

Created by: Debra C. Argen and Edward F. Nesta

Laugar Health and Spa Center



[Laugar Health and Spa Center](#) in Reykjavik, Iceland offers 18,000 square meters of blissful pampering.



Imagine a gorgeous Spa that not only has elegant appointments, has state of the art fitness equipment, yoga, Pilates, and Fit for Life classes, Spa treatments with luxurious Guerlain and Burberry products, a hair salon, seven different saunas and steam rooms, an outdoor thermal swimming pool with water park slide, an indoor Olympic size pool, hot pots, restaurants, and shops, and you have imagined Laugar Health and Spa Center.

The largest Spa in Europe, Laugar Health and Spa Center is the creation of Björn Leifsson, President & CEO, and his wife, Hafdis (Dísa) Jónsdóttir, Vice President & CEO, and is a labor of love that started from an idea 17 years ago and opened in January 2004.



We visited Laugar Health and Spa Center in April 2007, and were immediately impressed with the state of the art facility, which uses an eye scan for its 14,000 members instead of club cards or keys. Feeling a bit like James Bond, we had our right eye scanned for entrance throughout the Spa, which was perfect as (Debra) sometimes has a way of losing keys.

Touring Laugar Health and Spa Center with Björn Leifsson and Dísa Jónsdóttir we learned that in addition to their adult classes, they also offer a separate program for kids from 8 - 15 years, have dance classes for children 4+ years, and childcare programs, making the facility truly family-friendly.



With so many offerings, we had to make the ultimate hard decision of whether to exercise using their extensive Life Fitness or Hammer Strength fitness equipment, experience their saunas and steam rooms, swim in the pools, have massage treatments, or discover "hot pots." Since we had heard so much about the "hot pots" we decided that we should begin our Icelandic Spa experience there.

We went to the locker rooms, changed into our bathing suits, took showers, put on our Spa robes and went outside to experience the "hot pots." Remember this is April, in Iceland, and the temperature was still very cold, so we almost ran to the "hot pots," which we discovered are small shallow pools heated to varying temperatures from 37- 42° C (98 - 111° F). Entering the deliciously warm water was a wonderful experience as we soaked neck deep under bright blue sunny skies. Moving from one hot pot to another we met many people and learned that the hot pots are gathering places for family and friends from infants to senior citizens to meet.



Sufficiently warmed, we decided to leave the hot pots and try the large water park slide into the thermal pool. Climbing quickly to the top, we felt like we were on a luge as we were propelled down the twists and turns of the giant slide until we exited into the warm water. After a swim in the pool we were ready to go inside and experience the saunas and steam rooms.

Inside, the Spa is almost dreamlike with low lighting; we peeked into the relaxation room, where Spa guests relaxed in leather lounge chairs positioned around a fireplace in the center of the room, and knew that if we were to lie down in the warm, semi-dark room for even a minute, we would be asleep immediately.



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Since we had just arrived in Reykjavik earlier that morning, the point of our visit to the Spa was to rejuvenate ourselves, and also experience Iceland's Spa culture, so this was an experience that did not try.

Laugar Health and Spa Center has seven different types of saunas and steam rooms kept at varying temperatures with different themes and aromatherapy and we wanted to experience all of them.

Debra: After emerging from one of the pretty, colorful mosaic saunas, I decided that I had to investigate the wooden tub set on a platform. This was an experience that Edward decided that he could easily forego, and watched bemusedly as I climbed into the tub and had an invigorating surprise as I submerged my still warm from the sauna body into icy cold water! After feeling very relaxed from the sauna I was now fully wide-awake.

Our next Spa adventure was experiencing the Jacuzzi with my appreciative body sighing with pleasure at being warm again after the ice water plunge. We continued by taking periodic rests in the restaurant where we drank cool glasses of waters with fresh lime, lemon, and orange, and alternated our sauna and steam experiences with a footbath, standing under a waterfall, sitting on cool stones and letting the water sluice over our bodies, and taking refreshing showers.



When I saw a bucket suspended from the ceiling with a long cord I felt like I was in a cartoon, and even though I knew what would happen, I had to pull the cord releasing a stream of ice-cold water over my head after emerging from a sauna.

Edward: After hanging out at the different hot pots, doing a bit of light swimming in the thermal pool, and joining the other kids sliding down the giant waterslide, I was ready to move inside. With a plethora of Spa, sauna, whirlpool, and plunge pool options, I was like a child in a candy store trying to select what I would experience next. I started with the foot bath, jumped under the cool water shower, sauntered over to one of the many saunas to 'relax' for 5 to 10 minutes before finding the Jacuzzi empty except for Debra beckoning me to wade in. I walked by the ice water plunge and decided to let Debra experience this to its fullest, though I did immerse my hand up to my wrist, brrr was it cold. Eyeing the suspended bucket of ice-cold water, I was scheming of ways to lure Debra over and try my hand at christening her, but alas she took away all the fun and released the water on herself, maybe next time.

By the time that we had experienced the hot pots, the outdoor thermal pool, and tried all seven saunas and steam rooms, we had spent several hours at Laugar Health and Spa Center, and did not have time for a massage or a Spa treatment, to exercise or take a class. What we especially liked about the Spa was the wide variety of experiences that a guest can enjoy. On our next visit, we look forward to experiencing the rest of what Laugar Health and Spa Center offers.

Laugar Health and Spa Center is open Monday - Friday from 6:00 am - 22:30 pm; Saturday from 8:00 am - 10:00 pm; and Sunday from 8:00 am - 8:00 pm.



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