

THERE are only two hundred thousand Icelanders on the planet; only half of them are men; and nearly all of them are gorgeous. So why not have one of their geysers - their national pride and joy - gushing up your trekking arse? More akin to America than Scandinavia, US army bases and super-size billboards abound in this mid-oceanic Alaska! Yet despite recent Stateside influences and a hefty dose of Scandinavian Luther from the past, Icelanders are Viking pagans at heart and theirs is one of the most liberal countries in the world. The age of consent here is 14 for everyone, with equality of sexualities enshrined in law. Everywhere is pretty gay-friendly and, if they aren't, just sue.

It's a good sign. The most phallic church you'll ever see dominates Reykjavik, the world's most northern capital city - built on the vast volcanic bulge that is the mid-Atlantic Ridge, kissing the Arctic Circle - smaller than Dover and cooler in more ways than one.

There are several gay-run guest houses and lodgings in town. You might try **Luna Hotel Apartments** (T: 00354 511 2800; www.luna.is), spread throughout the heart of this frontier settlement. Roost, then mosey down Reykjavik's main shopping artery, **Laugavegur**, taking in the many fashion and music boutiques or recharging at one of the eateries en route - try the ambient and surprisingly inexpensive gay-friendly **Humarhúsid** (Amtmannstíg 1, T: 00354 561 3303) with its fine line in lobster. Gay bars nestle mere meters from each other in the centre. **Café Cozy** (Austurstræti 3; T: 00354 511-1033) is a small and friendly gay bar-cum-coffee-house dishing light meals and a fine fix of drinks 10am - 1am weekdays and 11am - 5:30am at weekends. Another great place to kick back at nights - which are broad daylight mid-summer and pitch black mid-winter - is the informal and aptly-named **Nelly's Café** (Pínghóltsstræti 2, T: 00354

562 1250) with its cheap drinks and even cheaper music.

Iceland's LGB organisation **Samtökin '78**, (Laugavegur 3, 4th Floor, T: 00354 552 7878; www.samtokin78.is) also doubles up as a café-bar on Mondays and Thursdays from 8pm - 11pm and on Saturdays from 8pm-midnight, pulling in a young, politically-aware and highly sociable crowd.

Unfortunately, **Spotlight** - until recently Iceland's only full-on gay club - has now closed down and nothing has yet replaced it. And, just as tragically, the world's only **'Penis Museum'** (aka Institute of Phalology; www.mh.is/vefir/phallus) has recently decamped 120 miles north east to Húsavík where, should you make the trek, you'll be quite literally gob smacked by a six foot whale cock on entry, followed by an eye-watering, if not mouth-watering, array of severed male mammalian members and pickled pricks, from polar bears to the bloke next door.

However, don't despair! Apart from the bars and ongoing boy babe safari on

every street, the best places for guaranteed sightings of young male flesh hereabouts are open-air thermal spas. Make a G-line by bus to the world-famous **Blue Lagoon** (T: 00354 511 2600; www.bluelagoon.is) to steam away, relaxed yet aroused, in luminous blue mineral, boy-rich waters surrounded by dark, bleak and rugged volcanic landscape. Treat for skin and soul.

Or try out the city's largest outdoor public "hot pots" (thermal baths) at **Sundlaugar Reykjavíkur** (Sundlaugavegur, T: 00354 570 7711), especially after 5pm when families have gone and gangly gangs of youths waft in - quite handy if you're at the cheap **Youth Hostel** next door (Sundlaugavegur 34, T: 00354 553 8110; www.hostel.is).

But if you visit Reykjavik just for shags - not volcanoes and glaciers - you're not just gay, you're dumb and gay dearie. There are a number of full-day bus tours on offer that take you around the so-called **"Golden Circle"** of natural splendours east of the city - visit www.re.is for a range of excursions all year round. There is actually something quite erotic about waiting for a **geyser** to shoot - the surrounding crowd holds its breath, as a bubbling pool ebbs and flows, until it finally spurts out is earthy juice to leave all cumers gasping.

Visit **www.gayice.is** for information about Iceland's gay scene.

WRECKED IN REYKJAVIK?

Gushing geysers! ADRIAN GILLAN gets washed up in the land of fire and ice where summers are light, winters dark and boy babes blond!



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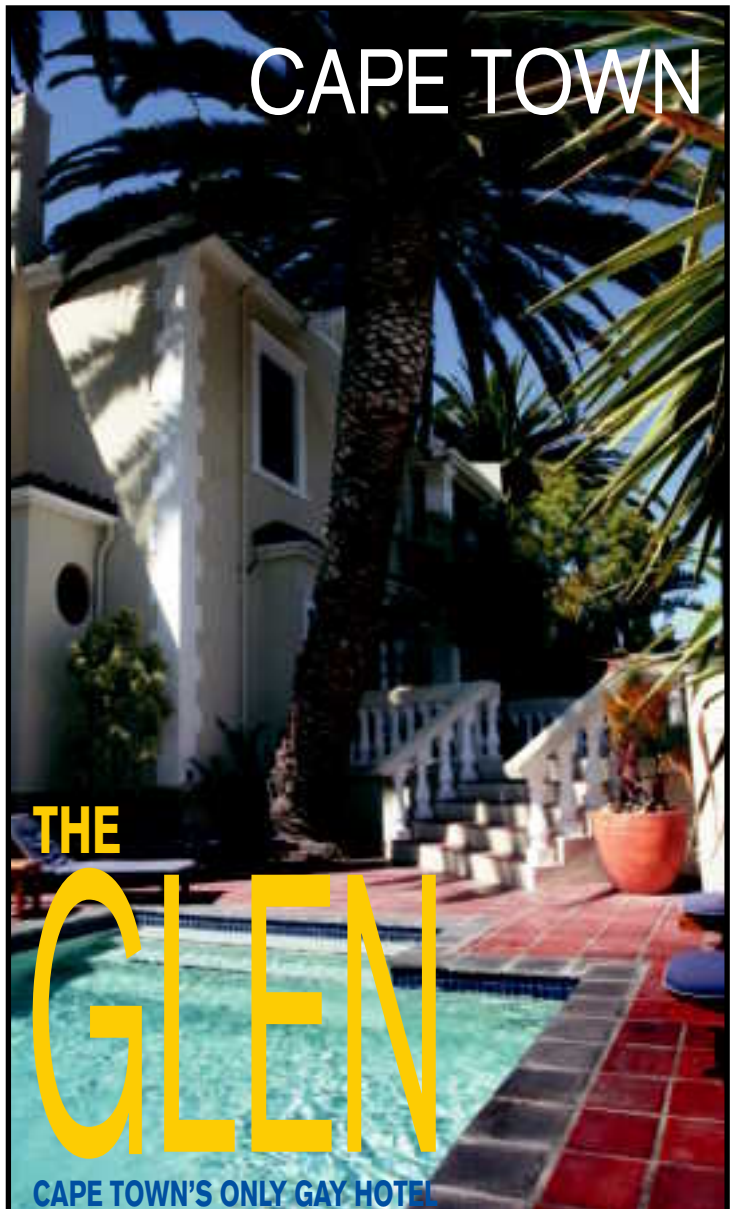
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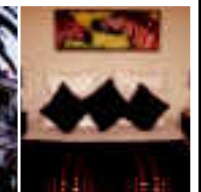
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