



## Surviving Solmukohta

the definitive guide to the convention



# welcome to Solmukohta

we may not always be leading, but we are ever the most nordic



“This is not Ropecon - our event resembles mostly nothing but itself”

In Finland, we have a saying: “*con happens*”. It is very much true in the case of our biggest and most popular convention, **Ropecon**. Arrangements concerning it have – since the early beginnings – had a strange way of just clicking in place and working out fine. I hope some of that has rubbed off on us, but hope alone will not bring you here.

This is not Ropecon – our event resembles mostly nothing but itself. In our uniqueness there has been much to learn from and adapt to. Many times our mistakes have made us stronger, and I can say that we have been building something very different this year. Ladies and Gentlemen: this is **Solmukohta 2004**.

For the first time, we have the possibility to host our guests at a real convention hotel. In the best *Cereal Collectors* convention spirit (pardon my reference to *Sandman*), Solmukohta will be arranged in a rather comfortable hotel in the woods of seaside Espoo. The place suits the convention feel, as you are bound to notice. Also, in the brave footsteps of the Danes, we have explored the strange terrain of a weeklong event. **A Week in Finland** brings our guests and hosts together, in a flurry of parties and events we are hoping no one will soon forget.

A **book** has been written as well, and its content will perplex many a reader to come.

The programme includes many highlights that have barely been touched on in this booklet. Still, our main attraction remains you, the visitors. It is for you we have built this event, and we hope that you will be comfortable and enjoy your stay. And thinking of our own best, we have assembled this small booklet hoping you will be **Surviving Solmukohta**. How else would we all be able to visit the Norwegians next year?

**Mikko Pervilä**

The Gordian Knot

# there and back again

## some directions to get you started

**S**olmukohta 2004 will be held from Thursday, the **19th of February**, to Sunday, the **22nd of February**, at the **Conference Hotel Matinlahti** in Espoo, about 14 kilometres from the centre of Helsinki.

### Bus from the Centre of Helsinki

There is a bus connection to the hotel from the centre of Helsinki. Bus tickets cost **3 euros**. Note that you need a **regional ticket** (*seutulippu*); a ticket that can be used for 70 minutes to travel on all the busses, trams, metros, local trains and even on some local ferries in the greater Helsinki area (Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa and Kauniainen).

Bus **132** drives from the centre of Helsinki to the vicinity of the hotel in about 20 minutes. At the moment the bus station in Helsinki that hosts all the lines that travel to Espoo is under major reconstruction (affectionately called "*Ground Zero*" by the locals). The platforms for various lines have been distributed around the construction site, and line 132 leaves from platform **55** on *Urho Kekkosen katu* (see the maps on the centre pages). It is probably a good idea to reserve a little time to find the right platform.

### From the Airport

The easiest way to get to the convention site from the airport is to take a taxi, which

costs around **30 euros**. A cheaper way is to take a bus to the centre of Helsinki and then switch to bus 132 bound for the convention site. There are two types of busses running between the city centre and the airport, official Finnair busses and standard city busses. The Finnair busses are faster and more expensive (**5 euros**) whereas the standard busses are slower and cost **3 euros** (and the same ticket can be used on the bus to Matinkylä).

The busses from the airport do not arrive at the same bus station where 132 departs from. The distance between the two platforms is about 500 meters.

### From the Harbour

Ferries from Stockholm arrive very close to the centre of Helsinki. The easiest way to get to the convention site is to take a tram to the bus station and then use bus line 132 to get to Hotel Matinlahti. From the Silja Line terminal one should take tram **3T** or **3B** (either of which will get you to the city centre despite the different routes) and from Viking Line the trams of choice are **2** and **4**. All of the trams go to pretty much the same place - one should get off on the next stop after passing the department store *Stockmann* (either at the *Railway Station* or on *Mannerheimintie* in front of *Lasipalatsi*).

A taxi from the harbour to Hotel Matinlahti costs around **30 euros**.

# practical information

tips on living it large at matinlahti - and a few rules as well

## Opening Hours

The doors open at **16:00 on Thursday**, three hours before the programme begins and **Solmukohta** is officially opened. After that the reception/information desk will stay open continuously until the convention closes at **16:00 on Sunday**. Please sign in at the information desk after arriving at the convention.

Convention organisers can always be contacted at the desk. It is also possible to call the desk via the **Solmukohta Hotline** (contact information can be found at the back of this booklet).



with fireplaces, saunas and other more relaxed areas that are accessible around the clock.

## Hotel Matinlahti

The convention hotel has a number of rooms reserved for all kinds of programme. These rooms are open from **07:00 to 22:00**. In addition to these more official surroundings, the convention has cabinets

### remember to pack

- Towel
- Sleeping bag and mattress (unless you are sure that you have a bed at the hotel)
- Enough warm clothes
- Outfits for the **Masquerade** and the **Fancy Dress Dinner**
- Personal hygiene stuff
- Identification
- Proof of payment
- Personal medication

## Hotel Rooms

Hotel Matinlahti has 49 rooms available for sleeping. Each room has two beds, but as each room will host four participants, roughly half of the participants must bring sleeping bags and mattresses with them. Each participant will receive an email before the convention that specifies if they have a bed or if they should bring their own sleeping equipment. The email will also list the other inhabitants of the room. This information can also be checked from the organisers beforehand.

Participants are responsible for the condition of their rooms. The rooms will not be cleaned during the convention and the participants should bring their own towels with them. The rooms have no curfew.

Those participants who signed on at a very late date might not be sleeping in four person rooms, but in larger rooms with more than four people.

### Alcohol and Smoking

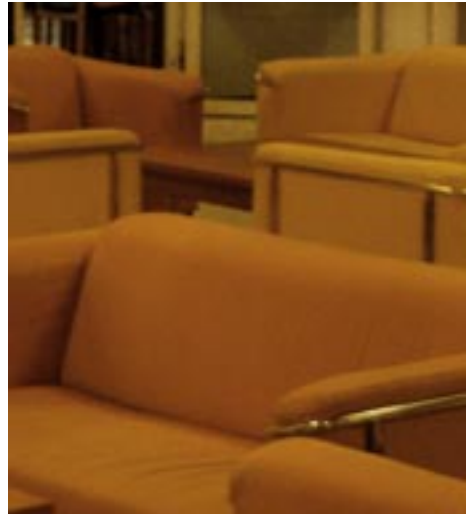
The hotel has a bar that serves alcohol until approximately **01:30**. It is forbidden to consume alcoholic beverages not purchased at the hotel in the public areas of the hotel. Smoking must be conducted either outside the hotel or on one of the various balconies.

### Minors

The age limit for the convention is **15 years**. Minors between the ages of 15 and 18 need to bring a signed note from their legal guardian that states that the minor is travelling to and participating in **Solmukohta** with the full consent of the guardian, and that the guardian is aware that the convention organisers assume no responsibility over the minors. If the guardian has questions about the convention they can either get in touch with the corresponding country contact or directly with the organisers of **Solmukohta**. The phone hotline can be used around the clock during the event.

### Food

The hotel restaurant is open during the convention for breakfast (**08:00-10:00**) and lunch (**12:00-13:00**). Breakfast costs around **7 euros** and dinner is priced at about **6 euros**. Vegetarian and vegan alternatives are available. The food served during the festive banquet dinner on Saturday is included in the entrance fee.



Any allergies should be communicated to the organisers before the convention.

### Internet

The convention area will be covered by a wireless local area network and participants of the convention can use it to gain access to the Internet. More information on the WLAN will be available at the information desk of the convention.

### Iso Omena

Located about a kilometre away from the convention hotel is Iso Omena, a large shopping centre with over a hundred stores, 16 restaurants and cafés, banks, a library, a liquor store and a pharmacist. It should be possible to find food, clothes, flowers, gifts, interior decoration stuff, home electronics and sports and leisure equipment there. The shopping mall is open **10:00-21:00** during the week and **08:00-18:00** on Saturdays. On Sundays it is closed.

# programme

various diversions, alarums and entertainments

The programme of **Solmukohta 2004** presents a balance between the theoretical and practical issues of role-playing. The evenings, on the other hand, are reserved for recreational and social programme.

The convention begins on Thursday night with a welcome speech and **The Masquerade**. However, if you arrive early, you may want to attend the **Dragonbane** organisers' meeting and promotional sessions. At night there will be a panel discussion on Finnish styles of larping and a renaissance dance rehearsal. **The Rich Bitch Crew** will entertain at the bar.

Friday and Saturday will be filled with role-playing-inspired programme until late afternoon; these days are filled with workshops, lectures and debates on various topics, some of which can be found from the following listings. The exact schedule will be published on the website in early February. The Friday night social programme consists of a variety show and **The Renaissance Ball**, while Saturday night hosts a **Fashion Show** and the **Fancy Dress Dinner**.

On Sunday mid-day we hope all the participants will gather together for one last time before it is time to exchange the last calling cards and say goodbye to all our old and new friends.

## Dress Code

**The Masquerade** begins at the welcome speech on Thursday night. Its purpose is to replace more strictly arranged mingling-facilitating programme. Con-participants can gear up in a costume that belongs to their favourite character or reveals their favourite gaming genre.

The theme of the Saturday night **Fancy Dress Dinner** is **Film Noir**. *The Maltese Falcon*, *Gilda*, and *Blade Runner*, for example, all capture the basic essentials of Film Noir: the milieu is a dark, smoggy underworld populated by shady characters with dubious motives and uncertain fates. Dress as a character or merely according to genre. Vintage gear from the 1920's to the 1960's is highly appropriate.

Dressing up in historical or fantasy costumes for **The Renaissance Ball** on Friday night is not required, but it does add up to the atmosphere.

If you have a costume you'd like to show on the catwalk, don't hesitate to contact [solmukohta-programme@ropecon.fi](mailto:solmukohta-programme@ropecon.fi) to enroll in **The Fashion Show** on Saturday night. An appearance on the catwalk is also a brilliant opportunity to advertise your up-coming game.

## game milieu

### Solving Classic Design Problems

Larp scenarios are notorious for their vulnerability. If the number of participants changes, you are in trouble. If plot hooks are missed, you are in trouble. If you design a game for random participants, you are in trouble. After battling these weak spots when designing commercial live action games, ELF Vesala leads audience discussion on possible solutions: dynamic designs, modular mechanics, scalable scenarios and common plot hook interfaces.

### Pyrotechnics

Heiko Romu lectures on the history, techniques and possibilities of pyrotechnics. How to choose safe and impressive pyrotechnics for larps, and how to get the qualifications to use and make effects yourself. Includes demonstrations and a small show.

### Fantastic Music

A workshop and a jam session open to all. Folk music students introduce and teach using different kinds of forgotten instruments and singing in fantasy and historical larps. Feel free to bring your own instruments, tunes and wild ideas.

Anni Tolvanen conducts.

### Latex Weapons

A show and tell on making latex weapons by well known weapon maker Sadetta Postareff from *LatexDragon*. Both working techniques and designs are introduced in detail.

## immersion

### Beginnings and Endings

Eirik Fatland's workshop includes a brief introduction on the 2002 **Ropecon** lecture and a demonstration of methods used in enhancing psychological security and immersion under the *Europa Model*.

### Body Painting

A show and tell on body painting; professional make-up artists Nina Kalugin and Nina Hämäläinen introduce some basic techniques and designs. Participants get their hands dirty as well – techniques are used on both live models and brave volunteers.

### Leather Working

A workshop on using and working leather as prop and costume material. A cunning hand crafter teaches techniques and the use of proper tools.

### Positive Power Drama

Half talk, half workshop based on Emma Wieslander's article in the **Solmukohta Book**; the workshop includes techniques used in the immersion exercises that preceded the larp **Mellan Himmel och Hav**.

## theory

### Transitional Space as the Space of Gaming

The English child psychiatrist D.W Winnicott says that there is an *intermediate space* between the outer objective world



### Role-Play as an Educational Tool

A lecture on the possibilities of rpg in education with special attention to the theories of role play and education. Thomas Duus Henriksen bases his talk on his article in **Beyond Role and Play**.

### Responsible Larping

Thomas Duus Henriksen leads a discussion and a debate on the psychological aspect of larping. Psychological safety is one of the main issues of this discussion, and it is analysed from a social-psychological as well as a structural perspective. Empirical histories from the larp scene are used to ground the theoretical analysis.

### Genesi: Discussing Larp Theories

An in-depth presentation and debate on larp theory from the perspective of *Genesi*, continuing Christopher Sandberg's article in the **Solmukohta Book**. The presentation focuses on the joy of creating and entering the fantastic. Theories and tools are selected for their actual usability – to the most childish participant, as well as to the serious author.

### What Is Participation?

Participating by thinking, choosing or acting? Gabriel Widing of the *Association of Interacting Arts* presents a three step theory on what participation means. A seminar on why artists are authoritative, new media artists are false prophets, and live roleplaying is a democratic means of making art. It will be a short version of an upcoming book on participatory arts and culture.

### Some Thoughts on Reality

A discussion on reality and larp, roles and play. Gabriel Widing of the *Association of Interacting Arts* approaches reality from various viewpoints.

## larp around the world

### Four Larps on Panoptic Society

A lecture with a presentation including documentation of the larps **Kybergenesi**, **Europa**, **inside : outside** and **PanoptiCorp**, which Eirik Fatland played some role in organising, and an analysis of these larps in the light of Foucault's theories on the panoptic societies.

### Larp around the World

Mike Pohjola chairs a Q&A panel discussion on larping manners, styles and cultures in different countries, with

an attempt to continue from the issues discussed in **Knudepunkt 2003**.

### Dragonbane

The First Dragonbane meeting for the whole team. Thursday daytime is reserved for discussions about the project, and a promotional session begins at 17:30. Contact [info@dragonbane.org](mailto:info@dragonbane.org) for further information.

### Gender Equality in Larps

Emma Wieslander's lecture continues the discussion on gender equality issues of previous KP:s. The lecture includes a presentation on a Swedish project on gender-equality in larps.

### Larp in Finland

An introductory Q&A panel discussion on larping in Finland. The panel represents several Finnish gaming cultures and crowd participation is expected. Mike Pohjola navigates.

### Vreden

A promotion for the Swedish larp Vreden. The game will take place in August 2004 in Gothenburg.

### The Making of Roulin' Moose

Timo Multamäki's documentary and recollection on the making the larp Roulin' Moose.

### Documents from Panoptic Larps

Eirik Fatland's show and tell with various types of documentation from the larps **Kybergensis**, **Europa**, **inside:outside**, and **PanoptiCorp**.

## fun

### Speculative Larps

Scuba diving murder mysteries, politics of orangutan art critics, dinner parties on the planet of zombie letter-openers? This is your chance to learn about hitherto unknown larp classics and still forgotten new success stories from an international all-star panel of nordic larp experts with Syksy Räsänen in the lead.

### A Rich Bitch Crew Exclusive

At **Solmukohta 2004** you get the opportunity to join the celebrations. Let two fantastic, glamorous, hip hop kittens groove your world. Sit, talk and listen or jump, dance and shout. Experience all levels of heaven on Thursday evening.

### A Kitchen Line

Larp goes musical. All singing, all dancing stage spectacle tells the hilarious story of a bunch of female larpers under the thumb of an evil gamemaster.

A Kristiina Prauda production.

### Renaissance Dances for Fun

To boldly go beyond Pornopolka with a little guidance from Kristiina Prauda. Rehearse renaissance dances, socialise, and flirt in preparation for the ball.

### The Ball

Dance till you drop. Folk music band *Hyberborea* accompanies renaissance dances rehearsed earlier in the dance workshop with Kristiina Prauda. An optional dress code for the ball is a suit of any kind.

# beyond role and play

tools, toys and theory for harnessing the imagination

**R**opecon ry will publish a collection of articles and essays on role-playing for **Solmukohta 2004**. The purpose of the book is to create and preserve intellectual discussion on role-playing, both tabletop and larp. The book will feature about 25 articles written by researchers and students from 7 countries. It is edited by Markus Montola and Jaakko Stenros.

One copy of the book is included in the entrance fee of **Solmukohta**.

The texts range from manifestos to practical guidelines, and from models of role-playing to its educational uses. There will also be some academic analyses on recent, more influential larps such as **Mellan Himmel och Hav** and **PanoptiCorp**. The emphasis is to equip the reader with practical, analytical and theoretical tools, which can be used to understand role-playing.



Petri Lankoski, for an example, discusses the importance of emotions in role-playing games in his article **Character Design Fundamentals for Role-Playing Games**:

“[G]oals and plans are very important for the emotional processes. Hence, I would argue that goals or plans by necessity are a part of a good role-playing game character. Goals are the very basis of character immersion and emotional experience. As a player evaluates the character’s goals meaningfully and takes them as hers in the game, she is able to experience “shared emotions” – to feel what the character would feel in the situation.”

Paul Mason, on the other hand, has gone **In Search of the Self**, and produced a survey of the first 25 years of anglo-american role-playing theory:

“One of the most frustrating aspects of role-playing games for those who had been playing for a while was [in the beginning of 1990s] the impermanence of theoretical developments. As this paper itself demonstrates, most of the writing on role-playing appeared in ephemeral publications with very low print runs. As a result the ideas were only weakly disseminated. As new magazines emerged, the same ideas (particularly ‘realism and playability’) were continually gone over. For many it felt like the hobby was marching on the spot.”

A The Helsinki Area  
 B Helsinki City Centre  
 C Hotel Matinlahti and the Surrounding Area

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Bus number 132      | 11. Senate Square      |
| 2. Finnair airport bus | 12. Suomenlinna ferry  |
| 3. City airport bus    | 13. Uspenski Cathedral |
| 4. To Silja terminal   | 14. Café Tin Tin Tango |
| 5. To Viking terminal  | 15. Golden Rax         |
| 6. Ateneum             | 16. Lappi              |
| 7. Kiasma              | 17. Lasipalatsi & Mbar |
| 8. The National Museum | 18. Bamboo Center      |
| 9. The Railway Station | 19. St. Urho's Pub     |
| 10. The Rock Church    | 20. Zetor              |





Hotel Matinlahti

Rantamäki 3  
02230 Espoo



# surviving helsinki

## finding your way around the finnish capital

This guide should help you experience the best sides of a unique seaside city with a warm heart, but it is by no means a definitive guide to travel around the Helsinki area. Ask the local hosts and organisers for more advice on what to do and see and how to get there.

### Getting Around

Helsinki has an excellent public transportation system, utilising trams, buses and a metro. A single ticket (good for transfers within an hour of purchase) costs **2 euros** within city limits. A similar regional ticket (*seutulippu*), that can be used in the neighbouring cities as well, costs **3 euros**. Tourist tickets are available from *HKL* (the Helsinki public transportation bureau) service centres and *R-kiosks*, which are scattered all around



### Finland

**Population:** 5 190 785

**Official languages:** Finnish (93,4%), Swedish (5,9%)

**Currency:** Euro (EUR)

### Helsinki

**Population:** 559 716 (with over one million inhabitants in the greater Helsinki area)

**Neighbours:** Espoo, Vantaa, Kauniainen

**Land-area:** 186 km<sup>2</sup>

**February temperatures:** the average temperature is -6,8 degrees

the city. Tourist tickets cost **4.80 euros** for a single day, **9.60 euros** for three days, and **14.40** for a five-day pass.

Taxis are easy to find, except at four in the morning, when the nightclubs close and you may have to queue for some time at the nearest taxi post. Taxis can be hailed on the streets, found at the taxi posts, or ordered by phone from the taxi centre (**+358 100 0700** in Helsinki). On average taxi rides within city limits cost between 10 and 20 euros.

Once you actually make it to the city centre, just about everything should be within walking distance. Be sure to bring enough warm clothing, however. In February the temperature may drop below -15 degrees, with a cold sea wind making the conditions seem even worse.

## Shopping and Prices

Alcohol and tobacco are fairly expensive in Finland when compared with central and southern Europe. Furthermore, the state-owned chain of liquor stores, *Alko*, is the only place where wines and hard liquors can be sold (beer and cider are sold in grocery stores until **21:00**). If you're travelling within the EU, bringing along a week's supply and then some might not be a bad idea.

Otherwise the shopping in Helsinki is fairly good, especially if you're into design. Both *Marimekko* and *Iittala* have factory outlets in Helsinki, and *Stockmann* is the largest department store in Scandinavia. *Fantasiapelit*, located at Kaisaniemi metro station, is the local outlet for all things related to role-playing games. There are also a couple of excellent comics stores and movie theatres (showing foreign films with the original soundtracks and Finnish and Swedish subtitles) in Helsinki.

## Opening Hours

Shops are usually open **09:00-21:00** during the week and **09:00-18:00** on Saturdays. Smaller grocery shops are also open on Sundays **12:00-21:00**. Kiosks, gas stations and other such small outlets may be open after nine in the evening or even around the clock, but they are more expensive.

Bars and pubs usually close at **02:00**, but a number of clubs stay open until **04:00**. The last busses and trams depart around **01:30**.



## sights

### things to see, places to do

#### Ateneum

The national museum of fine arts, Ateneum, houses some of the most famous Finnish paintings by such luminaries as Gallén-Kallela and Schjerfbeck. (*Kaivokatu 2*)

#### Kiasma

The Helsinki Museum of Contemporary Art is a stunning architectural piece by itself, but it also houses a very good collection of contemporary art. The downstairs café is a great place to enjoy a hot drink. Designed by Steven Holl and opened in 1998. (*Mannerheiminaukio 2*)

#### The National Museum

Finnish life from the stone age onwards. The old clothes, weaponry, thrones, and crests are probably of interest to quite a few role-players. (*Mannerheimintie 34*)

#### The Railway Station

Designed by Eliel Saarinen, the main railway station combines art nouveau, art deco and functionalism – very successfully, strangely enough. (*Kaivokatu 1*)

#### The Rock Church

Located at Temppliaukio, this beautiful church is built straight into the bedrock. The church and the unique copper roof were finished in 1969 and designed by Timo and Tuomo Suomalainen. (*Lutherinkatu 3*)



### Senate Square

The Senate Square is the heart of Helsinki's old monumental centre. Designed in grand empire style by C.L. Engel, the square and the Helsinki Cathedral overlooking it brought a touch of St. Petersburg to then Russian controlled Helsinki when they were finished in 1852.

### Suomenlinna

The seafortress in front of Helsinki is an impressive site, but winter is not the best time to visit it. Those willing to brave the weather should board a ferry from the Market Square and make their way through the ice to the islands that the Anglo-French fleet bombarded for days in 1855. The fortress is a UN World Heritage Site.

### Tram 3T

A great way to explore the city is to take the tram 3T (or 3B, which travels the other way on the same number eight shaped route). The line passes many of the most impressive sights in Helsinki. You can board the tram at Market Square and Mannerheimintie among other places. Tourist info centres and HKL-ticket outlets hand out free guides to the sights along the tram line.

### Uspenski Cathedral

Overlooking Market Square and South Harbour, this beautiful cathedral is the largest orthodox church in Western Europe. (*Kanavaranta 1*)

## a night on the town bars, restaurants and clubs

### Café Tin Tin Tango

Tin-Tin Tango is located a little further from the center, but it has been a preferred gamer hangout for years. The café also doubles as a restaurant, a bar, a laundromat, and even has a reservation sauna. (*Töölöntori*)

### DTM

The largest gay night club in Scandinavia, DTM (previously *Don't Tell Mama*) welcomes all open minded night people. Relatively trendy. Hosts a café during the day. (*Iso Robertinkatu 28*)

### Golden Rax Pizza Buffet

Unremarkable food, but a good hangover or post-game joint. For **8 euros** one can consume as much pizza, chicken, salad, soft drinks and ice cream as one can. (*Forum shopping centre*)

### Ilves

A bar that's steeped in Finnish rock'n'roll history. They serve some of the best burgers in town, and there's a good chance some local star will be interviewed in the adjacent table. Just try to ignore the stuffed lynx, which gives the place its name. Located across the street from the downtown stop of bus number **132**, which goes to the convention site. (*Urho Kekkosen katu 4-6*)

### Kalaravintolat

“The fish restaurants” are a chain of pubs serving an excellent assortment of beers and ciders. The chain includes *Leijuva lahna*, *Punavuoren ahven*, and others. Ask a local for instructions to the closest one. Note that there is no fish on the menu.



### Kynsilaukka

Homey garlic restaurant that serves everything from garlic beer to garlic ice cream. (*Fredrikinkatu 22*)

### Lappi

Restaurant Lappi is filled with “pine kitch” and serves gourmet Lappish dishes for tourists. The place is quaint, but the prices are a little high. Booking a table in advance is usually a good idea. (*Annankatu 22*)

### Lasipalatsi

Located on the second floor of the functionalist building in the heart of the city, restaurant Lasipalatsi serves actual Finnish food and gives the customers a brilliant view of the action about town. Pricey, but good value for money. (*Mannerheimintie 22-24*)

### Lost & Found

The former “straight-friendly gay club” is now the premium gay-friendly straight club in town. The crowded dance floor is one of the best in Helsinki, though certainly not the trendiest or most spacious. (*Annankatu 6*)

### Mbar

Mbar is the best Internet café in Helsinki. It is centrally located in Lasipatsi, very comfortable, and often has an offbeat DJ playing all kinds of experimental stuff. (*Mannerheimintie 22-24*)

### New Bamboo Center

A remarkably cheap oriental restaurant in the city centre. Especially the Malaysian curry specialities are worth a try. Just don't order them hot, unless you really know what you're doing. (*Annankatu 29*)

### Robert's Coffee

The closest thing to a Starbucks in Helsinki. Serves a wide variety of coffees and teas, including fair trade and ecological variants. Located around town.

### Sea Horse

A smoky restaurant that serves traditional Finnish homemade cooking, Sea Horse is a cross between a local boozier, an actor hangout and a trip back to the 70's. (*Kapteeninkatu 11*)

### St. Urho's Pub

Comfortable pub with a wide selection of beers, ciders, whiskies and even a few good wines. St. Urho's is named after the late president Kekkonen. The pub also has a fairly good and affordable kitchen that stays open until last calls. (*Museokatu 10*)

### Zetor

Restaurant Zetor doesn't dazzle with its food, but the decor is crazy enough, what with the tractor and assorted Soviet *kolch*. (*Mannerheimintie 3-5*)

# a week in finland

## role-play your way through snowy helsinki

**A Week in Finland** brings together role-players from Finland and abroad. It is the perfect opportunity to get to know different gaming cultures from around the world, compare notes, and get new ideas. But, above all, it is a great opportunity to mingle with larpers from everywhere in games, parties and other events.

The week will be held under favourable signs. It will begin on Friday the **13th of February** and continue with **Valentine's Day**, celebrated with an appropriate larp. Guests are free to arrive at any given day between **the 13th** and **the 18th**.

During the week, several small larps will be played. Some of them are hand

picked from the Finnish variety and some of them are brand new.

In addition to the games, several get-togethers will be held. Some of them are parties, some of them just opportunities to meet everyone and to discuss whatever interests the participants.

Please follow our web pages for updates, as museum trips, freeform tabletop games and other programme is added. Also, some of the games will require players to sign up in advance or pay a small participation fee. Further instructions, and updates to this preliminary programme, will be available on the **Solmukohta website**.

If you plan to take part in **aWiF**, and need a place to stay, please inform the con organisers. We will do our best to secure accommodations to foreigners at hospitable local larper homes. Solmukohta participants who live in Helsinki and want to offer their homes for this purpose should email [solmukohta-awif@ropecon.fi](mailto:solmukohta-awif@ropecon.fi).

### a taste of finland

When in Rome, drink as the Finns drink. Here's a little primer to get you started with the best and the worst of Finnish favourites.

#### Salmiakikossu

*Sal Ammoniac Koskenkorva*

Sal ammoniac (or ammonium chloride) is generally considered a harmful substance, and marked with a warning label. In Finland it's eaten as candy. And what would Finns do with candy, if not mix it with the nation's most popular table vodka.

## friday 13.2.

### The Opening Party

There is no game on the first night, but Helsinki University's sci-fi association has invited us to use their clubhouse as a jumping off point. Nothing fancy, just good people and good conversation. The

same location may be available during other nights as well.

## saturday 14.2.

### Aspecta Occulta 4: Pagan Love

*"The former Pontifex has returned after decades of absence, and founded some kind of a mortal cult. Go and find out if his teachings still respect the First Tradition - and the wishes of the Pyramid, of course..."*

A short World of Darkness larp for 20 adult players.

Pagan Love is a methodological display of the *Immersion on a Dime* game design concept. It is also an example on the utilization of stereotypical elements in the creation of heavy emotional content. The game's emphasis will be on immersion, emotional contemplation and metaphors, not action.

By J. Tuomas Harviainen

## sunday 15.2.

### Exposure

A game with knuckles, by Mikko Rautalahti, about secrets that want to come out, and images that cannot be captured without light.

For twenty to thirty serious-minded, emotionally capable players who can live with blood on their hands. Exposure will consume four to eight hours of your life, and not a single one of them will you ever get back.

### Siideri

#### "Cider"

Cider is of course drunk in most civilised countries. "Cider" can only be found in the close proximity of the Arctic Circle. Try such popular labels as Golden Cap or Fizz – just don't expect to taste apples or enjoy the experience. Also available in light, lemon, or with a raspberry twist.

Not a gentle experience. Not a kind lover. Not a bedtime story. Not a string of meaningless shocks.

No breaks for coffee and cigarettes. No rooms for calming down.

**Exposure.** It's not always harsh.

## monday 16.2.

### Helsinki Sight-Seeing Tour

Locals guide the wide-eyed visitors around the most interesting sites in Helsinki. Good shoes recommended.

### The Tavern

A short introduction to the concept of randomness, part 1.5

A crossgenre-crossuniverse game for 16-22 players. Bring your own character into the Tavern of ...well, that's the question, isn't it? Or one of them.

This game is about mood, emotion, and relationships between individuals: you to your character, as well as the character to others, in a strange situation, among strangers. When applying, you must present us with 2-3 choices of characters that you have already played in some other larp (or possibly tabletop) and formed

an emotional attachment to. Who, what, where, or by whom are irrelevant, but you must be able to present a description and history of the character. In this particular instance of the Tavern, characters with recently unhappy emotional circumstances and/or other strong personal conflicts are preferred. We choose which one you play and let you know well in advance.

Gaming style is realistic and immersionist. If you are into action or plot suspense, this is not for you. But if you are into the inner dynamics of character and you-as-character, the modes of communication between strangers forced into the same space, or if you above all long to return to a character you did not get enough of, you are most welcome!

By Kristiina Prauda & Lin Savisalo  
(Note: There are cats and a dog living in the game area. During the game the animals are kept away.)

### The Sauna Party

A traditional Finnish Sauna party. Hot steamy room and a swimming pool. Bring

#### Lonkero

##### *Long Drink*

With the Olympics approaching in 1952, the powers-that-were worried that the Finnish bartenders' apparent collective inability to mix drinks more complicated than jugs of beer would prove an embarrassment. Enter the Long Drink, a ready-made gin and tonic in a bottle. Only they got it wrong, so the nation got to enjoy a surprisingly palatable mixture of gin and grape soda instead.

your own towels and booze. A swimming suit is totally optional.

Early in the evening, men and women will have separate turns in the sauna. Later in the evening, nobody will care.

The sauna party is a potluck, so bring some food to share. There is also a fireplace, where it is possible to toast marshmallows and grill sausages, at the sauna.

## tuesday 17.2.

### The Wicked Master

The Midwinter celebration in the village of Saari takes an unfortunate turn, when Master Tuure is found dead next to a high cliff. Few shall mourn him, though, since he has been known to be a wicked and clever man. A farm hand utters aloud what most would not like to think about: "*How could a strong and healthy man just slip and fall – uphill?*"

The Wicked Master is a murder mystery story in the spirit of Agatha Christie novels, taking place in the turn of the 11th century in Western Finland. The game is for 20 players and will be played in authentic environment.

By Nina Talvela

### Beyond Role and Play Launch Party

The **Solmukohta 2004** book **Beyond Role and Play – Tools, Toys and Theory for Harnessing the Imagination** will be published during the week and this party is your first chance of securing a copy. The event will kick off with a 30-minute press

junket (so beware of the media types) and then evolve into a cocktail party. Everyone is invited.

## wednesday 18.2.

### The Cheapest Show

*“It’s the cheapest show you’ve ever seen  
With drunks, drug addicts and old queens  
It’s garish, gaudy and obscene”  
- The Tiger Lillies*

Italian neo-realism meets Burroughs meets Loteanu meets Gogol in a fictitious East European setting. The Dump Dwellers are taken to the Registration Office.

A Turkuist live game from Henri Hakkarainen for twenty players over eighteen years of age. The emotional and sensory landscapes may be extremely intensive and uncomfortable. The game will last an estimated four to six hours, during which players are expected to be fully committed to the game.

### Helsinki Tour by Underground

An adaptation of time honoured student traditions, the Helsinki Tour by Underground is a perfect way to get to know the various social layers of Helsinki, and see the beery underbelly of *The Jewel of the Baltic Sea*.

There are 16 stops on the Helsinki metro. Next to each one of them there’s a cheap beer joint. Since only 13 of them form a straight line, the 3 others will bring you extra points.

The participants are divided in to groups of 3-4 people (or whatever feels most comfortable). Starting from the

easternmost part of Helsinki, *Vuosaari station*, the participants will travel on the underground from stop to stop. They will visit the beer joint at each location, and drink a beer (other alcoholic beverages may also be accepted). Our official tour guides are present at the bars, providing interesting trivia on the suburb in question and – most important of all – giving a mark if the checkpoint is passed by properly downing a beer. At the end of the line, marks and points will be counted, and the team with the best results will win (and get some free booze).

## thursday 19.2.

### Hangover and Hanging

Try to make it through the early afternoon at the all-you-can-eat Golden Rax Pizza Buffet. At **16:00** the doors open at Hotel Matinlahti, and at **19:00** Solmukohta will be officially opened.

Alahovin Hilikon  
Makee Mansikkaviini  
*Alahovi’s Purty Sweet  
Struhwberry Wine*

Finland’s wine industry is growing at a phenomenal pace all things considered. The pinnacle of Finnish vintnership is undoubtedly this subtle strawberry flavoured delight from the rolling hills of central Finland. Beware though, when they say “pretty sweet”, they mean “sweet enough to make your gums curl up and die”. Only for the truly adventurous.

# the organisers

the good, the bad, and the plain desperate

**Mikko Pervilä**

*The leader of the pack*

A real party animal sleeps inside Mikko's refined exterior. Yet he can still manage the logistics of the biggest role-playing event in Scandinavia from a cave in Visby.

**Henri Hakkarainen**

*Propaganda*

In his posh downtown flat Henri ponders feminism, proletarian rights, and web design. An elitist at heart, with great effort he can be coaxed into actually doing things shoddily himself instead of merely criticising others.

**Taika Helola**

*Programme*

Don't let the compact stature fool you, this woman knows more about 17th century emblems and metaphors than most people will ever want to hear. It's with this practical bend of mind that she attacks the problems encountered while arranging programme for role-playing events.

**Heidi Hopeametsä**

*Databases*

When not training capoeira, this foxy redhead creates things from handbags to websites, wishing she had more time to learn how to play the berimbau. Her meticulous talent for putting things in order, usually applied to folklore research,

is now vital for handling **Solmukohta** participant data.

**Kalle Kivimaa**

*Treasurer*

For as long as there has been role-playing in Finland, Kalle has looked after everyone's money. With his feet planted firmly on the ground he is both respected and respectable.

**Irrette Melakoski**

*Hostess*

Pioneer of Finnish web publishing, larpwright, and researcher, Irrette has recently moved to Helsinki in order to help put together the **Week in Finland**. When the going gets tough this tough gal goes riding.

**Markus Montola**

*Editor*

Game organiser and theorist, Markus thrives during conflict. When not inspecting lighthouses or networking on icebreakers, he divides his time between the academia and his gaming hobby.

**Timo Multamäki**

*Key account manager*

For Timo too much is never enough. Everything can always be bigger, faster, flashier – and above all more expensive

solmukohta - knutpunkt - knutepunkt - knudepunkt

– be it his games or his military vehicle come fashion accessory.

### Heiko Romu

#### *Acquisitions*

Combining the love of pyrotechnics and sushi, Heiko is the perfect man to take charge of the **Solmukohta** logistics. Armed only with a chef's knife, plate mail, a handgun, a parachute, a fire truck, and scuba gear Heiko can be expected to take care of anything.

### Jukka Seppänen

#### *Human relations*

Jukka has been involved with labour rights inside the Finnish role-playing scene for a number of years. For or against – the accounts seem to vary.

### Jaakko Stenros

#### *Public relations*

A customer of both the best clothing stores and the geekiest comic shop in Helsinki, Jaakko combines glitter and glam with a solid corporate career. Having trained people on three continents and never having written a larp, he believes firmly in the axiom: “those who can't do, teach”.

### Anni Tolvanen

#### *Amusements*

Anni has managed to arrange and write several successful larps and other events. In Solmukohta she puts her organising skills to good use in planning the programme. When not making larps or similar events, she studies music and singing in Kaustinen, the holy backyard of folk music in Finland.

## The Solmukohta Hotline

+358 45 635 0717

The hotline is manned during both **A Week In Finland** and **Solmukohta** itself. It will always get you in touch with the organisers.

### Email addresses

General queries may be directed to [solmukohta@ropecon.fi](mailto:solmukohta@ropecon.fi)

Submissions for programme and other programme related issues [solmukohta-programme@ropecon.fi](mailto:solmukohta-programme@ropecon.fi)

Volunteering as a host or any questions about A Week in Finland [solmukohta-awif@ropecon.fi](mailto:solmukohta-awif@ropecon.fi)

Questions about the Solmukohta Book [solmukohta-book@larp.fi](mailto:solmukohta-book@larp.fi)

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## Solmukohta·04



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