just a scenic backdrop. The country's incredible quantity of rivers and glaciers are harnessed to produce hydroelectricity. In fact, Hotel Rangá's heating and operations are powered by green and renewable energy sources.

## CHOOSE LOCAL

At Hotel Rangá, we always prioritize local suppliers. Locally grown products require less transportation costs. We also support local businesses by putting resources back into the community. What's more, we are proud to support local Icelandic artists by decorating our property with incredible pieces of artwork.

## FRESH IS BEST

Our Rangá Restaurant is well-known for its emphasis on farm-to-table cuisine. We pride ourselves on sourcing the best Icelandic produce and game. We are constantly aiming to serve locally caught fish and locally farmed meat. Our chefs even harvest wild arctic thyme on our property.

## HELPING THE YULE LADS

The Yule Lads are a mischievous yet friendly lot. In the thirteen days before Christmas, they come down from the mountains and bring presents to children. We encourage our younger guests at Hotel Rangá to leave a shoe outside their door to see if a Yuletide lad will pay them a visit.

Local children from the school in Hella actually help out the Yule Lads. We give our extra linens to the kids, and they make special Christmas bags for the Yule Lads to use at Hotel Rangá. In return, Hotel Rangá gives the local school sewing machines and other things they need.



Friðrik, owner of Hotel Rangá, and his daughter in front of the new electric aircraft.

Picture by Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir

## FLIGHTS IN THE ELECTRIC AIRCRAFT CAN BE ARRANGED WITH OUR FRONT DESK UPON REQUEST.

### ICELAND'S FIRST ELECTRIC AIRCRAFT

Iceland's first electric aircraft took off in July 2022. The introduction of this revolutionary aircraft is the initiative of Friðrik Pálsson, Hótel Rangá's hotelier, and his friend Matthías Sveinbjörnsson. Friðrik has long been a champion of green energy, setting a standard for Hotel Rangá's sustainability policies.

As Iceland is located between Europe and North America, it is a desirable location for energy exchange in international flights. Therefore, Iceland's first electric aircraft is only the beginning. Electric aircraft are the way of the future.

### ALWAYS INNOVATE AND ADAPT

At Hotel Rangá, we are committed to green initiatives and constantly updating our processes and procedures to reflect the newest innovations. For example, we provide our guests with paper straws, recyclable lunch boxes and natural, plant-based and biodegradable slippers.

Our newest addition is a cooperation with Viss - a work community for people with disabilities. Hotel Rangá supplies Viss with recyclable materials and helpful tools. Viss then creates special gift bags for items purchased at the hotel.

# CALLING ALL BOOK LOVERS



Picture by Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir



Is there anything more delightful than getting lost in a good book? At Hotel Rangá, we invite you to immerse yourself in the magic of literature while surrounded by the breathtaking beauty of the Icelandic countryside. Whether you're diving into a captivating novel or savoring the verses of Icelandic poetry, our hotel provides the perfect setting for book lovers.

Iceland has a rich literary tradition, from legendary sagas to contemporary masterpieces. In celebration of this heritage, we've curated a special experience for our guests—our Book Lovers Offer. Select this offer when booking your stay, and you'll discover a signed book waiting on your bedside table upon arrival. Each book is a delightful surprise, written by a contemporary Icelandic author. As you dip into its pages, you will get a unique glimpse into Iceland's vibrant literary scene.

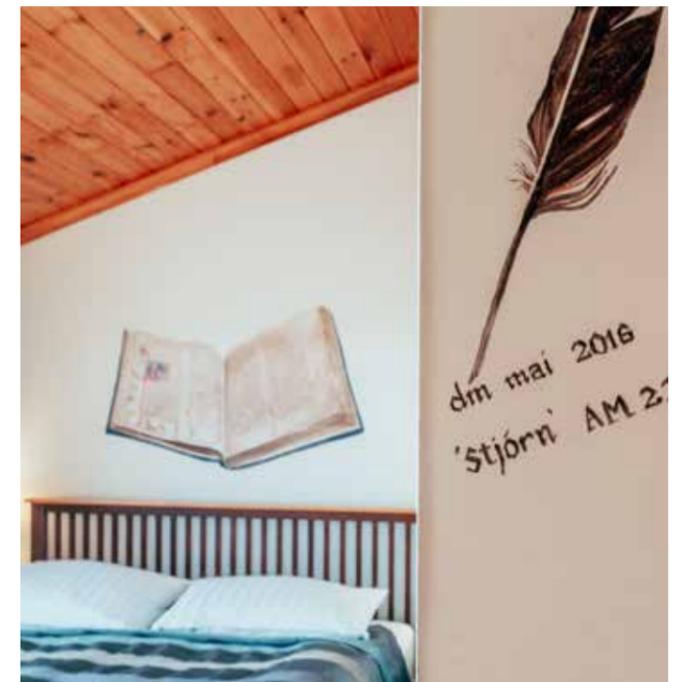
Throughout Hotel Rangá, you'll find inviting spaces designed for cozy reading. Every room and suite features plush beds and stunning views of Iceland's dramatic landscape. Our upstairs lounge boasts sumptuous leather sofas, making it the perfect spot to curl up with a good book. Pair your reading experience with a freshly made cappuccino or a warming hot toddy. There's something truly magical about reading with a steaming cup in hand, especially when the crisp Icelandic air swirls outside.

Despite its small size, Iceland boasts a fascinating literary heritage that dates back to the sagas—epic tales of heroic battles, deep-seated family feuds, and legendary adventures. It is easy to envision Icelanders of yore sitting together on dark winter nights and listening to these ancient stories. Today, this deep-rooted love for storytelling lives on. Iceland has one of the highest literacy rates in the world, and one in 10 Icelanders will publish a book during their lifetime.

In this spirit, we've created our very own poetry hotline. Simply dial in and listen to one of Iceland's most celebrated poets, Þórarinn Eldjárn, as he recites English translations of his poetry. The hotline is available to everyone—just call +1 424 487 5700 to experience the beauty of Icelandic verse. Take a moment to slow down, unwind, and connect with Icelandic culture through the power of poetry.

But literature is just one part of Iceland's thriving creative scene. From music and visual arts to theater and dance, Icelandic artists continue to make a global impact. At Hotel Rangá, we are passionate about supporting local creatives and take great pride in sharing their work with our guests.

If visual art is more your style, take a stroll through Hotel Rangá and discover a gallery in motion. Many of our rooms feature hand-painted murals inspired by Iceland's landscapes and culture—galloping horses, sleepy sheep, fields of purple lupines, and even scenes from the Icelandic sagas. Each mural is the work of a different local artist, reflecting their unique style and vision. The result? A one-of-a-kind collection of artwork that brings Iceland's beauty and history to life within our walls.



Pictures by Paige Deasley



Pictures by Clarke Joss

# WEDDING AT RANGÁ

Annabelle Macpherson and Sean Cowie were married at Hotel Rangá in the summer. Their intimate ceremony was held by the East-Rangá river. We loved hosting this couple and their families and are excited to share a glimpse of their special day. Below, Annabelle and Sean share their story and give good advice for couples planning a wedding in Iceland.

## HOW DID YOU MEET?

We had the good fortune of growing up in the same neighbourhood in Scotland and attending the same school. We actually lived just 10 houses apart from each other, and while we didn't officially meet until later, we ended up chatting on Christmas Eve at our local pub.

## WHY ICELAND?

We have always been avid travellers, and we've been fortunate enough to visit many incredible destinations over the years. However, there was something special about Iceland that really captured our hearts. It started when my husband Sean expressed a long-standing desire to visit Iceland. So, for his birthday, I surprised him with a trip there. From the moment we arrived, we were completely taken aback by the natural beauty of the country. The stunning landscapes, rugged coastlines and awe-inspiring geothermal features left an indelible impression on us. But it wasn't just the physical beauty of Iceland that drew us in. The warmth and hospitality of the Icelandic people, the vibrant culture, and the sense of adventure all combined to create an experience that was truly unforgettable. We felt an immediate connection to the country and its people, and we knew that we had to come back again someday. While a typical Scottish wedding would consist of a castle, we decided that we wanted an outdoor adventure and we thought where else it better to do it than Iceland.

## HOW DID YOU END UP CHOOSING HOTEL RANGÁ?

When we first started looking for wedding venues in Iceland, we knew that we wanted a location that was both beautiful and unique. We also wanted a venue that could accommodate all of our guests and provide a memorable experience for everyone involved.

After doing some research, we came across Hotel Rangá, and we were immediately struck by its stunning natural setting and luxurious amenities.

But what really set Hotel Rangá apart was the exceptional level of service and attention to detail that we experienced. From our initial visit to meeting the wedding coordinator Majken and the rest of the staff, we were always made to feel special. I think by around 30 minutes into visiting Hotel Rangá we were set that this was going to be our venue.

## TELL US ABOUT THE BIG DAY!

We decided to get married with our family, groomsmen and bridesmaids. We began the day with the bridal party getting ready first thing in the morning at Hotel Rangá. Majken was unbelievably accommodating and helpful in assisting the bridal party to get ready, and we had the joy of getting our hair and makeup done by professionals. Our afternoon ceremony was located along the beautiful Rangá River, right behind Hotel Rangá. The hotel helpfully set up all of the chairs and decorated our beautiful aisle with white rose petals. We had an amazing Icelandic singer and an incredible humanist who all came together to make the experience unforgettable. Our guests were truly blown away by the setting, and we were so fortunate with the Icelandic weather, as the sun came out at the last minute. After the ceremony, we enjoyed delicious canapés and then set off for an adventure in the three super jeeps with all our guests. We toured the stunning Icelandic landscape including the glacier and of course had a few drinks along the way.

We then returned to Hotel Rangá for a 3-course meal that was out of this world. Next, we enjoyed some music, dancing, speeches and of course, the beautifully decorated cake!

## WHO TOOK YOUR WEDDING PHOTOS?

We were fortunate enough to have two incredibly talented photographers capture our wedding day. Clarke Joss, a photographer from Scotland, was our primary photographer. He was assisted by his co-worker, Ryan Harris.



From the moment we met Clarke and Ryan, we knew that they were the perfect team to document our special day. They were both incredibly professional and easy to work with, and they had a keen eye for capturing all of the beautiful and intimate moments that made our wedding day so special.

Throughout the day, Clarke and Ryan worked tirelessly to ensure that every moment was captured, from the first look to the ceremony to the reception. As well as the professionalism, they also got on so well with our guests, and really became a massive part of our day.

## DO YOU HAVE ANY GOOD ADVICE FOR COUPLES PLANNING A WEDDING IN ICELAND?

Yes! I'll number them below:

- 1. Plan for the weather:** Iceland's weather can be unpredictable, even in the summer months. Be sure to plan for all kinds of weather and bring appropriate clothing and gear. Consider having a backup plan in case of rain or other inclement weather.
- 2. Wedding coordinator:** If you're booking a hotel as your venue, make sure that they have a wedding coordinator. Majken, wedding coordinator at Hotel Rangá, made our lives SO much easier. I honestly don't think we would have managed it without her. It also made the planning experience great as we discussed ideas with her day to day.
- 3. Embrace the natural beauty:** Iceland's natural beauty is unparalleled, so consider incorporating it into your wedding day. Whether it's by having your ceremony at a waterfall or taking photos on a black sand beach, embracing the natural beauty of Iceland can make for an unforgettable experience. We did this with a few waterfalls and glaciers.
- 4. Be flexible:** Given the unpredictable weather and other factors that can come into play, it's important to be flexible and open to changes. Having a flexible mindset can help you adapt to any unexpected situations and make the most of your wedding day.
- 5. Take time to explore:** Iceland has so much to offer beyond just the wedding day itself. Consider taking some time before or after your wedding to explore the area and experience all that Iceland has to offer. Whether it's by taking a road trip around the country or visiting some of the local hot springs, there's no shortage of adventures to be had in Iceland. Our guests visited the Secret Lagoon, some of Iceland's most famous waterfalls, and the day after the wedding we all enjoyed our recovery hangover in the Blue Lagoon.

# RANGÁ RECOMMENDS



Picture by Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir

Ready to go on an incredible Iceland adventure? These are our top activities.

## VISIT AN ICE CAVE OR GO GLACIER HIKING

Hike on a glacier with an expert guide who will share fascinating facts as you explore. Or venture inside an ice cave and marvel at the colors and textures of the ice. These unique structures actually grow and change according to seasonal weather conditions.

## RIDE A HORSE

One of the world's oldest and purest breeds, the Icelandic horse makes the perfect companion for novices and children. Ride through lava meadows, explore volcanic terrain and enjoy expansive views of the mountains, coast and countryside.

## DRIVE A BUGGY

Buggy tours are a unique and exciting way to enjoy Iceland's natural beauty. Traverse remote parts of the countryside and experience Iceland's stunning landscape up close. Feel the wind in your hair as you drive across a black sand beach or beside hidden waterfalls.

## TAKE FLIGHT

There is no better way to see Iceland's fantastic landscape than from above. A helicopter can pick you up outside Hotel Rangá's front door and take you on the ride of a lifetime over mighty volcanoes, ancient glaciers and powerful rivers. What's more, our guests can even book a ride on Iceland's first electric aircraft.

## SOAK IN A HOT SPRING

Don't forget to bring a bathing suit on your trip to Hotel Rangá—south Iceland is home to amazing natural hot springs like Landmannalaugar and Reykjadalur valley. Or grab a glass of wine and soak in one of our geothermally heated hot tubs overlooking the beautiful Rangá River.

## TAKE A SUPER JEEP TOUR

It is a wonderful experience to visit Iceland's highland interior on a Super Jeep tour. Visit remarkable locations like the Þórsörk nature reserve or Landmannalaugar—a stunning geothermal valley bordered by colorful mountains.

Picture by Kalen Emsley

## VISIT VESTMANNAEYJAR

Vestmannaeyjar is an archipelago of islands located just forty-five minutes from Iceland's south coast. What's more, the island Heimaey is home to the world's largest puffin breeding colony. Visitors to the island can enjoy delicious dining, great hiking and even visit a museum about the 1973 eruption of Eldfell.

## VISIT AN ANCIENT CAVE

Hotel Rangá is located minutes from several mysterious, man-made caves in the town of Hella. Tour the caves with a local guide and learn the theories behind the caves' creation. Explore underground and ponder how Iceland's early inhabitants might have lived.

## GUIDED DAY TOURS

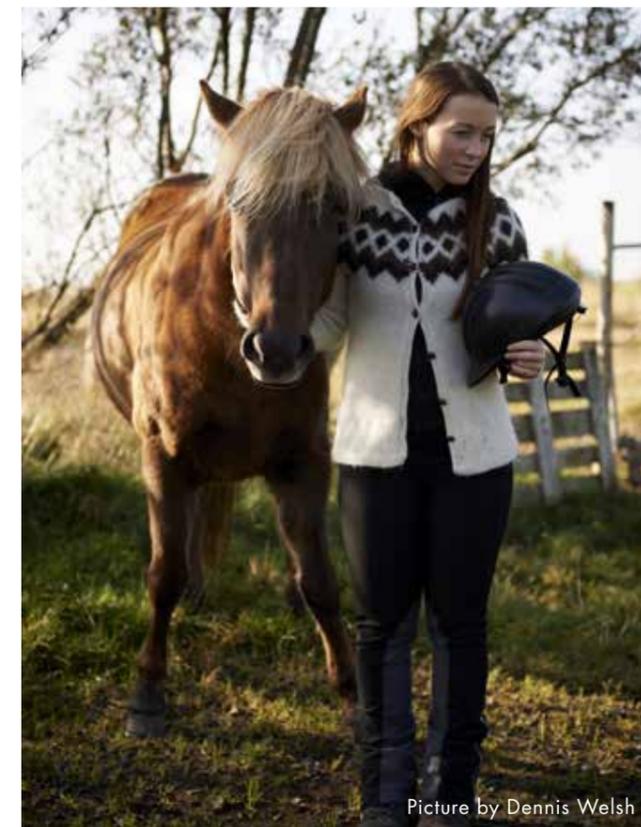
Experience the best of south Iceland by taking a day tour with a local guide. Go off the beaten path and explore hidden waterfalls, majestic mountains and beautiful black sand beaches. Your guide's expert knowledge will ensure that your trip is unforgettable.

## SNOWMOBILING

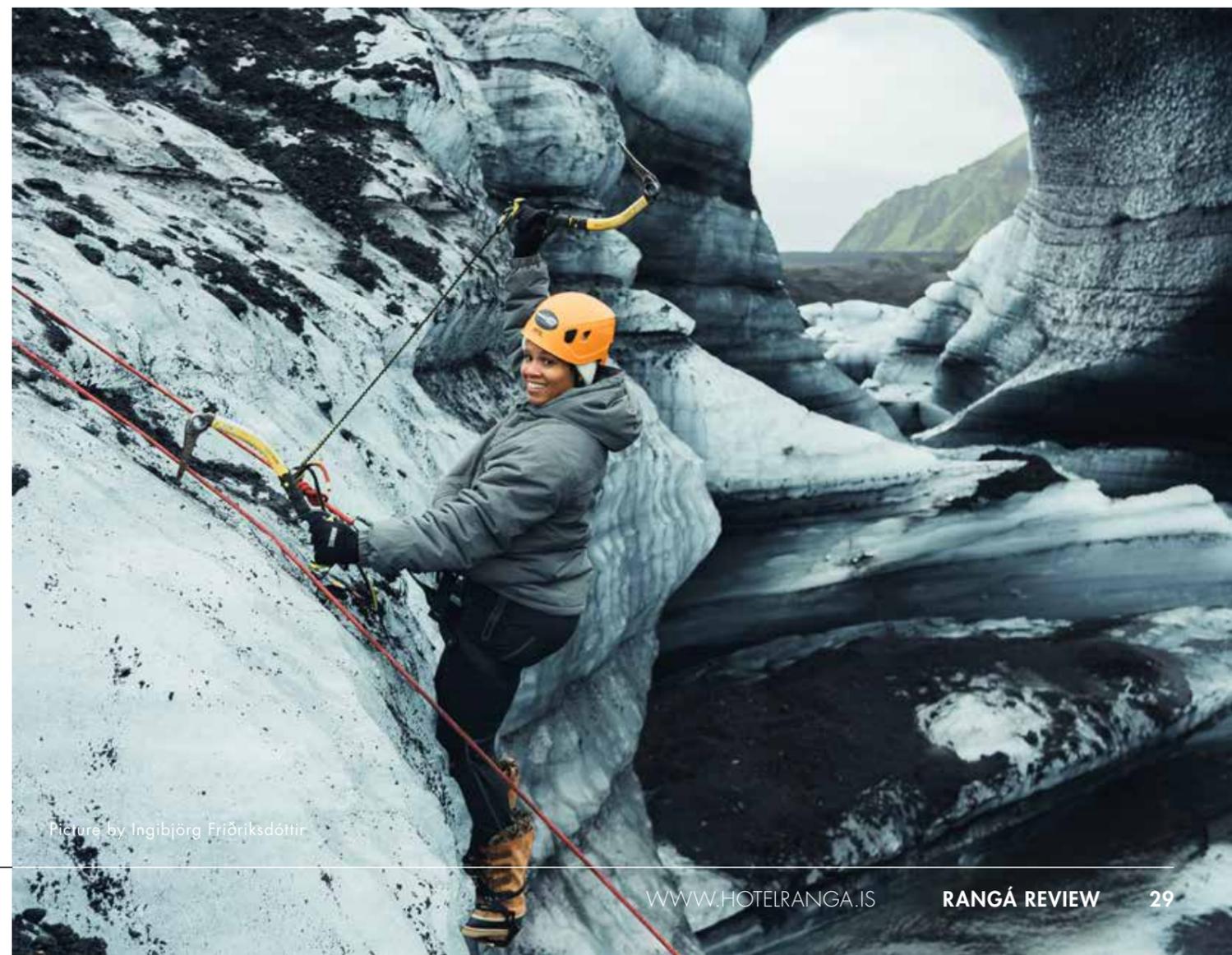
Snowmobiling on top of Eyjafjallajökull—the volcano-glacier that erupted in 2010—is an unforgettable experience. Zoom across the snowy glacier while you experience incredible views of Iceland's south coast.

## TAKE A HIKE

Whether you're looking for a leisurely stroll or a more adventurous trek, Hotel Rangá is near plenty of beautiful trails. Take a family walk beside the Rangá River or climb Þríhyrningur, an extinct volcano with amazing views at its summit. Please check with reception what hikes are available during your stay.



Picture by Dennis Welsh



Picture by Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir



The Icelandic Suite

# AROUND THE WORLD AT HOTEL RANGÁ

To experience the ultimate in luxury and comfort, indulge in one of Hotel Rangá's unique continental suites. Each luxury suite is specially designed to transport our guests to another continent for the night. From handcrafted furniture to handmade carvings, authentic artwork plays a huge role in the overall experience of each room. The construction of the suites was not only a creative challenge but a true passion project for Hotelier Friðrik Pálsson. What's more, the experience was a true team effort. Friðrik worked with a group of carpenters, expert curators, friends and family to find inspiration for the suites.



## THE AFRICA SUITE

Hotel Rangá's Africa Suite is a cozy refuge filled with original artwork and furniture directly from the continent. Details such as a zebra skin wall hanging, wooden masks, carved giraffe figures and bold African prints lend a hand to guests' imaginations.

Like the other suites at Hotel Rangá, the Africa Suite was a group effort. The owners, members of staff and outside contributors worked together to design and build the suite. What's more, they decided the room should have a small false ceiling made of straw in its off-kilter center, much like an African hut.

"I ended up going to Þorvaldseyri to meet with the farmer there. We were talking and I asked if I could cut a bit of his wheat before he threshed it. It had to be fully grown so that it would be as long as possible," Friðrik says. "He found the request amusing and we ended up visiting him two more times to collect a whole heap of wheat."



## THE ANTARCTICA SUITE

The Antarctica Suite at Hotel Rangá is a futuristic vision in black and white. This spacious suite takes inspiration from the south pole and all it has to offer. Inside, you will find black and white couches and rugs, black window sills and alternating black and white lamps and light fixtures. And don't forget the two life-size black and white Adélie penguins guarding the bathtub.

While much of the decorations in the other suites come from the corresponding continents, there aren't many furniture makers in Antarctica. As a result, the furnishings are from all over. The couches are Italian and the futuristic glass cabinets and chessboard are by the Samverk glass manufacturer in Hella, a village 10 minutes from the hotel.

The pièce de résistance however, is the Wandering Albatross mural on the ceiling by English artist Derek Mundell. This beautiful painting watches

over guests with its wingspan of nearly 12 feet. It's such details of design that elevate the Hotel Rangá experience. "We try to travel the unbeaten path and allow ourselves the things that bigger hotels can't," Friðrik says. "Tinkering with the details makes everything more personal and special."

## THE ICELANDIC SUITE

Many of Hotel Rangá's unique suites are modeled after continents around the globe, but the Icelandic Suite draws its inspiration from closer to home. Step inside the Icelandic Suite and you will find a beautiful space filled with traditional design and elegant decor. With the help of local artisans, hotelier Friðrik Pálsson has created a luxurious space that truly embodies the spirit of Iceland.

Friðrik enlisted elder craftsman, Ólafur Sigurjónsson of Forsæti farm, to design and make the furniture inside the Icelandic suite. You can see his craftsmanship in the cartwheel dining table and the master bed. The bed also features wood carvings by local artist Sigríður Jóna Kristjánsdóttir and is dressed in what is probably the largest hand knitted Icelandic wool sweater, or lopapeysa, ever made.



## THE NORTH AMERICA SUITE

Hotel Rangá's cozy North America suite highlights a variety of countries and regions, but observant guests will notice a Canadian flag on the inside of the door. "The carpenters knew that the room was supposed to be North American, but they thought the Canadians would be forgotten. So they decided to leave the Canadian flag in the room."

The North America Suite's bathroom offers the ultimate luxury in a giant copper bathtub. "In the bathroom, we found a pure copper bathtub in Mexico, the same with the sinks," says Friðrik Pálsson. "The bathtub is handmade and completely beautiful with large handles on the sides. To get that Wild West feeling you just need John Wayne in that bathtub in full clothing with a hat, cigar in one hand and glass of whisky in the other. I've always been planning to have a photo taken of myself like that."



## THE ASIA SUITE

Our Asia suite is particularly inspired by Japan, partially due to the fact that Friðrik spent time visiting this beautiful country. "It's probably the most authentic suite of them all," Friðrik says. Look up and you will see a gorgeous wooden ceiling with intricate details. "It was particularly enjoyable to make the ceiling. The design is over 4000 years old and is still in use in Japan today."

Hotel Rangá's Asia suite also features traditional Tatami mats and rice paper doors. There's a dining table based on the Japanese kotatsu tables and the bathroom is also built under a modern Japanese influence. In fact, the wooden bathtub is inspired by a traditional Japanese ofuro bathtub. This tub is higher than a western bathtub and is meant to be used as a soaking tub. Guests can comfortably sit and relax in the tub and imagine they are for a moment in Japan.

## THE AUSTRALIAN SUITE

Hotel Rangá's Australian Suite features authentic décor and traditional design that will transport guests to an oceanside oasis. "The idea of the room is that you are on the beach," says Friðrik. "In fact, the bathroom's entrance is designed to resemble a beach hut. We wanted to make it feel as though you are looking at the night sky. We painted the ceiling blue and added the stars of the southern hemisphere."

Inside the suite, guests will find beautiful stained-glass pieces, a large painting of the Australian outback and even a sculpture of the Australian outlaw-hero, Ned Kelly. "We got in touch with a company in Australia, and they helped us to come up with ideas for traditional Aboriginal art," says Friðrik. "We imported Australian wood that our carpenters used to create the furniture. There are two boomerangs above the bed, which are traditional Australian hunting tools. There are also two didgeridoos—an Australian wind instrument."



## THE SOUTH AMERICA SUITE

Hotel Rangá's South America suite stuns with vibrant colors, beautiful craftsmanship and lots of traditional geometric designs. This suite is especially inspired by Peru. "The Inca influence in Peru made it quite different from other countries," says hotelier Friðrik Pálsson. "There is a unique decorative style with many geometric prints. So Peru seemed to be logical to use as our starting point."



# HOTEL RANGÁ'S STORY

## THE BEGINNING 1999

Hotel Rangá was originally built in 1999 as a countryside retreat made up of 21 rooms. Constructed with imported cedar from New Brunswick, Canada, the hotel is situated on the banks of the Rangá River, from which it takes its name. The hotel's honey-colored timber walls, comfortable furnishings, and fine service immediately established its excellent reputation throughout Iceland. Hotel Rangá's first owner was Sigurbjörn Bárðason, one of Iceland's best known horsemen, and the hotel was originally intended as a rural resort for horse lovers. Over time, the hotel's excellent location made it a top destination for travelers of all kinds.

## FRIDRIK STEPS IN 2003

Friðrik Pálsson arrived at Hotel Rangá after a 30-year career leading two of Iceland's largest seafood export companies with subsidiaries all around the world. It was during this time that he spent over 200 nights a year on the road and developed firsthand experience of what it takes to create a truly memorable hospitality experience. Friðrik's warm personality, genuine nature, and charm are truly a part of the guest experience at Hotel Rangá. He can regularly be found at the hotel sipping Brennivín (Iceland's signature spirit) with guests, sharing his personal recommendations for the best places to explore to anyone who asks, and generally being a part of every aspect of the hotel's day-to-day operations.

## HRAMMUR JOINS OUR TEAM

In 2003, one of Hotel Rangá's most popular staff members joined our team - Hrammur the polar bear. Hrammur has the special job of greeting all of Hotel Rangá's guests when they arrive in the lobby. The word Hrammur means "paw" in Icelandic which we think suits our friend especially well, as he stands tall with a big smile and paws in the air. Hrammur is happy to be photographed and loves selfies, so don't hesitate to take a photo with our star employee.

## FIRST EXTENSION 2004 - 2006

Between 2004 and 2006, Friðrik led a team of designers and craftsmen to complete a renovation, expanding the hotel and creating our first Master Suite - the Royal Suite. New corridors were also built and the hotel's decor was refreshed. Spacious and elegant, with views of the glacier Eyjafjallajökull, the Royal Suite was an immediate success. This planted the idea for the future creation of more Junior and Master Suites.

## HOTEL RANGÁ LAUNCHES NORTHERN LIGHTS WAKE UP CALL 2005

In 2005, Hotel Rangá was one of the first Icelandic hotels to start offering a Northern Lights wake-up call. We added this service to make sure that our guests would never miss a chance to view the Northern Lights. If the

aurora should appear - even in the middle of the night - we will call your room so you can go outside and catch the magic in action.

## SECOND EXTENSION 2007 - 2009

In 2007, Hotel Rangá underwent another extension which expanded the hotel to its current tally of 52 rooms. Our dining area was also renovated: we added a new restaurant space known as the Glass Hall, extended the bar and added another upstairs private dining hall. As an additional part of the expansion, we created our continental-themed Junior and Master Suites. Filled with handcrafted and authentic decor and modeled after each of the 7 continents, the Suites are truly one of a kind. Our team worked closely with expert artisans, builders and designers to source authentic furniture and art so that our guests would feel truly transported. Featuring luxurious touches and comfortable amenities, our suites offer guests the possibility to spend the night in North America, Australia or even Asia.



## ART AT HOTEL RANGÁ 2012

Hotelier Friðrik brought his love of art to Hotel Rangá, filling the hotel with paintings and drawings created by Icelandic artists. Friðrik has also commissioned 16 different local artists to paint wall murals in Hotel Rangá's guest rooms. The project has been ongoing since 2012 - artists are given free reign to practice creativity provided that their subject is related to our area in some way. Artists have painted scenes from the Icelandic sagas, local flora and fauna, scenes of the northern lights, and local wildlife ranging from the arctic fox to the amazing assortment of birds that you can see on our property.

## RANGÁ OBSERVATORY 2014

The northern lights are a beautiful sight to see, but one cannot forget about the twinkling stars and far-off planets that glow softly in the Icelandic night. To assist guests in getting a better view of our fascinating solar system, Friðrik worked with the expert astronomer Sævar Helgi Bragason to build an on-site observatory in 2014. The observatory houses two high-quality telescopes and features a roll-off roof that provides access to the night sky. This is the only public observatory in Iceland offering guided tours of the night sky by experts.

## DELUXE SUPERIOR ROOMS 2018

In 2018, we embarked on a new renovation project of our Deluxe Superior rooms. Each of the six rooms was refreshed and updated from their original Standard size, including the ensuite bathrooms. Walk-in bathtubs were installed, making these rooms more accessible to all our guests. We also made these rooms more family friendly by adding a built-in wall bed to each room. The rooms can be made up with either one King bed and one wall bed or two Twin beds and one wall bed. Furthermore, each room was decorated with a unique wall mural by a local Icelandic artist.



## ICELANDIC SUITE OPENS 2018

In 2018, we launched our newest Master Suite, the Icelandic Suite. Inspired by Iceland, this beautiful space is filled with handcrafted furniture by Ólafur in Forsæti, a local artisan, and traditional Icelandic decor. Luxury details make the space memorable - from a unique soaking tub personally designed by hotelier Friðrik, to a cozy blanket inspired by the traditional Icelandic sweater known as lopapeysa. Large windows look out onto the peaceful Rangá River and the surrounding countryside.

## HOTEL RANGÁ CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

In 2019, we celebrated 20 years of business with year-long celebrations, prizes, and giveaways. Our values have stayed strong over the years - we remain committed to green hotel policies to help protect and sustain the environment. We operate with renewable energy and use as much locally grown produce and locally-sourced meat, fish, and dairy products as possible. We give back to our community and donate all tips to our local Search and Rescue teams. We are proud to be a family-owned and operated business, and look forward to the future of Hotel Rangá. We consistently strive to provide our guests with the highest hospitality and look forward to welcoming you to Hotel Rangá and showing you the majesty and beauty of Iceland.

## BEST COUNTRY HOTEL OF THE WORLD 2023

In 2023, Hotel Rangá was named Best Country Hotel in the World by Small Luxury Hotels. This prestigious honor was awarded at an event in Marbella, Spain. Special praise was given for our attention to detail, helpful staff and charismatic hotelier-Friðrik Pálsson. We are proud to have been a part of the SLH community since 2016 and thrilled to be acknowledged for our continual effort to provide the best experience for our guests.

# FUN FACTS ABOUT THE MIDNIGHT SUN

Iceland's midnight sun means that our summer months are filled with endless daylight. We made a list of fun facts about this unique phenomenon—read on to learn what we found.

## A TILTING AXIS

When the Earth's axis tilts towards the sun, locations that are closer to the earth's poles experience longer days. Because Iceland is close to the Arctic Circle, we experience the midnight sun during our summer months.

## TALKING COWS AND WALKING SEALS

In Iceland, Jónsmessa is celebrated on June 24, right around the brightest night of the year—Iceland's summer solstice or sumarsólstöður. Strange things are said to happen on Jónsmessa: cows talk, seals walk and elves are out and about.

## ROLL NAKED IN THE MORNING DEW

Don't be surprised if you see some nudists running around after midnight on Jónsmessa! Folklore says that good health will bless those who roll naked in the dew-covered grass. You should also make a wish while you cover yourself in dew—there is a good chance it will come true.

## POWERFUL STONES

While you're rolling in the morning dew, be sure to search for special stones with magical powers. One story says that there is a wish stone in the pond on top of Baula in Borgarfjörður. Anyone who touches the stone will have their wishes fulfilled; however, the stone is only visible on Midsummer's Eve.

## LOVE UNDER THE MIDNIGHT SUN

In Iceland, legend says that if a young maiden puts seven flowers under her pillow on Midsummer's Eve she will see her fiancée's face in her dreams.

## HERBS THAT CAN HEAL

Midsummer's Eve is also said to be the best time of year to pick healing herbs. In fact, lore says that orchid grass (*Dactylorhiza maculata*) picked on Midsummer's Eve can be used to win someone's love. All you have to do is put one end of the plant under your beloved's pillow and sleep with the other beneath your own.

## MUSIC AT MIDNIGHT

Iceland's long summer nights are the perfect excuse for a party. There are many fun music festivals during this time, including Secret Solstice in Reykjavík and the annual Skógar Jazz Festival near the famed Skógafoss waterfall.

Picture by Olivia Synnervik



SCAN TO START LISTENING

## HOTEL RANGÁ PLAYLIST

# ICELAND ECLECTIC

We created our Iceland Eclectic playlist to transport listeners into an Icelandic mood. From indie rock to classical piano, our playlist will bring you to Iceland in a sonic sense. The inspiration for Icelandic music is often connected to the country's wild, untamed nature. It is impossible not to feel inspired by our country with its gigantic glaciers, erupting volcanoes and the crazy Mars-like exterior of the island.

Iceland is filled with talented musicians who are innovative and unafraid of creating their own path. The music scene is incredibly diverse, but it still feels like one big family. Musicians from all genres often collaborate on unique projects, resulting in some truly amazing sounds.

On the playlist, you can expect to find Icelandic artists from all genres. Listen to tracks from film composers like Herdís Stefánsdóttir, Atli Örvarsson and Bjarni Biering. You'll also hear songs by the best known Icelandic rock bands: Mammút, KALEO, Agent Fresco and many more. Take a listen and don't forget to let us know what you think.

Picture by Olivia Synnervik

# CHECK OUT OUR BLOG

We post regular articles, updates, tips, tricks, offers and recommendations on our blog. Whether you want information on how to photograph the northern lights or inspiration for your dream elopement, we've got you covered.

Visit [www.hotelrangablog.is](http://www.hotelrangablog.is).

Find us on social media on Instagram and Facebook through @hotelranga.



Picture by Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir