

Vigfússon-ólafur-2019-06-07.mp4

James Thull [00:00:13] And what is that?

Ólafur Vigfússon [00:00:15] Uh, in Icelandic we have the word, veiðar. It means both fishing and hunting.

James Thull [00:00:21] OK.

Ólafur Vigfússon [00:00:21] So (Icelandic) means hunting or fishing. And (Icelandic) means a corner.

James Thull [00:00:26] OK.

Ólafur Vigfússon [00:00:26] So when we started our business 20 years ago, we started downtown, in a property which was on a corner. So it was Veior corner, downtown. So we moved up here, but kept the name.

Ólafur Vigfússon [00:00:45] Probably, I was born and raised in a very small village, fishing village, in the east coast of Iceland, and probably I was about 5, 6 years old when I started fishing, you know, from the pier. Like haddock, cod, and, you know, all kinds of small fish swimming around. Then, after moving here to the capitol, for school, for studying. I stopped, more or less, fishing for quite many years. But I... When I met Maria, my wife, I started fishing again, because she comes from a great fishing family. So, we started fishing together, and, me and my wife, and we have been fishing together for like 36, 37 years, or something like that.

Ólafur Vigfússon [00:01:37] Oh, well, that's a hard one. We've been fishing together, you know, it's- we can fish like for a day, without talking, you know, because I know what she's going to do. She knows what I'm going to do. I'm not saying that we don't talk, but, you know, we have the same understanding about, you know, and we uh... when you've been fishing together for, for so many years, that you start learning into each other, and then. That's- that's what I like. I used to fish with Maria's father before, quite a lot. He has passed away several years ago, but we fished together many years, and it was the same kind of uh... it was the same kind, you know. You know, I was actually knowing what he was going to do next, and vice versa. I think that's very important, you know.

Ólafur Vigfússon [00:02:34] What we're seeing here, the changes we're seeing here in Iceland is, probably, we're seeing some climate changes. But, you know, when people are talking about the climate changes, we have been around for such a short period. I mean, the human kind. And also in our lives, we've been very short time. So we feel that everything is changing quite a lot. So, but in the long term, in the history, you know, things are not probably changing. We have seen ice ages. And we've seen all kinds of disasters in the world, you know. And when we look back. But in our short lifetime, we are seeing some changes, like the waters are getting warmer. We used to have much more, like, arctic char fishing. Several years ago. The Arctic char is declining. So that is the one major part of fishing that we have been seeing, changes. In terms of fishing, we are seeing now, more and more catch and release fishing. We are seeing quite a lot of new anglers, good anglers, quality anglers, fly fishermen. In the young generation, coming up. I think that's most, the most significant changes that we see.

Ólafur Vigfússon [00:04:03] Yeah, but in Iceland, we are living in such so, you know, very small community. It takes us about, you know, five, to ten, to 15 minutes, to go to a fishing store. So we are not seeing that much, you know, ordering online. But we look more about, uh... We look at our website like more like a window. People are home. They take a look at the products, and they go to the store, instead of ordering them. Today we are seeing more competition, you know, through the Internet, abroad... Anglers, you know, it's very easy to sit down at the computer, and order things from, from abroad. So we have to be aware of that. And so we have to be very competitive, you know, regarding prices, and service and variety. So these are the changes that we have been seeing. Also, I would say like, 80% of our business is fly-fishing. 20% is conventional fishing, like lures and worms. So that segment, that fly fishing segment, has been increasing quite a lot through the last few years.

Ólafur Vigfússon [00:05:24] My personal favorite flies, if I would be fishing, like if I would get invited to go fishing, you know, for a day, trout fishing. And I could only bring one fly, I would definitely bring the pheasant tail. I think that's uh, you know, it's an international pattern, but we have so many varieties of that fly. But I think that would be the number one fly from my box. In regarding salmon flies, it will depend on, you know, which river you're going to, if it's a small river, or if it's a big river. But the riffle hitch tubes, definitely.

Ólafur Vigfússon [00:06:04] There are so many good fly tyers in Iceland, and then coming up with, you know, some really, really great ideas, coming up with some really great patterns. Also, you know, both abroad, and of course, and then also in Iceland. Yeah.

Ólafur Vigfússon [00:06:27] Yeah, we've been, like, we've been fishing together like for 36, 37 years, and then we used to fish quite a lot here in Iceland, both for trout and salmon. Several years ago, we decided to go full force into the business, you know. Obviously, we are quite busy in the summertime, when everybody is fishing. So we decided to, to decrease the fishing here in Iceland, we had been fishing here for so many years, and to explore the world. And I believe that now we have fished in six continents. We have fished quite a lot in Christmas Island. I think that's a magical place. We have been fishing quite a lot in the Seychelles. We've been to the Amazonas in Brazil, Venezuela. We've been to the Keys. We've trout fished in the Colorado River, and in lower Madison River, and Missouri River. So, yeah, we've been quite a lot around. My favorite place, I think it would be the Seychelles, today. And we've had so many, you know, adventures there, so many GTs, and paddlefish, and triggerfish. I really love that area.

Ólafur Vigfússon [00:07:42] Oh, yeah, yeah. Uh, this autumn, we are planning, or actually we're not planning, we have booked a trip to Zambia, in Africa. We are going to fish the Zambezi river, for tigerfish. Probably next year, we will be to Bolivia for the Golden Dorado. And, but I think the saltwater fishing is... a good friend of mine said, "Ola you were bitten by the saltwater bug. And there is no cure." And I think that's true.

Ólafur Vigfússon [00:08:16] The future of pollution, you know, pollution is, is a very big thing. We... all human beings should think more about the pollution. We are also quite a bit concerned about fish farming. I mean, in the, in the sea, we would like to get.... I'm not against fish farming, but I would like to see fish farming inland, but not in the open, in nets, you know, in the open sea. I think that's a very big threat, you know, in Iceland. Also, you know, I talked about pollution, when we have been traveling around, doing all the coral atolls, both in the Pacific and in the in the Indian Ocean, we are seeing some, quite a lot of trash, you know, coming with the sea. All the plastic, plastic bottles, plastic flip flops. I'm a

little bit concerned about those things, the pollution and fish farming. I'm not very concerned about commercial fishing, here in Iceland at least, because I think that is uh, really well organized and controlled.

Ólafur Vigfússon [00:09:30] Special about fishing in Iceland is, that, probably, you can go fishing in a river, and you won't see another fisherman for a whole day. I mean, you are alone in the nature. You can feel like you're the only person on the planet. You can move around from pool to pool. We have, also, so many both lakes in the highlands, lakes like in the national parks, so many rivers here, with sea trout and salmon. I think that's quite unique.

Ólafur Vigfússon [00:10:08] Fishing story I would share, I think the first one that pops up is the first really big GT I had. Probably 50, 60 pound fish. It took like 300 yards of backing my fly line, and rushed out and disappeared in like, with, with all this backing, in like fifteen, 20 seconds, but was quite amazing. My rope was almost, it was almost breaking, my, my reel was screaming, and then it, this magic happened in so few seconds.

James Thull [00:10:50] And were you able to land him, then?

Ólafur Vigfússon [00:10:52] Yeah, we actually, we managed to land him, the, my guide, this was actually in the Christmas, up Christmas Island. And my guide rushed out into the sea, hold(ing) the line high, because there was several corals, and we managed to bring the fish in, in like 30 minutes. That was, that was an adventure.

Ólafur Vigfússon [00:11:19] We have, like in trout fishing, we have this very good thing coming out a few years ago, which you called the fishing card. You can buy, actually, the fishing card, for a fair amount of... fair amount. And you can uh... with the fishing card, you can fish for like 34 lakes, throughout the season. And this brought quite, quite many, you know, new anglers into the sport, and families started fishing together, and going throughout the country and fishing. This is one thing, regarding salmon, and now many trout areas, you have to buy a permit for, for each river or each lake. And it's... I would say it's very well controlled, and very well managed. Some rivers, there is a quota. You have to release all fish that is 70 centimeters or longer. Some rivers are quota that you can take one fish, or two, and release everything else. And then we also have rivers that are 100% catch and release.

Ólafur Vigfússon [00:12:29] I think, you know, going into the- go into the nature and, you know... I would say connecting to the nature. I believe that everybody is a fishing or a hunter inside. And so, I think it's deeper inside some people, but, you know, not that deep into, into most of the... most people. So I think that, you know, when you are connecting to the nature, you're going out fishing, or going out hunting, you get more connected to the nature. And you are alone, you can fish for, for half a day, or all day, you know, with with your thoughts. So it's a kind of uh... it's like, always lik going to a therapist, you know.