

PASSPORT

MOSCOW

JULY 2009

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Interview With Rosemary Hilhorst OBE
Director, British Council Russia

Green Development in Russia

Vladivostok: Ruler of the East

Skopin Pottery

Patriashiye Prudy

Part one of *Passport's* guide to Moscow's
favorite residential areas



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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 



7



14



18



30



38



47

4 What's On in July

6 July Holidays

7 Previews

Passport's selection of cultural events in July

9 Theater

*A review of *The Past is Still Ahead**

10 How To

Part II of our series on how to get a resident's permit

12 Art History

Viktor Ufimtsev (1899-1964)

14 Art

Vladimir Dubossarsky and Alexander Vinogradov

16 Cinema

The CINE FANTOM club

18 Community

Interview with Rosemary Hilhorst OBE
Director, British Council Russia

21 Hot Topic

Gay rights in Russia or rather the lack of them

22 Travel

Tourism in Russia / Vladivostok: "Ruler of the East"

26 Craft

The incredible pottery of Skopin

28 Book Review

Oilopoly: Putin, Power and the Rise of the New Russia

30 Cover Story

Green shoots sprout in Russia

34 Wine Tasting

A fantastic evening of Spanish wine at Night Flight

36 Out & About

38 Your Moscow (1)

42 Real Estate

43 Relocation

44 Technology

45 Way Beyond

Human computer meets journalists

46 Column

Michael Romanov's diary

47 Last Word

Naomi Britz



John Ortega
Owner and Publisher

Mid-summer in Moscow; a fleeting chance to walk around in short-sleeved shirts, eat and drink on verandas and stroll around the more pleasant parts of the city, really has to be enjoyed while you can. Even the traffic police have been known to smile at this time of year, not so the brutish drivers of large black sedans and SUVs whose driving habits are equally brutish whatever the weather.

Now is the time of the summer 'out'. For those not already far from Russia's shores, there are all the last minute preparations to be made, the expectations and possibly traumas. One of the new worries is swine flu, not an illness that I would like to die from, although this seems unlikely at the moment.

This month we feature an interview with Rosemary Hilhorst OBE, director of the British Council here in Moscow. Britain is fortunate indeed to have somebody as talented and open to new ideas and thinking, working in Moscow. The editor indulges in a pet hobby of his: green development, with an article 'Green Shoots Sprout in Russia'. Piers Gladstone whisks us off once again to visit another remote, but accessible part of this great land. This time, to visit: The Ruler Of the East – Vladivostok. Closer to home (Moscow), Larissa Franczek describes the quite amazing pottery produced in the town of Skopin, a few hundred kilometers from Moscow.

In this issue we start a tour of Moscow's residential areas, at least the ones where expats live. We hope that you will find this new series interesting, and even useful. As this magazine is a community publication, please let the editor know of any news, announcements and ideas at j.harrison@passportmagazine.ru

IBCLUB (International Business Communication Club)

invites corporate employees and executives to participate in its bi-weekly meetings. Here you can develop your spoken English language skills with native speakers, network and participate in business training taught by an American corporate instructor.

*Address: 2-aya Tverskaya-Yamskaya Ul., 10. Venue: PLOV CAFE. Days: Tuesday 7:30-20:30; Thursday 7:30-20:30
More info: 8-926-1368149 (George), Website: www.ibclub.su*

The Dome Cinema Reopens!

It is once again possible to see first-run Hollywood movies in English with the reappearance on the Moscow entertainment scene of the Dome Cinema, located at the Renaissance Hotel on Olimpisky Prospekt. The cinema had been closed since the beginning of the year due to the recent trend among local film distributors of ceasing their former practice of providing original language copies of their major releases in Russia. The cinema owners have been able to side-step this slight inconvenience through some old-fashioned technical ingenuity which – in addition to allowing them to screen films in English – also gives them the ability to provide the professional, studio Russian dub via headphones. They have upgraded the overall quality of their sound as well. See you at the movies!



Is your business ready for the next global threat?

Seventy representatives from many international corporations searched for an answer to this question on June 4 at the Marriott Hotel Moscow. The event was hosted by International SOS – leading provider for international healthcare. Dr. Douglas Stevens (chief medical officer at International SOS), William Hopkirk (consultant at Control Risks) and Bob Rushton (security specialist at Travel Security Services London) analyzed the recent swine flu threat. Attendees learned how they could best mitigate the impact of a pandemic or any other comparable global crisis in this unpredictable world.

Cover painting by John Harrison

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Wednesday, 1st

Romance with the Saxophone

Alexey Skanavi (piano) and Veronika Kozhukharova (saxophone) perform a program "Romance with a Saxophone". Alexey Skanavi's creativity appeals to "old school" ideals of piano performance with its brilliance, variety of styles, delicate taste and easy-going contact with the audience.

Durov Art Café, 20:00

American Women's Organization (AWO) presents: AWO Coffee

The AWO Moscow provides social, educational and cultural programs for women living in Moscow. The annual membership fee of 1,500 rubles gives you free or subsidized access to activities including twice-monthly coffees, charitable events, seasonal parties, tours, special interest groups, and more. Membership is extended to citizens of all North American countries – Canada, the United States and Mexico – or those married to North Americans.

Hard Rock Café, 10:00

Morrissey (rock)

Morrissey is a British singer-songwriter. After a short stint in the punk rock band The Nosebleeds in the late 1970s, he rose to prominence in the 1980s as the lyricist and vocalist of the alternative rock band The Smiths. In 2009, Morrissey released *Years of Refusal*. Morrissey is returning to his basic rock approach.

B1 Maximum, 21:00



The Chekhov International Theater Festival presents: Nebbia (circus performance)

This circus triumph by Daniele Finzi Pasca is poetic rather than athletic. The Italian-Swiss director brings us apes-

ing power of movement, the humanity of Amarcord and the irony of a fakir's hyper-articulated body, while exploring a dimension of the soul that is as immaterial as an oneiric journey. Finzi Pasca echoes Shakespeare's belief that we are made out of the substance of our dreams; we are adrift in a world without reference points. The fantasy is released by the impending fog, which plunges us into a hallucinatory haze. Circus melds with theater, dance merges with photography, street music mingles with Commedia dell'arte. Fellini and Chagall are evoked but the flavor is unpretentious. Duration – two hours with intermissions.

Mossoviet Theater, 13:00 and 19:00, also 2nd-9th

Friday, 3rd

The Moscow Yacht Festival

The Moscow Yacht Festival hosts a concert featuring Mumiy Troll and The Invisible (UK). Mumiy Troll (pronounced Moo-me Troll) is an influential Russian band. The Invisible was born when towards the end of 2006, three friends started working together. An exciting, beautiful album gradually emerged and during the process the three Londoners fused into a fully-fledged trio.

Royal Yacht Club, 20:00



Saturday, 4th

World Press Photo 2009 (exhibition)

Krasny Oktyabr' Factory Exhibition Center welcomes a "World Press Photo 2009" exhibition from June 27 to July 27. This unique travelling exhibition consists of 196 works by winners of the prestigious photojournalism contest "World Press Photo," the final of which was held in Amsterdam in February 2009 for the 52nd time. The exhibition presents the most important events of 2008. On February 13, 2009 an international jury awarded 62 photographers from 27 countries. Anthony Suau's work was voted the Best 2008 Photograph.

Krasny Oktyabr, from June, 27 to July, 27

International Women's Club presents: Saturday Coffee Morning at LPQ

You may attend as many of these coffee mornings as you like. These events are a great opportunity to meet new friends, relax, and have lunch together afterwards. LPQ will provide complimentary coffee for us all, and of course, they also have a fabulous breakfast or lunch menu to tempt you.

Le Pain Quotidien, 10:00



American Women's Organization (AWO) Invites You on a Summer Picnic

Email: awomoscow@gmail.com for more details

Tuesday, 7th

The Chekhov International Theater Festival presents: The Secret.

The Secret, performed by the Ici Circus (France) is a theatrical and circus show where the public can see only one actor, Johann Le Guillerm, on the arena, but which involves a non-stop work of many people who strive to use all existing laws of mechanics to exercise the turns and tricks that are beyond understanding. The show is a must see for everyone.

Kolomenskoye Estate, also 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 14th-15th, 17th-19th, 22nd-23rd, 25th-27th, for more information go to www.chekhovfest.ru



Wednesday, 8th

American Women's Organization presents: Newcomers' Coffee

Hard Rock Café, 10:00

Saturday, 11th

The Summer Ballet Festival

The Summer Ballet Festival is aimed at popularizing classical ballet art as Russia's national heritage. Every year the Summer Ballet Festival in Moscow brings together different classic and modern ballet ensembles. One of the characteristic features of the festival is a symphonic accompaniment. All the performances will be at the Natalia Satz Moscow State Academic Music Theater. The festival will take the public on a journey through the classics that have inspired audiences around the world for years including such ballet masterpieces as the golden triad by Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, *Sleeping Beauty*; *Giselle* by Adolphe Adam, *Don Quixote*, one-act ballets by Stravinsky, Ravel, Chopin and modern and classical premières.

Natalia Satz Moscow State Academic Theater, 19:00

Wednesday, 15th

American Women's Organization presents: Morning Coffee

Hard Rock Café, 10:00

Regina (pop)

This year's Eurovision contestant from Bosnia & Herzegovina comes to Moscow again. Regina was formed in Sarajevo in 1990 when three friends – Aco, Bojan and Denis started their own band in a garage. Songs from this first album were written and composed at the start of the 1990's by songwriter and musician, Aleksandar Cabric, who was highly inspired by U2. Songs such as "Spavaj," "Ne pitaj me" and "Kao nekada ona" instantly became smash hits that are still very popular in the ex-Yugoslav republics.

Ikra, 21:00

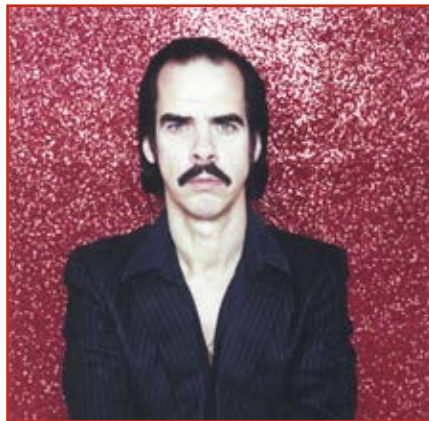


Thursday, 16th

Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds

Nick Cave is best known for his work in the rock band Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, established in 1984, who have become critically acclaimed for their fascination with American roots music. Before that, he had fronted the group The Birthday Party in the early 1980s, a band renowned for its highly dark, challenging lyrics and violent sound influenced by free jazz, blues, and post-punk. In 2006, he formed the garage rock band Grinderman that released its debut the following year. Cave's music is generally characterized by intensity and a wide variety of influences.

B 1 Maximum, 21:00



Chekhov International Theater Festival presents: Icaro (play)

This is about a clown who always dreamed of flying like a mythological Ikaros. The play is written and performed by Daniele Finzi Pasca, a Swiss play-writer, theater director and clown. Performed in English.

Pushkin Theater, 19:00, also 17th and 18th



Saturday, 25th

The Chekhov International Theater Festival presents: Lipsynch (musical in three parts)

Lipsynch is an exploration of human expression through voice, word and language. It touches on post-synchro-

nization, voice synthesizers, operatic song, babies crying, voice detection and many other vocal phenomena. Robert Lepage staged Lipsynch as a saga about time and God-forsaken mankind. Moreover, it's about the people who are desperately clinging to what is utterly transient: the voice, the sound, the memory.

Petr Fomenko Workshop Theater, 13:00, also 25th, 26th, 28th, 29th, 30th

Kazantip Pre-Party (club party)

Kazantip – is a Russian analogue to European open airs like Mayday and Creamfields. It is also one of the biggest, longest, craziest and most amazing techno, trance and house music events in the world. Ikra club organizes a special preparty, dedicated to the opening of Kazantip, which traditionally is held on the Black Sea in Ukraine.

Ikra, 00:00

Tuesday, 28th

The Chekhov International Theater Festival presents: Dorian Gray (musical)

Matthew Bourne takes us into the dark territory, but the spectacle is never less than theatrical. "I suspect Bourne's huge audience will follow him to the hell and back," supposes an Observer journalist.

Mussovet Theater, 14:00 and 19:00, also 29th-31st

Friday, 31st

Susanne Vega

An American songwriter and singer known for her highly literate lyrics and eclectic folk-inspired music. Two of Vega's songs (both from her second album – *Solitude Standing*, 1987) reached the top 10 of various chart listings, internationally: "Luka" and "Tom's Diner". The latter has been covered by many artists.

B1 Maximum, 19:00



July Holidays

text by Elena Rubinova

In mid-summer, there are fewer official state holidays. The red dates on the calendar give way to numerous professional, historical and religious dates marking the time of harvest.

Friday, July 3

Day of GAI (Russian Traffic Police)

The Russian Traffic Police was founded back in 1936. Since then, the organization has changed official names several times, but its social role has steadily increased as the country stopped looking at cars as luxury items in post-Soviet times. Those who live in Russia long enough are fully aware that GAI (also known as GIBDD) is also number one in the list of the most corrupt government organizations. Recently, the Russian daily newspaper *Moskovsky Komsomolets* reported that an average traffic police officer receives up to 20,000 rubles per day in bribes. Just a few years ago drivers paid cash fines for not-too-serious offenses on the spot and got a receipt. In an effort to combat corruption, the authorities forbade this, and GAI now give out tickets, so the driver pays the fine through the state-run Sberbank. Unless, that is, a bribe is paid. Several years ago the first all-women unit of traffic police was set up because sociological research showed that women were less inclined to accept bribes. Maybe on the day of their professional holiday, traffic policeman will only check your documents and wish you a pleasant journey.



Sunday, July 12

Day of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul (Petrov Den), Day of Fishermen.

The Feast of Saints Peter and Paul is one of the oldest festivals in the Orthodox calendar, observed at least since the year 258. The Church has celebrated this day since Kievan Rus adopted Christianity in the 10th century. The two Disciples of Christ led separate lives, yet they are commemorated on the same day when they were allegedly executed in Rome. A festive liturgy is conducted at all working churches across the country on this occasion. Believers observe a fast over several weeks (the so called Petrovsky lent) before Peter and Paul Saints Day. Apostle Peter is considered the heavenly patron of fishermen and traditionally the date was marked as the Day of Fishermen.

Sunday, July 26

Navy Day and Day of Neptune

Navy Day was one of the first Soviet professional holidays, established back in 1939. Russia announced last year that its navy would be expanded, and would build up its presence in different regions of the world's oceans. The collapse of the Soviet Union led to a severe decline in Russian naval forces, but the recent rearmament program which will last until 2015 has put the development of the navy on an equal footing with the country's strategic nuclear forces. The Russian Navy currently comprises the Northern Fleet, the Pacific Fleet, the Black Sea Fleet, the Baltic Fleet, the Caspian Flotilla, Naval Aviation, marines and coastal artillery. Major celebrations were held by all the fleets last year. The celebrations in Moscow are usually held in Kolomenskoye, Izmailovo and Sokolniki parks. A water and sport show is traditionally staged in the Russian capital on the Grebnoy Canal in the Krylatskoye district. Various performances by actors and athletes, the Rimsky-Korsakov Naval Orchestra, demonstration flights by commandoes are on the agenda of the festivities.



Unofficially it coincides with the Day of Neptune, God of the Sea, who was also believed to test sailors who go into the sea for the first time by giving them a hard time. On that day, people enjoy all kinds of jokes and played around in rivers and ponds. So if you see someone swimming in his clothes it means that friends shoved him into the water to meet Neptune.



**Moscow Kremlin, Cross Chamber
of the Patriarchal Palace**
June 19 – September 20
Open: 10:00–17:00
Except Thursday
www.kreml.ru

Augsburg in the Kremlin

The Kremlin Museums continue a tradition started some time ago – to present the treasures belonging to different nations and epochs. Having been able to view a fantastic exhibition of precious items from India this spring, a collection from the German Maximilian Museum is already being prepared. Augsburg is one of the oldest towns in Germany, and thanks to its 17th century gold- and silversmiths, it was often labeled as the European jewellery capital. Works from gold- and silversmiths from the 16th – 17th centuries make up the highlights of this exhibition. At about this time, Augsburg set architectural trends in Eastern Europe, with its own Barocco style. Significant sculptural works include a “Fountain Lad” by Adriaen de Vries (ca. 1600) and other original sculptures from Augsburg’s monumental fountains that may be a revelation for Moscow audiences. Watches and porcelain sets, medals and bas-reliefs from as early as the Renaissance – all will be on display in the Kremlin through September.

Go West

To explain the name given to this exhibition we should go back to Soviet times, when you couldn’t go abroad simply by booking a ticket. It was considered incredible good fortune to win a ticket to a country as far away as Bulgaria. Even those who managed to get to neighbouring and friendly East European countries would recount for hours their impressions of a different world. The luckiest were diplomats and reporters who were sent on missions to completely inaccessible western countries, such as the United Kingdom, France or the United States. Any exhibition made by a Soviet photographer who had been working in such countries caused huge interest in the media. There were fads as people copied haircuts and skirts, auto-enthusiasts discussed foreign racing cars for hours; common life in the streets in countries across the iron curtain held great fascination. This exhibition features works by eminent Soviet photographers such as Vladimir Lagranzh, Valery Gend-Rote, Vassily Egorov. Their photos were not made for propaganda reasons, but for themselves, and for us, to understand what it was like looking at a different world.



Lumiere Brothers’ Gallery
Central House of Artists
July 1 – August 24
12:00–19:00
Open daily except Mondays
Krymsky Val, 10



World Press Photo 2009
Red October Factory
Bersenevskaya Naberezhnaya, 6, Building 3,
Floor 4
June 27–July 27
11:00 – 20:00
Open daily except Monday

World Press Photo

The Netherlands-based World Press Photo Competition has existed since 1955, and is a unique space for independent photography, informational and cultural exchange. Nowadays this is the most prestigious contest in journalism photography. Every February, the jury select photographs that best illustrate the previous year’s most remarkable events. The winners’ exhibition takes place in eighty countries. In Russia, the Red October Factory hosts the display this year. There is no fixed theme for the contest; that is determined by life itself. Whereas previous years’ winners presented works made in different hot spots of the world, this year’s winner in the Every-day Life photography section, Antony Suau, gives his vision of the financial crisis through his black-and-white image of an American sheriff’s deputy who moves with his gun drawn through a Cleveland home checking that the family has left their house due to a mortgage foreclosure. Among winners are Russian photographers, too. Yury Kozyrev won a prize in the Portrait nomination, Alexander Taran – in Sports Events and Alexey Bushov won a prize for his nature shots from Namibia.

Hasta Siempre!

Che Guevara's name is well-known the world over, his iconic photograph taken by Alberto Korda is considered to be one of the most recognizable images of the 20th century. During his short life he gained an enigmatic aura which has not yet faded and has touched millions of people who did not know him in person. The current exhibition at the Dom Naschokina Gallery is the first dedicated to Che Guevara in Russia. It comprises photographs he and his friends took. Few people know that Che was a photographer, wrote diaries, and made documentary films. In a separate room there is a special space with the very epitome of 'cult' photography: the picture made by Korda in 1960 – plus posters, films, music, and sketches of Havana of that epoch.

Dom Naschokina Gallery

12:00 – 19:00

Open daily except Monday

Vorotnikovskiy Pereulok, 12



Classical Ballet

Russian ballet has been one of the symbols of Russia for a couple of centuries now. Two Moscowite choreographers: Natalya Kasatkina and Vladimir Vasilyov, artistic directors of the Classical Ballet Theater dedicated their lives to maintaining the famous classical traditions. You will see nothing extravagant in their productions. Classical technique frees dancers to render their emotions. The Classical Ballet Theater has existed since 1977 but it has no stage of its own. Despite this, it manages not only to create a new production a year, but to hold an annual summer festival in the Novaya Opera Theater. The Novaya Opera orchestra provides accompaniment. This year the festival debuts with a gala dedicated to choreographer Natalya Kasatkina and proceeds with a Tchaikovsky' triad of *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, and *Sleeping Beauty*; *Giselle*, *Spartacus* and of course the recently successfully premiered *Coppelia* ballet.

Until July 19

For schedule and tickets see

www.classicalballet.ru

Elza's Ocean Flood

The band, Okean Elzy, was formed in Lviv (Ukraine) in 1994. Their style at that moment could be described as urban rock. They first started becoming well known outside of Lviv in 1996, when they first participated in national rock festivals. The audience liked their debut album, *There Where We Are Not*, released in 1998, which was dedicated to Lviv – their home town which they had spent so much time away from. The success was partially due to an unusual combination of fine guitar music and authentic and colorful Ukrainian melodies. Their international career began in 2000. First they made an impression on a Russian audience at the Maxidrom rock festival. And though the texts of their songs were in Ukrainian, the tenderness, emotions and melodic tristesse did not leave music fans indifferent. Concerts in London were a new important stage in their career. Since then the band have performed with symphonic orchestras, dedicated songs and albums to divas such as "The Model" which was inspired by Coco Chanel according to the front man Vyacheslav Vokarchuk and have been refining their style to become one of the most stylish bands of not only Ukraine but Russia where they are sincerely loved.



B1 Maximum

July 24

21:00



Cirque Nouveau

The Chekhov Theatre Festival stands out as being one of the largest and most prestigious theatrical biennales and forums in the world, and literally has no equals in the quantity of presented performances. It started in 1992 and since then has been held once every two years, witnessing the liberalizing changes that happened in post-Soviet theater. More than twenty productions by German choreographer Pina Bausch with her Wuppertal Dance Theater, Canadian theatrical wizard Robert Lepage with his Ex Machina Theater, the British choreographer Matthew Bourne, Bartabas with his Zingaro Equestrian theater from France... France, by the way, is the "president" of this year's festival and its world-famous Zingaro theater opened the festival in May. In total, over twenty productions from all over the world will be presented, all in different genres such as opera, music hall, film, dance, puppetry and acrobatics, and their combinations.

For schedule and tickets see

www.chekhovfest.ru

The Past is Still Ahead

text and photos by
Dr. Olga Zinovieva

On May 21, the Library for Foreign Literature in Moscow presented an outstanding cross-cultural event. A searing play about Marina Tsvetaeva, one of Russia's most intense and uncompromising poets, who was very Russian and international herself was performed. Tsvetaeva spent much time abroad and spoke several languages. *The Past Is Still Ahead* premiered at the legendary Mayakovsky Academic Art Theater in April 2007 and recently ran with great success in New York, as it seemed to capture the sacred pattern of the poet's life. It will also be shown in London and Oxford this summer.

The Past is Still Ahead is a play written and staged by Sophia Romma, an American playwright and poet, based on a monologue by Oded Be'eri, a prolific Israeli author with Elena Romanova, one of the most talented actresses of the Mayakovsky Academic Arts Theater, staring as Tsvetaeva and supported by a group of Russian and American actors.

This haunting performance captures the emotional and creative life of Marina Tsvetaeva, who was also victimized by Stalin. Tsvetaeva's tragic life reflects the profound and appalling suffering endured by the Russian people during the first half of the 20th century.

The Past Is Still Ahead portrays the poets' comprehensive vision of life, perceptions of people and romance with the most significant poets of her time, which gave inspiration to her poetry and drama to her family. The play's major motifs revolve around the relationship that Marina Tsvetaeva established with poets Sophia Parnok, Boris Pasternak and Osip Mandelstam. We witness her correspondence with Rainer Maria Rilke in the summer of 1925; celestial Rilke, with his extraordinary eloquence and personal meditation on the creative process – offering

Marina a combination of power and illuminated poetic vivacity. Marina never actually met her cherished Rilke, but nevertheless, he was her escape from the political turmoil and social devastation wrought by the Russian Revolution and later during her long exile. The play shows the imaginary, idealistic world of Marina Tsvetaeva with Rilke by her hand, in contrast to harsh and injured reality.

Marina was born into the family of Professor Ivan Tsvetaev, a founder of the Moscow Fine Arts Museum. Marina's mother was a pianist, who died early of tuberculosis, a disease, which killed many at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Marina and her sister Anastasia spent much time with their sick mother in Switzerland and Germany, receiving their education at home. Their mother's early death and a return to regular school studies in Moscow affected both girls considerably, leaving them with the invariable desire to find mother-daughter relations in their adult life.

Marina started writing her poetry and published her first books very early. Her married life and a mother's responsibilities were never easy and encouraged her to flee into her poetic world. After the dramas of WW I, the 1917 revolution, the Civil War, the death of their baby Irina and starvation, she and her husband Sergei Efron fled Russia for Paris. The family had to take a complicated decision to go back to Russia in 1939 when her husband fell under a dark cloud of suspicion in France, however they were then labeled as enemies of the Soviet State in Russia. Her husband and daughter Ariadna were arrested, and she had to go to the small town of Yelabuga on the Volga River with her adolescent son with no means to support them both. In film-noire style, we witness horrific scenes of the sinister NKVD Officer mercilessly interrogating Marina Tsvetaeva there. In despair, Marina hangs herself; giving life to her poetry for eternity.

Many readers in both the East and the West have been enthralled by



Elena Romanova and Alexander Rapaport in the play, The Past is Still Ahead

Marina's poetry; marveling at her strength, moved to tears by the sheer depth of her emotions and her steadfast obstinacy to fall in love with the swirling word as well as with some of the most gifted poets of the 20th century.

Elena Romanova, plays the role of Marina Tsvetaeva marvelously; she has starred in more than twenty leading roles in the theater and cinema. She has performed in Geneva with François Rochaix (general director of the Carouge Theater) in *Atelier*, and played the lead in a great many films in America, Russia, Sweden and Greece.

An accomplished screen and theater actor, (in Moscow as well as in New York), Alexander Rapaport plays the role of the NKVD officer, who materializes as a dark presence throughout the play representing the horrors and pressures to which Tsvetaeva had been subjected in the last years of her life.

Tosh Marks, a consummate and stylish actor strikingly introduces us to a variety of personalities in the drama, from Rainer Maria Rilke to Sergey Efron and even Osip Mandelstam – all of them vital keys to Marina's life and work. World-renowned concert pianist, Inna Leytush plays Marina Tsvetaeva's mother. Opera vocalist, Soprano Helen Fosturis, plays the role of Marina's muse, performing originally composed music to Tsvetaeva's poems.

There are a lot of beautiful musical pieces in this play by famous Russian composers – Tchaikovsky, Rakhmaninov, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Shostakovich.

One can only hope that dedicated theatergoers will have more chances to see this extraordinary play in Moscow, New York or London. However, the most logic venue for such an event should be the theater in Yelabuga, when the play is translated into Russian. **P**

How to Get a Residence Permit II

Stephen Lapeyrouse



text by John Harrison and Stephen Lapeyrouse

In the first installment of this series on getting a residence permit (see *Passport*, April 2009) I described how the application process is initiated and how to go about applying in the first stage of getting a temporary residence permit (*PBT* – *Razresheniye na vremennoe zhitelstvo*).

Intrepid American citizen Stephen Lapeyrouse, who as it happens is not married to a Russian and therefore had to apply under the quota system as described in the April article, went through the process described in that article and lived to tell the tale:

“The advice in the April issue to present letters of recommendations from people who appreciate your work here in Russia, was useful in my case. I presented five letters when I submitted my application form for a spot on that month’s quota and I am sure that they made a difference. I admit I was a little surprised to see my name on the list of people in the quota for that month, but seeing my name there was in a sense false security, because really it is only the beginning; that’s when things start.

“You have two months: to gather all the necessary documents, complete the application form, and submit your application for a temporary residence permit. People told me the process was really complicated, with ‘20 documents to fill in and long queues’. In fact there are only a few documents (about six), and virtually no queues or long waits. (Though each applicant must go to special clinics – not common polyclinics – in their area of Moscow, so perhaps this might vary.) There were three medical tests: for HIV/AIDS, for tuberculosis and drug use at three different clinics. Results were available in a day or two (the tests were done in minutes), although I waited a week for the blood test. Before you get each test done you have to pay a few hundred rubles or so at a Sber-



bank. But as you know, there are many of these banks across Moscow. The medical tests can all be completed in about two weeks max, unless there are some unusual circumstances.

"The really time-consuming documents are, first, getting hold of a document confirming that you do not have a criminal record. Americans have to get this letter from some government office in their place of 'permanent US residence'; in my case the court office in the county where I lived. That document has to be notarized, then sent to the secretary of state of the state where you live, for the second difficult document, the apostille. (This is a necessary, internationally-valid document which certifies the notarization of the other document. You must have them both. Google "apostille"). This must be done in your place of origin, and, for Americans at least, can not be done at the embassy.) This can take a few weeks, and I recommend starting the process immediately, as it is impossible to get an extension on the two-month period within which you can submit documents for the permit. I was actually first told that for Americans the documents might have to be done by the FBI which is complicated and can take 6 months! I didn't think this was necessary as there was no such stipulation in the instructions or the forms I had to fill out. In fact, the migration officer who received my completed forms and documents didn't want to accept them at first for this reason, but he made a phone call to some top office in Moscow and was told to his surprise – and my relief! – that documents from the local state government were accepted.

"Your passport needs to be translated and notarized, and you need copies of your registration and current immigration card [the white slip of paper you fill in when you enter the country]. As a tip, I would say that you should make sure that your name is spelt the same way on all your documents (in Russian) as in your notarized passport translation.

"I am now waiting for news on whether or not I will get my temporary residence permit. I am confident that everything will be okay. I was told it should come in about 4 months, and there seemed no question as to whether it would come! In general, if you follow the rules and don't have to get things done in a hurry, everything is cheap, and possible. The stipulation that you wrote about in the April issue, that you have to prove your income or show you have hundreds of thousands of rubles in the bank, appears to have been dropped. In my experience, the process is not onerous, and is doable. I had expected terrible inconvenience, long lines, dirt and worry; I was pleasantly surprised.

| DEPARTURES | | | | |
|------------|----------------|--------|------|-----------|
| TIME | DESTINATION | FLIGHT | GATE | REMARKS |
| 09:20 | NEW YORK | AA343 | A12 | BOARDING |
| 09:30 | LOS ANGELES | UA882 | A34 | |
| 11:40 | LAS VEGAS | RF453 | B45 | DELAY |
| 12:15 | MIAMI | SA125 | C90 | |
| 13:10 | PARIS | KL722 | C23 | |
| 13:55 | ROMA | AI512 | A78 | CANCELLED |
| 14:20 | LONDON | BA211 | B89 | |
| 14:50 | HONOLULU | LH231 | B37 | |
| 15:15 | SYDNEY | QA313 | C52 | NEW TIME |
| 15:35 | TOKIO | JA251 | C38 | |
| 16:10 | BANGKOK | TC125 | C35 | |
| 17:00 | RIO DE JANEIRO | FP893 | B72 | |

"I would add a couple of things: first that, unless you have at least basic Russian, the process can be a bit intimidating, and I would suggest having a friend at least help you at the first clinic to get started. (And for sure let a Russian fill in the application form for you!) Also, take all your personal documents with you to all of the clinics and other places, as you never can be sure what they might ask for!"

Visas have become an expensive headache in recent years. The *PBT* is in a way a different kind of headache, but one which leads to a relatively stress-free coming and going, living and working in Russia – when you get the Permanent Residence Permit (which is the third part of the permit process). **P**

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Viktor Ufimtsev: The Archive

text by

Olga Slobodkina-von Brømssen



A Cubic Portrait of Seated Girl, 1921. Pencil, watercolors (35.5x21). From the collection of Y.M. Noskov, Moscow

The Galeev Gallery is currently displaying the archive of artist Viktor Ufimtsev (1899-1964) – diaries, photos, drawings, collages and paintings, which have become accessible only recently. Ufimtsev is a complicated figure in the history of art and cannot be simply labeled a Soviet artist. His archive is further evidence of that. His diaries are a rare documentary guide into the artist's inner world.

Ufimtsev's youth coincided with the 1917 Revolution and futurism, one of the main directions in art of those times, of which he was an ardent adherent. Futurism was more than a conception for him – it was a position, a gesture, a symbol, an element of the renewal. Ufimtsev lived in the town of Omsk where he was noticed and encouraged by the leader of futurism – famous artist David Burliuk. Viktor Ufimtsev's first exhibitions were on fences. He painted on fences and organized exhibitions of that kind of painting.

Ufimtsev's archive is priceless since it is a reflection of the epoch. It consists of two parts: his diaries (his spontaneous thoughts, feelings and emotions) and the artist's reminiscences, which he prepared for a book at the end of the 1950s. The book, published posthumously,

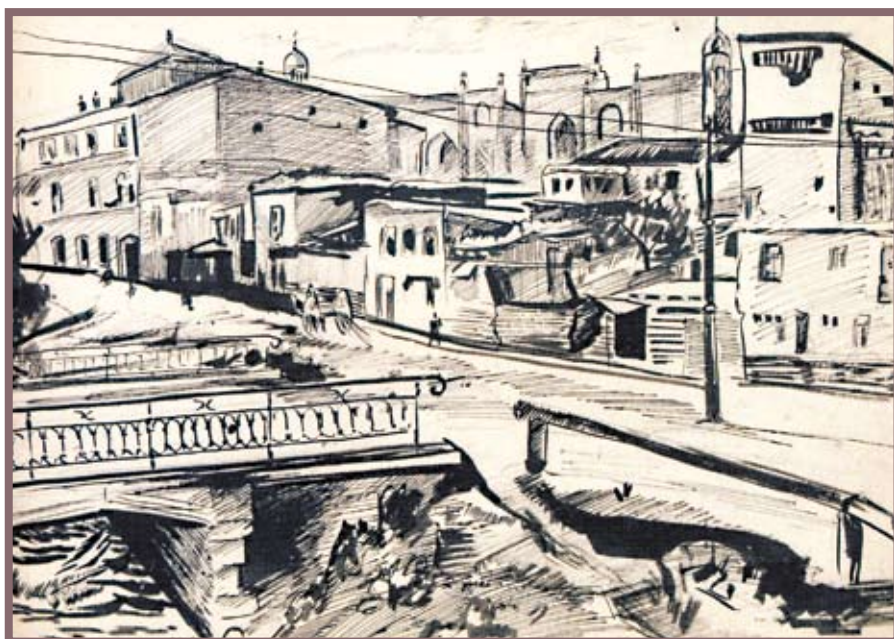
is called "Talking About Myself" while the diaries have been closed for us until now. They are all the more precious because no censorship or editing has ever been done to the original texts.

Ufimtsev was true to an old and good tradition – to describe every day and hour. Thanks to his meticulousness we can restore the chronology in detail and imagine those events. Ufimtsev was an eager traveler and a gifted literary person. He wrote about his adventures with rapture.

In 1921 he participated in a trip along the rivers of Siberia. He visited the art museum in Barnaul and was astounded and inspired by the creativity of Olga Rozanova, Kazimir Malevich, Natalia Goncharova, Alexander Osmyorkin and Ilya Mashkov. After this trip, he organized three exhibitions within six months, which caused great shock waves in this Siberian city.

The next year he decided to move to somewhere where there would be no

A Street in Tashkent, 1930s. Paper, Indian ink, brush, feather (25x36). From a private collection



stagnation, but only knots of nerves. He choice fell on Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan has always been a popular place for artists wishing to sacrifice philistine welfare for the change and adventure of an exotic land. Ufimtsev and his friend Mamonov appeared in the East as counter Kulturträgers looking not for their daily bread, but dying to quench the lust of life. Reading his diaries one inevitably has associations with the followers of futurism – the beatniks, hippies, hitchhikers and punks, whose anarchic rhetoric opposes bourgeois values.

If one compares the texts of Ufimtsev's reminiscences with his diaries one is inclined to think that they are written by two different persons. His reminiscences are all about being in a traveler's club with an Asian slant – *uriyk* (dry



*"Pieces of Life" series. Album
13. Nov 1924-Feb 1925*

apricot), *aryk* (a well), *verblyud* (a camel), *ishak* (a donkey)... while his dairies disclose the difficulties of adapting to local conditions and give away the author's sincere nostalgia for Omsk. Another example is his visit to an exhibition of Alexander Volkov in Tashkent. His dairies show his active inacceptance of Volkov's style while the memoirs sing praises to Volkov, the innovator.

By the end of the 1950s Ufimtsev, a successful representative of official art fighting against so-called "formalism" and blessed by the powers to be, began

to imitate his own style of the 1920s. We find collages in his archive done in the style of constructivist photo editing. He consciously did not put a date on them, thus trying to mislead future researchers. The only hint of the time are fragments of newspapers revealing the year of 1958. In this art of slogans, Vladimir Mayakovsky was the clear genius, but Ufimtsev also tried his hand at it.



*From "The Photo Edit".
The Falling Minaret, 1958*

By the 1950s, Ufimtsev acquired two models of expression: his official exhibitions, whose content was Soviet patriotic pathos, and his lyrical diaries as an experimenter. For example, his gouaches were inspired by his impressions of trips to India, Tunisia and Afghanistan. They are so simple and laconic that they bring associations with his series of the 1920s-1930s called "Turksib", which is now part of two Uzbek museums – the Nukus and the Tashkent.

Another interesting part of his archive is his famous series "Pieces of Life". Small water color sketches which date back to 1923, to the times of his first Turkestan expedition. The artist drew the events of his life and wrote short explanations right on the pictures. The text in them plays a special role becoming part of art. There are at least 13 albums in the series called "Pieces of Life", each of which has several dozen pictures.

Before his trip to Turkestan, Ufimtsev had managed to go to Moscow where he became well acquainted with modern art, poetry and theater. That experience became a driving force for the young artist. We learn from his diary that Ufimtsev was familiar with the originals of Kandinsky, Rozanova and Malevich. The Revolution brought a variety of choices into art. Although Ufimtsev

had mastered all the 'isms' by that time – starting with impressionism and ending up with the shift of form and the ironic paradox of David Burliuk – his art was domineered by the folk style of *lubok*. Unfortunately, the "Pieces of Life" series has never been displayed. It was the artist's inner monologue, his family chronicle. Ufimtsev was afraid to show the series to anyone, because it revealed his naked lyricism bordering on lack of patriotism.

The 1940s-1950s became his inner drama, which resulted in the limitation of his practice both as a painter and a drawer and this all told on his health. He often involved assistants to paint huge patriotic canvases. In the chronicles of his life he mentions his epic canvases saying that he "destroyed them later". In the 1920s he was part of the artistic process of his generation however by the 1940s and 1950s he could only repeat whatever had already been invented in art in the 1920s.

One cannot make out his attitude to the then-tragic pages of Soviet history. He might have taken such a strategy for the sake of self-security or maybe just because he was sick and tired of ideology in general. He was racked between the duty of a people's Socialist artist and his awareness of the impossibility of achieving freedom of expression. He died in 1964, and with him died the era of artists-experimenters in the East.

Ufimtsev used to experiment in photography too. He photographed his trips to Tunisia, Afghanistan and India as well as members of his family and colleagues in art. The historic value of his photos is indeed high.

Tribute must be paid to Ildar Galeev, owner of the gallery hosting this exhibition. Ufimtsev's archive is displayed with love, care and professionalism. During the opening, lucky visitors enjoyed not only the oriental fragrance of Ufimtsev's art, but also Uzbek plov (meat and rice). An art album, published for the opening by Ildar Galeev, carefully introduces Ufimtsev's archive to the reader revealing not only a unique insight into the artist's world, but into that era of Soviet life and art. The display and the album "Ufimtsev: Archive" marks the 110th anniversary of the artist's birth and will be presented in the Omsk Art Museum in October 2009. **P**

“Seasons of Russian Painting”:

Vladimir Dubossarsky and Alexander Vinogradov created their “Seasons of Russian Painting” series especially for display at the Tretyakov Gallery’s Krymsky Val museum. The exhibition “Seasons of Russian Painting” is running until September. Both the artists



are among those few modern painters who combine innovative approaches to the tradition of large-sized themed pictures with a carefully arranged composition.

A Tribute to the Past and Present of Russian Art

Above, below, top right. Sections of the four paintings: Summer, Spring, Autumn, Winter. All of which are painted in acrylics on canvas, 145x475 cm



text by Anna Dyakonitsyna
photos by Valentin Sklyarov

The entire series is a fascinating collage based on the game of “playing the classics” spiced up with irony but also suffused with earnest enthusiasm. The immensity of the topic allows the artists to boldly integrate wildly diversified themes in an attempt to visualize the continuity of historical periods and generations, the dialogue of epochs and individualities, the peaceful coexistence, rather than confrontation, of the Realist tradition and avant-garde art. Religion-themed paintings were the only exception that Dubossarsky and Vinogradov deliberately left out of the project; there is no direct reference to Alexander Ivanov’s art.

In line with their creative credo, the famed duo of modern Russian artists visualized in this composition the quin-

tescence of the Russian school of painting, tackling the most illustrious, “iconic” pieces from the Tretyakov Gallery’s collection, with the addition of a couple of works from the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg. Embracing the conflicts and dramas of art history, struggles between proponents of different artistic trends, and clashes of individuals which reconciles everything and everyone by paradoxical combinations of images known by heart from textbooks.

In keeping with the classic tradition, the series consists of four equal pictures, each of which corresponds to one of the four seasons. Each composition represents an authorial collage designed on a computer, and then printed on a canvas and overpainted with acrylics. The grouping of the characters is carefully

thought out. Each of the four pieces elaborates its particular theme. “Spring” is the realm of girls’ and women’s images created by Arkady Plastov, Alexander Deineka, Boris Kustodiev, Karl Briullov, and Tatyana Yablonskaya. “Winter” is pivoted around the themes of valour and epic heroes: Alexander Nevsky stands over Maxim Gorky’s shoulder (both evoking images from Pavel Korin’s painting); the knights from Viktor Vasnetsov’s picture and the Swan Princess by Mikhail Vrubel are featured in different sections of the painting; a Bolshevik walks downstage (a visual quotation from Kustodiev’s piece); Voroshilov and Stalin bring up the rear in the picture’s right section (a mirror image of the fragment of Alexander Gerasimov’s painting), and the central part features Viktor Popkov’s self-portrait.

"Summer" is pictured as a time of outdoor relaxation and promenades on foot or on horseback, but also as a season linked to the agricultural calendar. The warm months are the traditional period of weddings and feasts. But the seemingly simplest stories look like phantasmagoria when treated by Dubossarsky and Vinogradov.



Thus Briullov's "The Rider" seems to move next to Petrov-Vodkin's "The Red Horse" and Nesterov's philosophers (a mirror composition from the artist's painting)... Plastov's "Haymaking" is combined in the foreground with Malevich's "Peasant Woman". The following "Autumn" features a table set for a feast, from Niko Pirosmashvili's painting; seated around

Every stage of the process of creation was shot on video, and now is being demonstrated alongside the work. Their work on the "Seasons of Russian Painting" opened up new horizons for the artists themselves. It is by no accident that the latest project by Dubossarsky and Vinogradov, presented at the Venice Biennale, tackled the

tyakov Gallery and contemporary artists will be continued in autumn 2009 in the framework of special projects to be shown in Hall no. 38 at Krymsky Val with a new project of Francisco Infante with his 80 artworks on the theme of changeability and inconsistency of the natural world changing the very space of existence.



"Seasons of Russian Painting", Alexander Vinogradov & Vladimir Dubossarsky, 2007

it are Pushkin, Peter the First, Marshal Zhukov, a girl with peaches, Dostoevsky, and the "All-Union Elder" Mikhail Kalinin; in the foreground, Lenin, his head bent low over the table, works on his notes (with visual quotes from the works of Orest Kiprensky, Nikolai Ghe, Pavel Korin, Valentin Serov, Vasily Perov, Vasily Yefanov, and Isaac Brodsky). The well-known images presented outside their familiar context become embedded into new associative and compositional linkages. Interestingly, the initial idea for the project arose not only from Dubossarsky and Vinogradov, but from the Tretyakov Gallery's team as well. Working on the project, the artists were afforded a unique opportunity to have a close look at the paintings in possession of one of Russia's major museums, both those on permanent display and works from the reserve collections.

same idea. The Tretyakov Gallery is grateful to Vladimir Dubossarsky and Alexander Vinogradov for their support of this exhibit and for donating all four compositions to the gallery. Cooperation between the Tre-

Editor's note: This article was prepared with the kind cooperation of the Tretyakov Gallery Magazine, www.tg-m.ru, which also made the images printed here available. P



CINE FANTOM

text by Vladimir Kozlov
photos by CINE FANTOM

Aleinikov, one of CINE FANTOM's founders and, in the past, a respected underground filmmaker, primarily known for

"This is not just a film discussion club, but a community of people who make films themselves," adds Andrei Selivestrov, another of CINE FANTOM's founders and currently its programming director. "People who founded the club, like Boris Yukhananov, Gleb Aleinikov, Alexander Dulerain or myself, are actively taking part in the filmmaking process. This is not a club of film buffs from some-

Vladislav Mamyshev-Monroe and Gleb Aleinikov (left to right) during a discussion of the "Volga Volga" film by Andrei Seliverstov and Pavel Labazov at Cinefantom club



Gleb Aleinikov and Boris Yukhananov at the Cinefantom club presentation in Rotterdam



In the 14 years that CINE FANTOM has been around, it has become a respected film screening and discussion club, but its activities are more diverse, encompassing film project pitching sessions and production of its own films.

CINE FANTOM came into being back in the mid-1990s, when the domestic film industry was in poor shape, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and shock-therapy type economic reforms earlier in the decade. However, Russian cinema still existed, although often outside of mainstream television or cinemas.

"The original idea behind the club was that the filmmaking process in Russia is much more diverse than what can be seen on TV or in the cinemas," says Gleb

films made in a creative tandem with his late brother Igor, like 1992's *Traktoristy-2*.

"There were films that were shown only at film festivals, for instance, and there were films that were hardly seen by anyone at all," Aleinikov says, adding that the club's aim was to expose such films to audiences that would be interested in them.

"We are interested in everything that is related to Russian cinema, from blockbusters to films made by little known filmmakers, like, say, Oleg Mavromati." Aleinikov then went on to explain the club's mission. "Our task is not only to show films but also to give the audience and the author an opportunity to communicate with each other. And I believe that we managed to achieve this."

where in the sticks, but a community of people who are involved in making films, who have a certain understanding of cinema and are willing to promote it."

Although there are some other clubs focused on film screenings and discussions in Moscow and other Russian cities, CINE FANTOM is probably the oldest and best known institution of this kind. "True, there are other places in Moscow where movies are screened and discussed, like Praktika or Art-Kino," says Selivestrov. "But we are the oldest club of this kind and I think that we established the tradition of watching and discussing movies."

Founded in 1995 by people mostly associated with the "parallel cinema" underground movement of the late

1980s, the club originally had its sessions at the cinema museum, which has since closed down. The title of a Samizdat film magazine edited by Igor Aleinikov back in the mid-1980s was used as the club's name.

In 2004, CINE FANTOM moved to the Fitil cinema near Park Kultury metro station where films are screened every Wednesday at 8pm. At the same time, the club acquired a newspaper and a more informative web site. The selection of movies for screening has also evolved, but so has the country's entire film industry.

"With moving to Fitil, the club certainly improved," Aleinikov says. "When we were at the cinema museum, we didn't have our own publication, just leaflets, and our website was not as comprehensive as it is now. As for the content of our screening, we

At the same time, the club has taken part in several foreign festivals, presenting programs of Russian underground cinema.

The list of directors whose movies were screened at CINE FANTOM is quite diverse, from emerging directors like Ilya Khrzhanovsky and Alexei German Jr. to underground cinema producer Yevgeny Yufit, from internationally recognized art cinema director Alexander Sokurov to Troma Films' founder Lloyd Kaufman.

The founders of CINE FANTOM stress that they are not focused entirely on underground or non-commercial cinema and rather aim to encompass various areas of contemporary Russian and international film. For instance, Russia's most expensive movie to date, *Obitayemy Ostrov* (The Inhabited Island) by Fyodor Bondarchuk, was screened at CINE FANTOM, presented by its producer Alexander Rodnyansky.

In recent years, CINE FANTOM's activities have diversified quite substantially. The club is participating in the Moscow International Film Festival with the program *Alternativa* (Alternative), which features films that would normally have remained outside of the domestic film-making process. For instance, this year's *Alternativa* featured films made by St. Petersburg based rock band NOM, which have been popular with the band's fans but were never really introduced to larger audiences interested in cinema.

Another direction, in which CINE FANTOM has recently been active in, is the organization of pitching sessions that allow filmmakers to present projects they are working on or intend to, in a bid to find funding or other kind of support. "We held two pitching sessions within the Moscow International Film Festival and figured out that they were

Gleb Aleinikov
at a press-
conference in
Rotterdam



Boris Yuhananov and Alexander Dulgerayn during the "Esfir" film discussion at Cinefantom club

depend on what is going on in the film industry, and this is something we don't have any control of."

"The times change and so does what we are screening," adds Selivestrov. "Back in 1995, Russian cinema hardly existed at all, and what did exist, was marginal. These days, on the contrary, we have a huge amount of films, a lot of which is quite interesting."

And although the club's focus is primarily on domestic cinema, foreign films also make it to its screenings. "We pay a lot of interest to programs of foreign films, as well," says Aleinikov. "It is important to know the international context to be able to see in what way domestic cinema relates to it."

"Over the years, the club has gained a reputation in the industry, and it's not a problem for us to invite, for instance, producers like Rodnyansky or [Sergei] Selyanov and their films," Aleinikov says. "And they are also interested in their films being screened and discussed at CINE FANTOM because they get unbiased opinions this way."

"Our approach is totally universal," says Selivestrov. "We don't make a division between commercial and non-commercial cinema, but love both."

CINE FANTOM is strictly nonprofit. "From the very outset, we stated it clearly that the club is not meant to make money but to spend it," explains Selivestrov. "We have a board of founders which invests money into the development of the club."

interesting both on the commercial and creative side," says Selivestrov. "In a way, this is some kind of a show: people talking about films they would like to make, and that's interesting as well."

"This is something new in this country and we are glad that we were among the first to introduce this practice here," Selivestrov adds. "There are others who are doing that and we also plan to continue."

And, ultimately, CINE FANTOM is launching its own film production. Its first movie, *Mozg* (Brain), directed by Selivestrov, is to be released within the next few months, while the founders say they are planning to launch a few more movies next year. **P**

Interview with **Rosemary Hilhorst OBE**

Director, British Council Russia

Cultural Counsellor of the British Embassy.



 **BRITISH COUNCIL**
Russia

You have been appointed director of the British Council in Russia and also cultural counselor of the British Embassy. How did this come about? How did you become interested in Russia?

I arrived here in September 2008. Within the British Council, our posts are awarded on a competitive basis, and internally advertised. We tend to be in a country for between three and five years. At some

city. It means that we have to focus and we need to give Moscow itself more attention. Also, we need to pay more attention to developing our projects and developing those with partners; rather than managing buildings and spaces and that kind of thing. So in a way, it's been quite liberating. We're developing a new program now for the next three to five years, and it's very exciting.

So the work of the British Council includes taking Russians to the UK, not only bringing British arts people here?

We do both, but there are also Russian organizations working in the UK that have the remit to bring Russian culture to the UK. What we try to do is to make sure that there is mutual benefit, which means that you are talking about exchange. It's about sharing what we



point towards the end of that period we have to apply for the next posting. I have now worked for the British Council for about 24 years in different overseas placements and in the UK. I have always been interested in Russia, but a suitable opportunity has never quite come up. Last year, however, the right job came up; I applied and was appointed, which was fantastic. So I am aiming to be here for as close to five years as I can.

Are the problems with the authorities here now coming to an end?

I came in after the most difficult times in 2008, and wasn't here when the St. Petersburg office was closed, which was very difficult for us. There is a double answer to your question. There are still big tax cases going through the courts in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and we are taking these very seriously. Those arguments are still on-going, but many, many companies are familiar with this situation in Russia, and I think we have to see it through the court system. On the other hand, we have had huge restructuring. We are now down to 25 people in this small Moscow office, and that is down from over 180 people in 15 cities before 2008, so there is a difference! So now we have to be realistic about what we can achieve. In fact, there is immense freedom in being a small team in the capital

Does this mean that you have to delegate more responsibility to your partners?

The days of us just signing a check for something to happen are long gone. What we want to do now is work with a partner right from the beginning of an idea and ask ourselves: what do we want to do with this, what do we want to get out of it, who should we be working with, where should we work and what should we be doing? An example might be the Chekhov Theater; perhaps the key theater organization in Russia. We have worked with them in the past, and some of the links formed in the past have created the opportunity for UK theatrical companies to come out here. This July, for example, Matthew Bourne is coming out with his company doing Oscar Wilde's *Dorian Gray*, which should be great. We are talking with them about the future and we hope to be working on a project with them and the Royal Shakespeare Company over three or four years which will both go to support the Royal Shakespeare Company's Russia Season in the UK and also help us to be able to bring UK theater here. So the Chekhov Theater is an example of a crucial partner, where we get completely engaged and monitor progress together.

have. We see ourselves as being a bit of a broker between Russian and UK organizations sometimes. You put them together and then it happens. We can help put some different kinds of partners together who wouldn't normally connect up. We also do a lot with young people, for example there is the Chevening scheme which helps send bright young Russians to the UK to study. There is Education UK, where we are promoting study in the UK, and other projects like the Young Creative Entrepreneurs which identifies creative young people [Russians] in the creative industries and giving them an experience in the UK.

We know that the British Council library closed, but we also know that you recently donated your collection of books to an existing library within the library of Foreign Literature here at Nikolyam-skaya Ulitsa, 1. Would you like your own library back?

Actually, no. So many books are published globally these days, and you need enormous resources to keep them all up to date. A lot of books are available to people in different ways now, both through other libraries and also things like Amazon. We made sure that when we came out of our centers across Russia that the materials were handed over to our partner institutions, so they weren't

lost. I'd rather we put our money and our time into other programs, such as concentrating on literature. We have a lot of exciting projects in this area coming through; working with publishers, readers and authors.

Are you happy with what you are doing now in Russia?

I'm happy with what we're doing, and I'm happy with the plans that we are beginning to develop. In the last twelve months we've reached one million Russians in one way or another. We are increasingly reaching people through our web services. Most of our English language work is concentrated on providing materials, ideas, communities for teachers and learners through the web, and that will reach every part of Russia that has access to the Internet. So we feel that putting effort in that direction makes it possible to reach more people. I've been quite humbled in my first few months here at the demand for what we do, in spite of the difficulties.

I read that the British Council was cutting back on promoting visual artists from the UK. Has that now been resolved?

I won't simplify this as it was quite complicated. This issue was well rehearsed in the British press a few months ago, particularly in The Observer when Michael Craig-Martin, one of our top artists wrote about this. It coincided incidentally with the re-opening of the Whitechapel Gallery in London. One of the opening exhibitions was the British Council collection. What it demonstrated is how we use this collection around the world. Every piece of art had its passport attached to it; showing where



in the world it had been exhibited over the last decade. That exhibition demonstrated how we try and use the collection and send it round.

I think in Europe, and I include Russia within that, we went through a stage of realizing that an awful lot of contacts between the UK and Europe happen anyway. There are very good relationships built up. Whether we get involved or not, there is an awful lot happening. The question is; where do we put our effort? In the last couple of years, the British Council has been trying to rethink that quite carefully. There was a consultation exercise at the end of last year and the beginning of this year with the arts community in the UK about what we can really support. For Russia we have come up with what we are calling Creative Russia, which is sort of an umbrella for the work we want to do between the UK and Russia in the arts. I think we did lose our way a little bit for a little while, and resources had something to do with that, but I think we are

back on track and that in Russia you'll see a new approach coming through.

Can culture be transferred?

What the British Council would say is that our business is cultural relations. And that is all about people in different parts of the world meeting in some way and gaining an understanding of how different people approach life. I think that cultural relations are critically important, and need to be understood properly. We tend to feel that it is an area of expertise around the world in 110 countries, something that we have built up over 75 years; it's the 75th anniversary of the British Council this year. It's all about how you get people together, how you broker those sorts of engagements, how you make it easier, and how you facilitate. You can't just put 10 nationalities in a room, particularly if they're 18- or 19-year-olds, and think that they'll get on with each other. You have to provide a safe space where that kind of dialogue can take place.

In Russia, there is a phenomenal amount of tradition in culture, in the arts and in literature in particular. For me, my first interest in Russia was caused by reading classical Russian authors as a teenager. They are incredible. Understanding comes with knowing more. Sometimes I think that views in the 21st century are very shallow. They come from a very quick reading of Wikipedia or something. Some of this needs a lot more work, and if we can help that to happen, that is worthwhile.

Are you here with your family?

My husband comes and goes, and the reason he comes and goes is because we have two children, and they are now grown up and have just started earning their own living. When I was moving around to different countries with the British Council, my husband Francis stayed at home and brought up the children. He was the main carer, which was fairly pioneering at the time I think. Now that they are both doing their own thing, he went back to university. He chose his life-long passion: art, and his degree show is on this week. In the autumn he's going to start an MA at Goldsmiths College. I'm really proud of him. He comes here as often as he can. He enjoys Moscow - especially the contemporary art scene which is terrific here. **P**

*Interview conducted by John Harrison
Photos by Alina Ganenko*





The Right to Be

text by Yuri Pushkin

It is hard to feel at home in your own country when the popular expression of who and what you are is "unnatural". Such is the reality for gays and lesbians living in Moscow and all across Russia's eleven time zones. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has certainly turned into a more democratic and free nation. Along with a more open society came the legalization of homosexuality. Still, free speech appears to be more of a privilege than a right, denied to anyone whose opinions or lifestyles vary from what is considered normal, including gays and lesbians.

Such was the case on May 16 when dozens of gay and lesbian rights activists attempted to stage a protest rally on top of Moscow's Sparrow Hills to bring attention to the human rights violations in the country. As in years past, the city's Mayor Yury Luzhkov banned any demonstrations from taking place claiming that homosexuality is "satanic" and "helps spread the AIDS virus". Led by Russia's prominent gay rights activist Nikolai Alexeyev, UK human rights activist Peter Tatchel and American Andy Thayer, co-founder of the Gay Liberation Network, the event was less a parade than a game of cat and mouse. Riot police seized any participants talking to the media. All three leaders were arrested within minutes of their arrival. "This shows the Russian people are not free!" yelled Tatchel as he was carried off into a police car.

Since homosexuality became legal on paper fifteen years ago, very little has actually been done by the government to provide equal rights and safety for Russia's gays and lesbians. Same sex marriage is still illegal, as is adoption for gay and lesbian couples. In 1996, several new LGBT-themed publications appeared but quickly folded due to lack of funding as well as legal and social harassment. Today, no such material is visible on magazine stands around the capitol. State run media channels feature almost no homosexual content providing no voice to the gay community. To date, no basic discrimina-

tion laws exist to protect individuals from hate crimes. Two years ago police stood by and watched as Tatchel and others attending the 2007 Gay Rights Parade were attacked by neo-Nazi protestors and severely beaten. In response, gay rights groups sued the city, all unsuccessful.

"The federal and city authorities have refused to meet representatives of Russia's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. They will not introduce laws to tackle anti-gay violence and to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. Faced with this intransigent refusal to engage in dialog or legislate, what are Russian queers to do?" wrote Peter Tatchel in an open letter published on gayrussia.ru and UK's *The Guardian* after the parade in Moscow.

In order to get the governments attention, Russian gays are following examples they have from other nations and leaders who fought for human rights, such as Mahatma Gandhi in India and Martin Luther King Jr. in the U.S. "First, they need a right to speech and protest and at the moment, they don't even have that," said Andy Thayer to me over the phone after he was arrested during the gay parade. "It's one thing to change the law, but it's another to change the attitude of a nation."

It is this barrier which will be hardest to overcome. Unlike United States, where racism was in fast decline in most of the nation by the time Martin Luther King Jr. marched on Washington in 1963, the majority of Russians are still very much against homosexuality and gay marriage. In a poll taken by *Moskovsky Komsomolets* prior to the gay parade, 75% of people questioned agreed that it should be banned under all circumstances. Only 14% of the population supports legalization of gay marriage in some form. With such strong views from the general public, it will be hard for Alexeyev or anyone else to change the country from the inside.

Aside from the government, some in the gay community also show skepticism in tactics used by Alexeyev to bring international attention to the issues at hand.

"Why bring attention to ourselves, especially in such a negative way? If people see

less violence at gay pride parades, maybe the overall attitude will start to change then too," said a gay stylist in Moscow in an interview, wishing to stay anonymous.

Alexeyev is aware and disappointed about such views, "People care about their own personal welfare much more than going to a demonstration and fighting for whatever is right." Both Tatchel and Thayer disagree with blasé views of gays not willing to stand up for their peers. "Our protest was more than gay rights, it's about the rights to protest, the rights to free speech, the rights for all, not just gay or straight."

If not internally, Nikolai and other activists must try to get pressure from outside Russian borders in order to change what goes on inside. When then-President Boris Yeltsin legalized homosexuality in Russia, he was not supported by any of the political parties or the voters. Still, he was pressured by the West to do so in order for Russia to become a member of the Council of Europe. Today, Europe is showing little interest in Russia's human rights issues, indicating that the initial pressure may have been more of a symbolic move. Currently, there are fifty or so cases in front of the International Court in Switzerland regarding discrimination and human rights violations in Russia, with no decisions being made. Some see it as a weakness from the European Union governing body before Russia, perhaps fearing some retaliation from the nation which still has a strong hold on gas and oil supplied into Western Europe.

But despite large and clear problems that still exist for gays in Russia, progress has been made since 1993. Gay clubs, gyms and other places to hang out at are opening up more frequently around the city and younger generations, influenced by their foreign counterparts, are slowly becoming more accepting of homosexuality. The country, as a whole, may be far behind other progressive nations but change is clear in cities such as Moscow and St. Petersburg. Most importantly, thanks to the wide spread of information via the Internet, Russian gays are no longer alone in their fight for human rights. In the end, isn't that what we all want – to not be alone? **P**



Tourism

in Russia

text by Ian Mitchell

Last month I was invited to give a talk at the 9th Annual Moscow International Tourist Exposition, as part of a day-long series of presentations on the problems and possibilities of tourism in Russia in times of global economic crisis. Although I am not an expert on tourism as an industry, I am a travel-writer and so I spoke from the point of view of the consumer.

To me, the most iconic image of tourism in Russia is the sign at the cash desk of the Tretyakov Gallery—by any standards one of the world's great visitor attractions—which says Russian citizens pay 150 rubles to enter and foreigners pay 250. If, by any chance, you happen to be with a Russian citizen who asks for two tickets and is sold two Russian ones, you will be stopped at the turnstile by a gruff, unsmiling official in a military-style uniform who will spot the fact that you are foreign and curtly refuse you entry until you queue up again and pay 250 roubles. This takes your ticket cost up to 400 roubles as the first ticket is wasted, and delays you for a further ten minutes or so. Visitor-friendly or what?

This sort of thing is not uncommon and goes a long way towards explaining why, though 11 million Russians travelled abroad in 2008, only 2.3 million foreigners visited the country. The conference was designed to address this imbalance.

The tourist industry in Russia employs about 5% of the labor force, which is half the proportion in the United States, and very much less than in many countries, like Iceland or Botswana, which have less to sell by way of cultural attractions and natural beauty.

In America, tourism contributes 9.5% of GDP. Since GDP of the USA is about eleven times that of Russia, the amazing fact is that the tourist industry in the United States is larger than the entire Russian economy, from Neftegas to nuclear missiles. Russia has a per-capita income that is one of the lowest in the developed world, and 10% unemployment. It would seem logical for the government to give the tourist industry a high priority. But it does not.

One example: to bring a family of four on holiday to Russia from Britain costs £1,000 for the visas alone. That is before flights, accommodation, food and spending money. You could buy an entire package holiday to Greece for the cost of those visas. So my questions at the conference were, first: why is Russia so uninterested in the money and jobs which tourism could bring? And, secondly: what can be done about it?

Part of my answer to the first question came from looking at the titles of the talks given by the other speakers. One was: "Generalizing the theoretical and practical research and experience in the solution of the problems facing the tourist industry." Another was: "Social and psychological aspects of operations in tourism." Finally: "The strategic thinking of managers taking administrative decisions about the system of education in the tourist industry."

In that context, it was perhaps understandable that there was a general sense in the hall of sitting up and taking notice when I started my talk by saying: "If Moscow wants to increase tourist numbers, there are three simple but crucial steps it needs to take. The first is to increase the number of clean, budget-priced, family-orientated hotels. The second is to increase the number of clean, budget-priced, family-orientated hotels; and the third is to increase the number of clean, budget-priced, family-orientated hotels."



I quoted Alexander Udalov, who recently wrote in *AEB Business Quarterly*: "Of the 175 hotels operating in Moscow today, no more than 30 offer what could be classed as international standard accommodation, and these are almost exclusively in the 4- or 5-star categories."

The average cost of a night in a hotel in the United States is \$60. In London, which has 18 million visitors per annum, nearly six times the figure for the whole of Russia, that rate is \$115. In Moscow, it is \$200.

This, I said, is very sad when you consider the range of attractions Moscow has to offer. First there is the fascinating range of small museums and other cultural assets which you can find all over the city. Most are not advertised. Some appear to be closed when you reach the door. But when you find them and get in, the displays are informative and the subject matter is often extremely interesting. I wrote about one of these, the Museum in the Dom na Naberezhnoy in *Passport* last May.

Next there is the wonderful sense of physical freedom in the Russian countryside, which can be easily reached if you are prepared to brave the tourist-unfriendly atmosphere at the railway stations, the dirt in the trains, the incomprehensibility of the timetables and the crowding.

Finally, I said, there are the warm, friendly, kind and interesting people of this vast and often baffling country. If only official Russia were more like them in-bound tourism would be a healthier industry, not least because for many people it is precisely the rough edges and the unpredictability which are appealing, especially in contrast to the increasingly over-commercialized resorts of Europe and elsewhere.

After my talk I was approached by many in the audience to tell me that they agreed with my views. The chairman of the

session presented me with a beautiful book about the history of Moscow. He inscribed it on the title page, addressing me as "Gospodin Mitchell" – the first time I have ever had that honor. At least one person in an official position knows how to charm

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The “Ruler of the East”: Vladivostok

text and photos by Piers Gladstone

After 9 hours, seven time zones, two airline meals and no sleep I found myself still in the same country standing on the tarmac of Vladivostok airport. The last three hours of the flight from Moscow consisted of nothing but the unending taiga forests of Siberia slowly moving beneath the plane in the morning sun, occasionally interspersed by snaking rivers of orange and gold. The vastness and scale of the landscape below was almost beyond comprehension.

While still being part of the same country, Moscow and Vladivostok are literally worlds apart. Gone are the concrete tower blocks, the Mercedes and six lanes of traffic, replaced with lush green hills and a plethora of imported right-hand drive Japanese and Korean cars. The old battered Russian Volga that drives me into town is an anomaly here; even the police cars are imported from Japan. “Before perestroika Vladivostok was a closed city,” explains my driver through drags on his cigarette. “After, it was opened and lots of criminals came for business, especially drugs. The people of Vladivostok also started to trade, mostly importing Japanese and Korean cars. Every sailor has about 6 cars because whenever they are in Japan they buy one and ship it here. A \$500 dollar car there is worth \$5,000 here, and \$15,000 in Moscow.” This has since changed with the new laws on imported vehicles designed to protect the ailing Russian car industry, which will have a devastating effect on the local economy – a significant proportion of the local population is directly or indirectly involved in the imported car and car parts industry, and the new importation laws will make foreign cars up to 50% more expensive.

The Russian Far East first lured explorers and traders with the promise of natural riches such as sable furs that were traditionally hunted by the local indigenous people, such as the Nanai people. The Far East soon became a region to send criminals and political ‘undesirables’, with Sakhalin Island becoming a penal colony in

the 19th century. Many of these people stayed after serving their terms, beguiled by the beauty of this far-off region. Today, the Far East boasts a huge array of natural riches, from coal to crabs, and diamonds to oil. However, the region has also suffered from environmental disasters, illegal logging and the dying out of many of the indigenous cultures in the last century.

Founded in 1860, Vladivostok meaning “Ruler of the East” was, and still is, strategically and economically important for Russia due to its close proximity with Japan, China and Korea. Its harbor became a naval base in 1872 and home to the Russian Pacific Fleet, and with the completion of the Trans-Siberian railway line’s terminus here in 1903, Vladivostok’s trading importance grew significantly. Before the Russian Revolution, Vladivostok was a cosmopolitan home to merchants and traders of all nationalities. And trading in one form or another it seems is what virtually every citizen is involved in. From 1958 to 1992, Vladivostok was a ‘closed’ city, but it is now once again open for business, giving the city the feel of a frontier town, looking much more towards its neighbors than to Moscow.

After a shower at my hotel, I head out to see the port area of Vladivostok. In front of Vladivostok’s beautiful and recently restored Russian Moderne railway station, Ulitsa Aleutskaya swarms with activity. Buses swing up in front of the station, trucks laden with goods toil away from the port, and cars and people jostle for space. There is a bustle and a vitality in the air, a tangible sense of purpose and enterprise juxtaposed against the methodical mechanical clanking of cranes unloading Japanese cars from a boat in port on the docks of the Golden Horn Bay that stretches out magnificently behind the railway station. Four navy destroyers sit passively and impressively, dwarfing the other ships in port. The hillsides are lined with rows of buildings, those closest to the port the oldest, while those higher up or further away much younger. And like all Russian cities with industry and commerce, Vladivostok has recently witnessed a construction boom.

I go to the train station to double-check the time of my train tomorrow, passing sailors in striped uniforms and funny caps. It is one of the most beautiful train stations I have ever seen, replete with large engraved copper doors and swirling decorative motifs. The journey and the jet lag are catching up with me though, so I stop in at the grand restaurant for a bowl of *solyanka* and a coffee. Above me chandeliers hang from the high ceilings that are decorated with murals of fairytale-like rural Russian scenes and laced with intricate corning.





After a longer than anticipated siesta, I head out into the evening. I take a taxi up to the city viewing platform and look out across Vladivostok. The air is mild and damp and the city looks very different at night. The lit windows in the city's tower blocks make them look like electronic circuit boards. The twinkling lights around the lower reaches of the city's hills are like necklaces draped around dark necks.

The next morning I walk the streets close to the harbor. Here, less than a century ago, people of all nations lived, worked and traded. Indeed, it seems that Vladivostok then, and perhaps still now, has more similarities with a city such as Hong Kong than Moscow. At one point in its history, the majority of inhabitants were of Chinese and Korean origin, mainly due to the fact that these nationalities were responsible for the construction of the city. While these nationalities were removed during the Soviet era, it is clear that they have returned since perestroika.

I walk down ulitsa Aleutskaya that runs alongside the port and come to House 15, where Yuliy Borisovich Brynner was born, later to become the bald-headed actor Yul Brynner, famed for his roles as the King of Siam in *The King & I* and in classic movies such *The Magnificent Seven*. His father was a Swiss trader, his mother Russian. Yul made it to Hollywood via Harbin in China and Paris. The building next to Yul's house is also connected to Vladivostok's past; it housed the offices of The East India Trading Company. Indeed, after the revolution started, many countries landed troops in Vladivostok to protect their citizens and interests, and the city only fell to the Red Army on October 25, 1922, signalling the end to the Civil War.

As I walk along Ulitsa Aleutskaya, I realize that there is a distinct lack of advertising billboards here in Vladivostok. Perhaps these port dwelling traders are more savvy than Moscow's inhabitants, or perhaps they just have less money. As I look at the boats in the port, I notice something even stranger – the flags that are flying on the four navy destroyers in dock look remarkably similar to the American Confederate Flag of the southern states, the "Stars & Bars" or "Rebel Flag".

In the afternoon I take a cab to Sportivnaya Harbor to visit a fish market I have been told one can buy a huge array of freshly caught

and cooked shellfish. On arrival it is obvious that this is a favorite place for locals to come to at the weekend too. Groups of teenagers and young families promenade along the waterfront while dodgy looking young men in low-rider style Toyota Crowns with over-sized wheels sit listening to music that blares from their open windows. Others sit and drink beer in the late afternoon sun. I stop at one of the many stalls with a set of scales and piles of shellfish and buy a selection of Kamchatka crab, king prawns and some small crayfish, all at a fraction of their cost in Moscow, before finding a space among the other diners sitting on the wood benches provided. The seafood is literally out of this world, and I decide to buy two more crabs to take with me for my train journey north to Khabarovsk.

As I make my way to the train station I realize I am not ready to leave this unique Russian city. I have been here for less than 36 hours – time enough to get a feel for the city, but not long enough to feel ready to leave. It is a city like no other I have been to in Russia – full of vitality, diversity and people with a pioneering spirit. Since its founding, Vladivostok has played an important role in the history of Russia, and I strongly suspect it will continue to do so. **P**

Travel Info

Aeroflot flies daily to Vladivostok. If you book well in advance, flights are in the region of 13,500 rubles return. Alternatively, if you have time on your hands you could take the slower, more scenic route on the Trans Siberian train.



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Skopin Pottery

text and photos by
Larissa Franczek

"We don't see anything equal to these works of Russian folk art among other peoples' sculpture or earthenware." That's what Alexander Saltykov, a prominent Russian art critic, historian and theologian wrote about Skopin pottery. In 1940 he worked with some unique collections at the Historical Museum in Moscow and noticed some very interesting sculptures, vessels and candle-sticks in the shape of fantastic creatures, birds and beasts. They were very artistically made. He thought this rather strange, as the creators of these works were not professional artists but ordinary, often illiterate potters.

There are several types of artistic pottery in Russia, such as Gzhel, Rostov, Pskov, and Kargopol, Dymkovskaya, Filimonov toys. Among them, Skopin decorative pottery is special, ancient, very unusual, versatile and even contradictory.

Some sources claim that the town of Skopin was founded in the 12th century, others cite the date of 1597. Anyway, it is one of the oldest towns in the Ryazan region with a current population of 31,000 people.

One of the legends about the name of the town explains that the town was named after a fish-hawk (*skopa*), a mysterious bird which apparently used to live in the vicinity of the town. That's why, according to this version of history, there is an image of a fish-hawk in the town's coat-of-arms.

From the town's beginnings to the middle of the 19th century, Skopin pottery didn't differ from that of any other of the numerous potteries of Russia. Around the town there were large clay deposits which quite naturally encouraged the production of pottery. Craftsmen produced utensils that were in common usage in every peasant's house: pots to leaven dough and churn butter in, vessels to keep milk and pickles in, jugs for *kvas* and other drinks, chimneys, bricks and tiles.

Skopin earthenware was different due to the quality of local clays. They were of a high plasticity that were of a white, yellowish or rosy color and rang when tapped after baking. Baking clay in a smoking flame without oxygen resulted in beautiful shades of black. Wash-stands, deep plates, mugs and bread boxes were molded on a low manual potter's wheel. All these articles as well as their decorations were very simple. Masters scratched some geometrical ornaments on them

and then they were glazed. After molding and drying they were brushed with some tar and sprinkled with lead powder. Different oxides were added to obtain different colors: ferric oxide for yellow, reddish and orange colors, cupric for green, cobalt for blue and manganese for grey, dark red and brown.

That's how the craft had existed until the 1850s. It was a time when people in Russia started showing renewed interest to their national arts. Skopin pottery turned from the purely utilitarian into decorative sculptural ceramics. Not only did palettes became multicolored but the whole system of proportions changed considerably. Together with traditional, elegant forms, some craftsmen started experimenting. A jug, for example, was made with new proportions: its body became more trapezoid than round, its mouth got wider towards the top.

Simultaneously, the decoration became more complex. Craftsmen intuitively chose geometric patterns. It was simple, strict and meaningful and suited asymmetrical forms of vessels perfectly. The new Skopin decorative system became harmonious and complete.

The history of figured vessels is thousands of years old. Almost each epoch



and country had their own types and kinds. Cups, vases, jugs in the shape of birds and animals were made of precious stones, glass, porcelain and often given as gifts to rulers of countries. Some of them are static, conventional and metaphoric. Skopin-figured vessels are of a different character altogether. They are not only alien to any strict laconism, they are also verbose.

If you try to make up a list of Skopin "personages" you'll end up creating a whole fairy tale land. There you'll have a fish-hawk, double eagles, wise roosters and cautious hens with chickens, ducks, a swan and other simple and important looking birds. You have bears, almost humanized by craftsmen, unusual monkeys, rather fat pigs, a sad fish. This is the "population" of the land. It is guarded by mythological creatures: strong and mighty wood spirits, dragons, and menacing but not malicious lions. Add some cute-looking people: an odd looking violinist, a funny soldier, a man with a stick in his hand, a *mouzhik* (bloke) in a sheepskin coat: the picture is more or less complete.

Being special is not enough for a vessel to be called a piece of Skopin pottery. Details are what matters. *Kvas* containers and *kumgans* (water containers) often have legs like pedestals and their mouths remind you of medieval columns. Lids look like tiered roofs and figures on their tops are 'birds' or 'beasts'.

Skopin vessels are as exciting as Russian fairy tales. You read and reread them again and again and always dis-

cover some fresh details or gladly remember old ones. They talk their own language and their message is undoubtedly meaningful.

Very soon Skopin pottery became widely and unbelievably popular. It was sold in Ryazan, Moscow, southern Russian cities and Ukraine. People who liked "exotic" folk art, collectors and foreigners eagerly bought it. In 1902 and 1913 the pottery was displayed at several Russian craft exhibitions and in 1900, in Paris.

Nowadays the Ceramics Museum at the Kuskovo Estate, the Historical Museum (Moscow), the Russian Museum and the Ethnographic Museum (St. Petersburg) and the Art Museum in Ryazan boast marvelous Skopin pottery collections.

On the territory of former workshops a pottery factory was built in the town in 1976. Now 160 people work there – 10 of them are members of the Russian Union of Artists. The variety of articles is diverse. New items such as ceramic clocks, lamps, fire-place tiles and chess pieces have been developed. The most

interesting and unique items are still hand made.

In 2004 the town of Skopin held the 2nd International Potters Festival.

The most curious thing about the factory is that it has survived, in spite of all the economic troubles in the 90s. A separate story needs to be told about the host of talented people who have devoted their work to try and save the Russia's culture.

My visit to the factory was quite special. I not only enjoyed its wonderful collection but was lucky enough to enlarge my own. I collect souvenir bells. Have a close look at these three (shown in the photos). A certain dynamism, expressiveness, lots of details and individuality – hallmarks of Skopin pottery – can be noticed in them too.

In my opinion they have not only a certain aesthetic essence. They are some of the most optimistically and emotionally positive parts of my collection. Besides, bells can talk, they are ready to tell you lots of new things. The story of Skopin pottery is one of them. **P**

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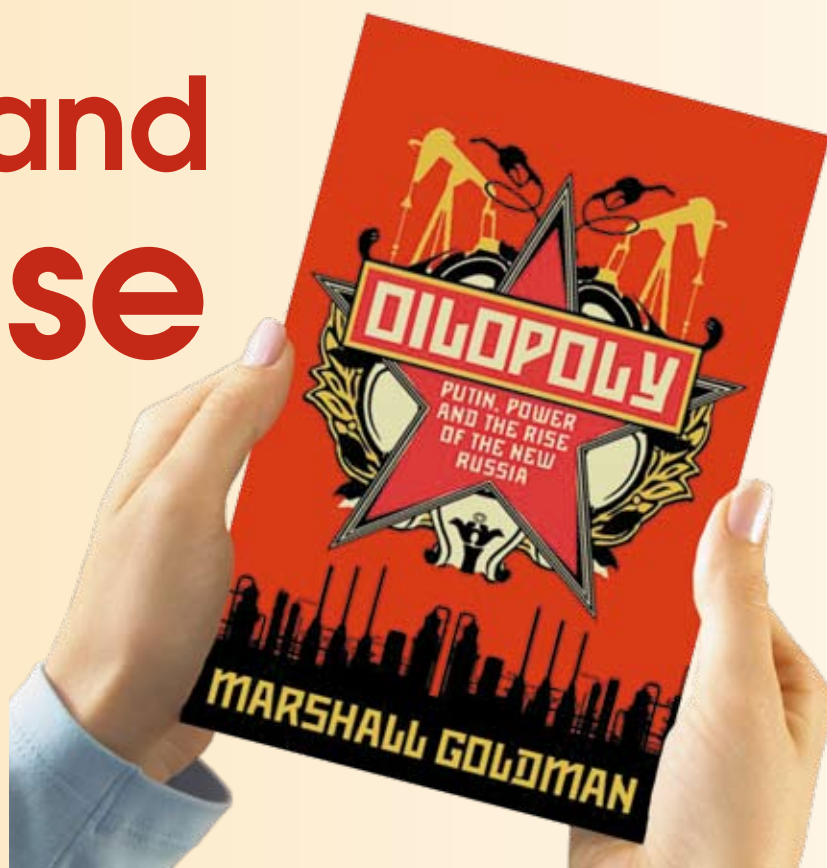
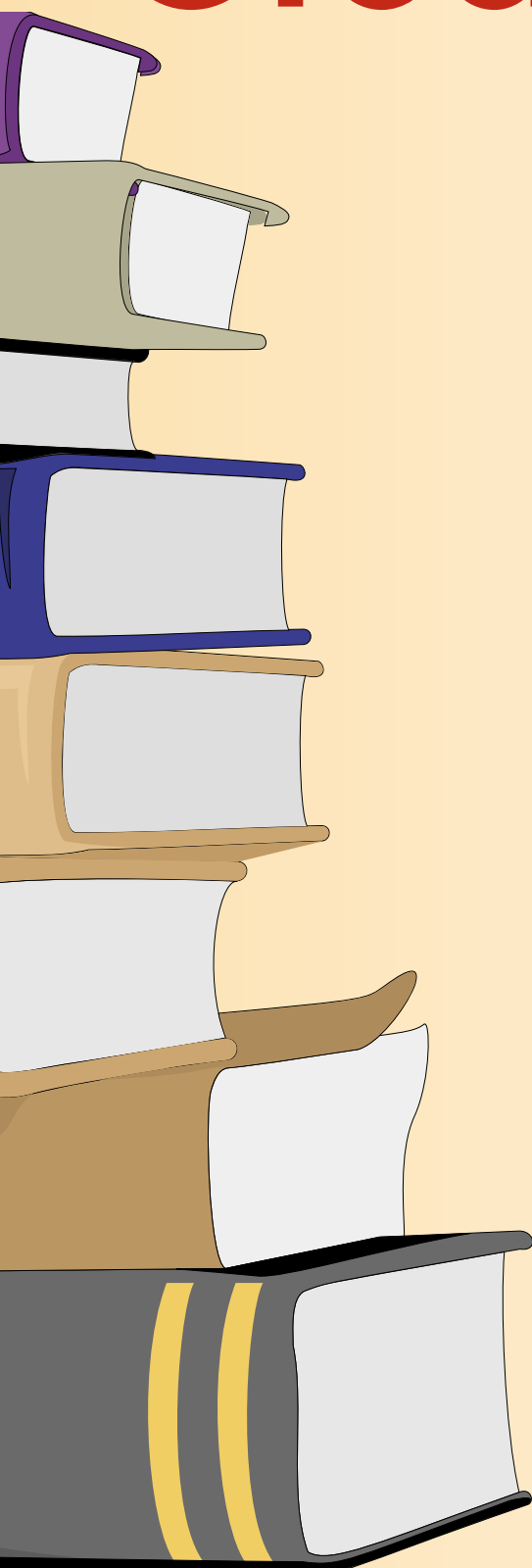
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Oil and Grease



by Ian Mitchell

Oilopoly: Putin, Power and the Rise of the New Russia

Marshall Goldman, Oneworld Publications, 2008, paperback pp. 244, £10.99 (amazon.co.uk)

Oilopoly should be required reading for everyone who is in love with money. People who like to cuddle up to cash really need to take an interest in the future, as Russians learned on August 19, 1998 when Inkombank (motto: "We are here to stay") closed its doors and left its depositors panting with a bad case of cashflowus interruptus. I know elderly Muscovites who started putting money under the mattress last November, fearing that Sberbank and VTB would go the same way as Inkombank. That they did not was largely due to the fact that the Russian government is now prepared to put its resources of the state behind commercial enterprises which it judges either too big, too friendly or too "strategic" to fail. This book tells the fascinating story of how this situation has come about, and suggests some ways in which it might develop in the future.

Though futurology is ubiquitous, futurologists are rarely much closer to the

truth than a witch-doctor or a gypsy would be. The author, Professor Goldman, who teaches at Wellesley College and Harvard, quotes the International Energy Authority which predicted, in mid-2007 when oil prices were roaring ahead, that they would continue to roar ahead until 2012. This prediction was not made on the basis of the way in which a pile of sacred bones lay on the ground after being shaken out of a dried wildebeest scrotum, or in the light of the distribution of tea-leaves in the Authority Director's cup at dusk on the night of the Hunter's moon, but on hard, Protestant-style information of the sort which real-world characters like oil traders are said to treat with respect.

The voodoo name for this type of knowledge is "market fundamentals". So, the Authority said, world demand for oil was set "to grow at an average of 2.2 percent per annum" during the relevant period. Note the precision: not 2.1 percent, or 2.3 percent. The Authority also said without qualification that world oil supply was going to rise by "1.1 percent" per annum. With figures as precise as those, the logic is undeniable. After two years of upward "roaring", the oil price would be at least \$130 dollars a barrel. If you don't believe me, go onto

your nearest trading floor and ask the first wildebeest you meet.

Professor Goldman gives an historical perspective to his story, which is both interesting and important in revealing the fictions of futurology. Back in the days when senior people in Washington thought that money was power, and laughed at those in the Soviet Union who thought that rockets and bombs represented real power, the CIA set to work to undermine the Communists' chief cash cow, Neftegaz. President Reagan's newly appointed Director of the CIA, William Casey, believed that the Soviet Union was the source of most of the world's terrorism. The logic once again was ineluctable: if the world were rid of the Soviet Union, terrorism would decrease. The fact that the opposite has happened must mean that, far from disappearing, the Soviet Union has in fact expanded. Perhaps it has become invisible. Or maybe it moved west and changed its name to the European Union.

Be that as it may, the CIA's efforts to undermine communism were based on a careful study of the Soviet Union's energy policy and potential; the word "potential", of course, implying another excursion into the future. Casey based his approach on a research paper produced in 1977 by a large and well-resourced team of CIA experts who predicted that within a decade Soviet oil production would fall sharply. By 1987, the USSR would be buying around 200 million tons of oil per year on the world market.

The outcome was not quite like that. Far from falling, Soviet oil output actually rose over the period, from 545 million tons per annum in 1977 to 625 million in 1987. (Oilopoly has many informative tables and statistics.) In fact, it was only in the early 1990s, when Russia began to enjoy the benefits of the capitalism which the CIA had been so concerned to force upon it, that oil production started falling sharply. By 1997, it was down to 307 million tons, which would have been about 350 million on a comparable USSR basis – a drop of about 40% over the previous decade.

The reason for this drop was the one factor which never appears to have occurred to the CIA: the owners of the new private oil companies began behaving rationally. Professor Goldman describes how they came to realize that they could make more money by asset-stripping and sending the plundered cash abroad than by producing oil. It was only after the Casey plan to break the Soviet Union by driving the oil price down to record lows had become a distant memory, in the late 1990s that the price began rising again and the oilogarchs re-thought their position and concluded that there was potential for personal enrichment within Russia.

They were helped in this by the incoming-President, Vladimir Putin, who wrote a dissertation in 1997 for the St. Petersburg Mining Institute in which he outlined his strategy for recovering lost state influence by taking control of the country's natural resources and putting them in the hands of companies which would be controlled either directly or indirectly by the state. (Goldman says that a large part of the dissertation was plagiarized from a 20-year-old American study.)

The result of the close "co-operation" between the state and strategic industry has been that the owners of the companies concerned have remained free to pay themselves "market rates" for their daily labor, and to buy and sell shares and other assets – in other words to get rich – while simultaneously being protected from competitive pressures by a state which uses the law, the courts, environmental inspectors and all the other tools of bureaucracy to make sure that no outside companies can face them on equal terms. The further result has been the continual plunder of Russia's resources by the few who found themselves at the top of the heap when Putin came to power and who wisely allowed him and his friends to join their game.

There is not enough space in a short article like this to give details of how this was all done. Suffice it to say that words like corruption, grease, persecution, lawlessness, stupidity, violence, greed, servility, more grease, bullying, aggression, illusion and even sometimes farce would be appropriate to describe much of Professor Goldman's narrative after 1991.

The reasons he gives are varied. One is that "the FSB is no longer just a police organization, it is a business." Another is illustrated by the calculation of a Japanese economist who noted that it takes Gazprom \$3.3 million to construct a kilometer of pipeline, when the world average cost is \$1 million. The missing \$2.3 million is what finances the FSB, and its clients in government and commerce.

Finally, and in my view most importantly, there is the observation of a fellow Wellesley College academic who explains much of the misallocation of resources, and also the declining reputation of Russia as an international business partner, by saying that, after the fall of communism, the country lacked an adequate "moral infrastructure". The result, Goldman writes, is that "there are few of the firmly rooted commercial laws or informal moral codes that are taken for granted in long-established market economies. The 'rule of law' becomes the 'law of the rulers'."

Bob Dylan famously said, "Don't follow leaders, watch your parking meters." The problem for Russia is that far too many people follow leaders who are so deeply in love with money that they seem to lack a moral compass. But maybe we should sympathize rather than condemn. Russia is a country entirely without parking meters. **P**



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Green Shoots Sprout in Russia



text by John Harrison

For the majority of Russians, the idea of sustainability, green buildings and the like are not exactly considered to be vitally important, particularly at present, when hundreds of thousands of people are losing their jobs every month. Greenpeace and other environmentally-friendly groups have been successfully isolated and politicians are not yet using the green card. Green means a primary colour in Russia and not a lot else. The exploitation of natural resources continues to be the main driver behind Russia's economy. When the price of oil rises by a few dollars a barrel, a collective sigh of relief is almost tangibly felt throughout Russia. Again, the oil-smeared, get-rich-quick drill bit is vibrating in Russians' souls. To hell with a sustainable future.

Why, given such a scenario, should a group of building professionals gather in Moscow on May 14 to form, on a voluntary basis a Russian green building council? The answer is the simple equation that all real estate people use: supply and demand. Multinational companies, the crème de la crème of real estate tenants, sought after by real estate agents and developers alike, are beginning to express preference for ecologically friendly, sustainable, green, whatever you want to call them, buildings.

What this means is that the headquarters of companies that hire thousands of square meters of Class A (top notch) office space in many countries worldwide have issued directives to their office procurement staff to get offices in 'green' buildings. In the recent past, when there was far more demand than supply, and lease rates in Moscow were as high as London, it didn't really matter whether the building was green or not, but now that the market has turned, companies can be a little fussier, and developers, who even in Russia have to eventually produce buildings that the market actually likes, know that.

Most countries' governments are interested in encouraging developers to build energy-efficient buildings for obvious reasons: to cut down on urban pollution (as buildings contribute to about 40% of all urban pollution), and to cut down on energy consumption. In Russia, urban pollution, although a real problem, is not serious enough to warrant public outcry. There is no serious water problem in northern Russia, and so much energy is on tap that the only way to control the temperature in winter in most residential blocks in Russia is to open and close the window. Some even argue that it is in the interest of some commercial groups to actually increase energy consumption, not reduce it. The opposite may actually be true. One analyst, Guy Eames, CEO of

the Russia Green Building Council has argued that the Moscow city government is in favor of reducing the amount of energy the city uses because it is having difficulty meeting demand for energy. Be that as it may, there are no tax breaks for eco-friendly buildings as yet offered by the Russian government (as there are in many western countries), although various committees are discussing the issue.

At present, there are only a couple of 'green' buildings in Moscow. A few are being planned, waiting for the life blood of investor money to return to the market. Some of this money comes from abroad. Most international real estate investors are savvy to the direction that the market is taking and would prefer to invest in sustainable buildings if they could, as not only are they cheaper to operate, thus more attractive for tenants, but also easier to lease and sell.

Naturally, every developer will try in the future to promote his building as being ecologically friendly. Few actually will be. In the USA, a system called LEED has been developed to test whether a so-called 'green' building is actually up to standard or not. The UK version is called BREEAM. Many countries have their own standards, however LEED and BREEAM are the two most well known internationally recognized certification procedures. Developers

take part in the process on a voluntary basis, although new buildings in some countries such as EU member states now have to be awarded energy performance certificates which are becoming more and more demanding.

The newly-formed Russian Green Building Council hopes eventually to introduce its own regulations for Russia, which will be based on LEED and BREEAM standards, adapted to Russian specifics.

So far so good for new investment-grade buildings but what about the other 99.9% of buildings and the whole 'green' cause of promoting sustainability in Russia? A sea change in public attitudes is needed. What about encouraging the use of more fuel-efficient transportation and sustainable urban planning as a whole. You might find it hard to believe, but the process has started. On June 5, a public viewing of the film 'HOME', a joint project of two masters of modern art – world-renowned aerial photographer Yann Arthus-Bertrand and film director Luc Besson was shown in two places simultaneously in Moscow. 'HOME' is claimed to be the most influential climate movie of 2009 as was Al Gore's *Inconvenient Truth* in its time. I attended the showing in the 'Sphere' arts space on Bersenevskaya Naberezhnaya. The organizers were surprised to witness over 400 people crowding in, far more than expected; despite the rain which at times came in through the roof. This perhaps showed in 3D the force of nature, a theme that was adequately documented in Yann Arthus-Bertrand's superb aerial photography. The crowd, mostly young, was spellbound as a hard-hitting commentary detailed the affect of upsetting the intricate balance of nature by man.

Whilst waiting for the film to start, event sponsors BMW introduced its 'energy-saving dynamics' and Sony its energy-saving BRAVIA WE5 televisions. Doubts about the eco-records of these two mega companies aside, it was uncanny to see hundreds of Russians watching eco-promotional commercials, which have yet to make it to the country's TV stations. It appears that a battery of industrial giants are lining up their eco-promotional materials, used in other countries, for use in Russia, once

Russian public opinion swings enough in the 'green' direction to make such publicity commercially viable. The new housing complex 'Vorobyovy Gory' was also promoted at the 'Sphere' event, despite the somewhat doubtful green credentials of the project's developers.

The power of PR and the media, even in Russia, is a force to be reckoned with, even though there is no 'green press' as yet. Russia's celebrities have not yet been enrolled for the cause of the green revolution that has swept the valleys, cities and politics of our native lands. Covers of Russian glossy magazines are not yet adorned with the new green elite such as Al Gore on the cover of *Wired* last year with a headline: 'Climate Crisis! The Pro-Growth, Pro-Tech Fight to Stop Global Warming', or 'Wal-Mart Saves The Planet' from the cover of *Fortune*, August 2006, or Julia Roberts posing as a green nymph together with George Clooney, Robert F. Kennedy and Al Gore on the cover the 'Special Green Issue' of *Vanity Fair* in 2006.

Be that as it may, Laima Vaikule, Artyom Troitsky, Alena Sviridova, Aleksander

F. Skilyar and Viktor Gusev took part in a campaign in March 2008 organized by the VITA Animal Rights center. Their efforts brought the 15-year-old struggle against the slaughter of baby seals in Russia's far north to the public's attention, and later in 2008, a partial ban was imposed.

So far, the green cause is not a subject of household discussion in Russia, although 'bio' foods are making inroads into the country's supermarkets and hypermarkets. One thing does look fairly certain: the western pre-occupation with green design for buildings looks certain to have an impact on the development of new commercial real estate in Russia. New business opportunities are about to open up in areas such as waste recycling. Market peculiarities and lack of transparency of administrative systems will have to be taken into account by Russia's new green missionaries, otherwise they are doomed to failure. New ideas are, however, taking a hold, particularly among the young, as long as western neo-green commercialism doesn't ruin things. **P**

Websites worth checking out:

www.greendev.ru

www.rugbc.org

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Scandinavian Tapas

and Spanish Wines

text by Charles W. Borden
photos by Maria Savelieva

This month we decided to go back to Night Flight for our Spanish wine tasting, and give Chef Michael Willuhn a chance to serve us some Scandinavian tapas and Night Flight's classic Planksteak.

I seldom try Spanish wines, but this month learned this was a mistake. Long relegated as poor cousins to their French neighbors and with dozens of Denominations of Origin (DOC), Spain's wines seem just too difficult to select.

Spanish wines are mainly red, and the country is the world's third producer by volume. Spain's wines at their worst are as bad as any plonk, and some make it to Russia as cheap vinomaterial (bulk wine – the source of most Russian wines), which is then reformulated, bottled and labeled as Russian. However, Spain has always produced some powerfully great red wines to rival the best French and have been of better value. Some of the best come from the Ribera del Duero, Priorat and Rioja regions.

The Spanish Denominación de Origen (DO) controls the classification and labeling of wines, and works in a way similar to Italian and French systems. Vinos de la Tierra is similar to the French geographical designation 'vin de pays'. The Denominación de Origen and Denominación de Origen Calificada are the designations for quality wine areas. Crianza are wines aged less than two years, Reserva at least three years with one on oak, and Gran Reserva requires at least five years aging.



Katerina Medvedeva, MTS



Steven Fisher, Citigroup

During recent months we have followed a new format to select wines for a wine tasting. Rather than picking wines from the shelves, I cull through the price lists of the principal fine-wine importers before the shopping trip. In each case I create a long spreadsheet of all the wines in the category we are seeking, in this case Spanish, from these importers. This resulted in about 150 wines from about forty bodegas (as wineries are called in Spain), if not to count the vintages of each wine.

Once the spreadsheet is prepared, I log on to Robert Parker's Wine Advocate and Wine Spectator and search for each winery. These are good sites that provide short comments and ratings for thousands of wineries and wines around the world. Search results are displayed by wine and vintage and it just takes a brief look to get a rough idea about which wineries consistently have good ratings. This lets me pare down the list to a manageable number of well-rated wines for a short list to take to the wine boutiques.

A substantial short list is needed because many of the wines on the importers' lists may not be currently available, at least in the shops. Also, some wines are primarily destined for restaurant wine lists rather than retail.

With five boutiques each owned by one of Moscow's top wine importer, Kutuzovsky Prospekt has everything we need. Heading in from the Third Ring Road, the first stop is L'Intendant, the sole Moscow shop owned by MBG Impex. Swinging back around to leave town, the next four shops are within 100 meters of each

other: first Kolleksiya Vin, then Grand Cru and Kauffman in the same building, and last Magnum, owned by DP Trade.

We ended up with a set of well-rated wines, four whites and eleven reds. The Night Flight sommelier decanted the reds and prepared the whites and she suggested a new routine. Rather than sampling one wine at a time as is our tradition, four glasses were placed in front of each guest and four wines were poured at once so that we could compare them. We started with the four white wines. The next flights went four, four and we finished with three spectacularly rated red wines, with Parker ratings of 96, 96, and 99 respectively. John Ortega splurged on a stratospherically

priced Dominio de Pingus, a legendary cult wine that Parker has called "One of the greatest and most exciting wines I have ever tasted."

The Tapas al la Night Flight came out with the white wines; it put the pretender tapas bar we reviewed last month to shame.

Tapas al la Night Flight

Gambas al Ajillo

Baked Salmon with Hot Mojo

Bacon-wrapped Dates

Ensalada Russia

Serrano Rolls with Cream Cheese, Pine Nuts and Chili

Manchego Cheese

Swedish Gingerbread with Green Cheese

Our guests finished the evening with the Classic Night Flight Planksteak, a perfect way to mop up the remains of the eleven Spanish reds that we enjoyed that evening.

The Top Wines

The top scoring white this night was the **Naia Naiades 2005** from Rueda in north-central Spain in Castille and Leon, made from Verdejo grapes that has a Parker 91 rating. It received a 3.84 (out of 5) from the Russian Knights of the Vine. Wine Advocate described this wine as "sourced from a single parcel of 80- to 100-year-old, ungrafted, Verdejo vines located in La Seca, a village which the locals consider to be the "grand cru" of Rueda. Light gold-colored, it exhibits an attractive perfume of vanilla spice, lemon-lime and honeysuckle."

The best red was a **2001 Clos Martinet**, from Priorat in Catalonia, which tied with the Pingus that followed it, but at one tenth the price. Wine Advocate describes the Clos Martinet as "a blend of 38% Grenache, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Carignan, 12% Syrah, and the rest Merlot. With great density and fabulously explosive aromatics (acacia flowers, crushed blackberries, blueberry liqueur, and wet stones), this full-bodied, compellingly rich, multilayered, awesome wine is a great example of what makes the Priorat appellation so special." **P**

Knights of the Vine

John Ortega, Fashion Mart

Charles Borden, OnLineMA.Com

John Harrison, Passport Magazine

Steven Fisher, Citigroup

Lucille Fisher

William Reichert,

Haynes & Boone LLP

Alex Anikin, Arcum Wine

David Lane, Tablogix

Katerina Medvedova, MTS

Todd Nalven, Chiron Capital



Giorgio Palucci, Giorgio's Milano

Stephen Schueler, Procter and Gamble

Jeff Combs, NCI

Masha Stupak, Arcum Wines

Natalia Zorina, Vogue Magazine

Shiraz Mamedov, SJS

Bert Lamaire, Soncotra

Moscow's Wine Boutiques

DP Trade Shops – several in Moscow including:

Decanter, Bol. Polyanka 30,
Tel: +7 (495) 238-3808

Magnum, Kutuzovsky Prospekt 24,
Tel: +7 (495) 937-6515

Magnum, Ul. Plyuschkina 20,
Tel: +7 (495) 775 0674

Vinum, Prechistenka 40/2,
Tel: +7 (495) 775-2305

Website: www.wine-dp-trade.ru

E-mail: info@wine-dp-trade.ru

L'Intendant

Kutuzovsky Prospekt 33,
Tel: +7 (499) 249-6114

Website: www.mbg-wine.ru/bootique/

Grand Cru Shops – several in Moscow including:

Tel: +7 (495) 510-6565

Novinsky Passage, Novinsky Bulvar 31

Novy Arbat 36/3

Kutuzovsky Prospekt 22

Website: www.grandcru.ru

E-mail: grandcru@grandcru.ru

Kolleksiya Vin – several in Moscow including:

Kutuzovsky Prospekt 18,
Tel: +7 (499) 243 2008

Website: www.vine.ru

Kauffman Shops – several in Moscow including:

Kutuzovsky Prospekt 22,
Tel: +7 (495) 243-2238

Ul. Kuznetsky Most 3,
Tel: +7 (495) 624-0464

Ul. Ostojhenka 27,
Tel: +7 (495) 291-3671

Website: www.whitehall.ru

E-mail: whsec@col.ru



Todd Nalven, Chiron Capital LLC



Alex Anikin, Arcum Wine



John Harrison, Passport Magazine
Charles Borden, OnLineMA.Com

British Business Club On the River

It was "jolly boating weather" when the British Business Club sailed "doon the water" for its May evening this year. To the accompaniment of a band which played appropriately out-of-date music very well, and a wonderful assortment of food, both Indian and British, a large crowd admired the sights of the river between Krasnopresnaya and Vorobyovy Gory. To starboard we had the Moscow power station, and to port the Rossiya building site. Then, as the drink flowed, the scenery

seemed to get greener and more beautiful. The park below MGU provided a fine foreground to the symbol of totalitarian architecture which towers majestically above it. This was where we turned and started on a reciprocal course, as one has to do on rivers. Poshest of all the buildings we saw – literally so, as it was Portside Out and Starboard Home – was the Novodevichy Monastery which did not so much tower majestically as protrude elegantly above the luscious spring greenery surrounding it. I think we tied up later and disembarked.

Ian Mitchell



RBCC go Norwegian

The Russo-British Chamber of Commerce hosted a networking evening in early June jointly with the Norwegian-Russian Chamber of Commerce at the Katerina-City Hotel, near Paveletskaya Station. The highlight of the evening was a talk by Vladimir Bagreev, the head of the Norwegian-Russian cham-

ber's office in Moscow, about the yacht Britannia. It is a little known fact that a replica of the famous and beautiful boat has been built, under contract to a Norwegian owner, in a Russian shipyard at Arkhangelsk. The original Britannia was designed and built in Scotland, in 1893, for the then-Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII. It was so fast that, although it never com-

peted in the America's Cup, it beat the American holder of the cup when racing in Scottish waters. Its most devoted skipper was Edward's son, George V. He willed that the boat be sunk after his death, so that it would never suffer the indignity of decay. Now in a joint, British-Norwegian-Russian effort, the great memory is to be revived.

Ian Mitchell

Moscow Mellow Divas Summer Concert

On June 5 at St. Andrews Church, Moscow, the 9th Moscow Mellow Divas summer concert was held. The concert was a stunning musical collage of different musical cultures from all over the world, performed professionally with a panache that only hard work and enthusiasm can produce.

The choir took us on a musical world tour, starting with negro spirituals, 'Didn't my Lord Deliver Daniel', followed by 'Shine On me' and 'Ride my Chariot'. The evening was studded with various folk songs, such as: 'The Sailor and Young Nancy', and the Irish 'The Lark in the Clear Air'. The first half of the concert was rounded off by a rendition of Simon and Garfunkel's 'The 59th St. Bridge Song', and 'Bridge Over Troubled Water'.

The second half of the evening was an adventurous journey into forms of music not immediately associated with an expat choir: the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas 'The Yeoman of the Guard', and the 'Pirates of Penzance'. A rendition the theme tune 'Speak Softly Love' from the 1972 film, *The Godfather*, followed these stalwart performances. Latin American songs followed, then classics from the world of jazz, even 'All I Have to Do Is dream'



by the Everly Brothers. The evening was completed by a medley of numbers from the stage show and film, *Brigadoon*.

The sheer variety of musical styles surprised the uninitiated, like me, unused to the high standards maintained by the Moscow Mellow Divas choir. Hats off to the choir's organizer and musical director Sharon Wilson.

All proceeds raised during the evening went to the charities: Preodelenie, Nastenka and the ARK Open Arts Theater, three extremely worthwhile children's charities working in Moscow.

Nine members of the Mellow Divas choir are soon to leave Moscow, and the choir is seeking musically-minded people who may not have previously performed on the world stage [joke]. For further details, please contact Sharon Wilson: swsmw52@gmail.com
John Harrison

Diema's Dreams Come True

On June 2009 Diema's Dream charity foundation held its annual Benefit Auction of Art "Dreams 2009" in GUM. The event was sponsored by Coca Cola, Sroytransgaz, Linklaters, Chevron, Price-waterhouseCoopers, KPMG, TNK-BP and many others. The auction was also supported by Christie's and was conducted by its chairman Hugh Edmeades.

Diema's Dream was established in 1998 to provide financial, medical, and educational support for both physically and mentally disabled children in Russia. The larger goal is to support changes in society and legislation in order to create social and medical support programs which would allow parents to raise their children at home rather than living in institutions. The founder of the charity Mary Dudley introduced "Take a Step" – a new program launched by Diema's



Dream in 2009. The goal of the program is to offer assistance to low-income families with disabled children in need of surgery or medical intervention and as a result provide them with a chance to walk. All the art auctioned was donated absolutely free by Russian as well as several foreign artists. After the dinner and the auction, the guests danced the night away to The Smokebreakers and Tony Watkins, who also introduced his new book and the album, *Love's Roads*, available in the UK, Ireland and the U.S.



All the profits of the book sale will go to support Russian charities.

With the help of Uley Catering that provided brilliantly organized catering and delicious food, Diageo, Parliament Group, Coca Cola Hellenic Bottling and The Ararat Park Hyatt Hotel that generously donated their products and services, as well as the many individual guests and guests of sponsors, Diema's Dream managed to raise over \$335,000 to finance the programs supporting disabled children and orphans of Russia.

Vino I Formaggio

On the May 20 the Canadian-Russian business association CERBA together with the Italian Business Association Italiani a Mosca held a joint social event "Vino e Formaggio".

The reception took place at one of Moscow's popular restaurants "Club 25". The event's format was chosen by the organizers as an Italian Wine and Cheese Tasting.

Those attending the reception were Canadian, Italian and Russian businessmen,

and diplomats of both countries. There were representatives from companies such as Banco Popolare, Banco Intesa, NovaScotia, E.N.I, Fiat, фтв щерукью

The guests had a chance to taste six different types of Italian wine, i.e. Corvo Rosso IGT Prod. Vini Corvo (Sicila), D'Istinto IGT Prod. Calatrasi (Sicila), Santa Cristina IGT Prod. Villa Antinori (Toscana), Gavi DOCG Prod. Corte dei Balbi Soprani (Piemonte).

Barbera d'Asti DOC Corte dei Balbi Soprani (Piemonte), Cabernet Terra Serena IGT Vini Serena (Veneto).



Delicious Italian cheeses, focaccia and olives were provided by the food sponsor, Reginella. The other two companies which generously sponsored the networking event were Italian Brunel CR and Canadian NovaScotia Bank.

Rain, Nature and Jazz

The first summer weekend in Moscow is traditionally dedicated to jazz. On June 6 and 7 the sixth international open-air festival Usadba.Jazz blasted off in the Arkhangelskoye Estate.

This year, despite the rain, Usadba.Jazz entertained over 15,000 guests. This year's event will long be remembered because of the incredible line up, crazy dance mara-



thons and Branford Marsalis's performance on the first day of the festival. This year, the head-liners were Nino Katamadze and Insight, Nils Landgren and Funk Unit, Nickolas Bearde, Andrej Kondakov and Brazil All Stars, Oleg Nesterov and & Kapelle Berliner Postbote and many more. There was an art-garage sale, vintage shoes exhibition, a cardboard bus and many happy smiles.

The festival included the Young Musicians Competition. More than 500 musicians applied for the chance to perform at Usadba.Jazz. The performers, who were all under 35, came from various parts of Russia and the CIS. Usadba. Jazz takes place at the Arkhangelskoye Estate, which is five kilometers out of Moscow. The festival stages were located in different parts of the enchanting manor; The "Aristocrat" stage was in the Main Court. The "Parter" was spanned out on the huge lawn. The "Kapriz" was housed at the Yusupov Colonmade. The "Lounge" occupied a spot by the Moscow River.



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An aerial photograph of Moscow, Russia, showing a dense urban landscape with a complex network of streets and the Moskva River. A semi-transparent white text box is overlaid on the top portion of the image. The map includes numerous yellow circular icons with a blue 'M' inside, representing metro stations. Various street names are visible in Cyrillic, such as 'Тверской бульвар', 'Покровка', 'Новый Арбат', 'Садовое Кольцо', 'Остоженка', 'Раушская наб.', 'Космодамианская наб.', 'Озерковская', 'Воронцовская ул.', 'Марксистская', 'Таганская', 'Восстания пр.', 'Пеннинский', 'Шаболовская', 'наб. ул.', and 'Псковская'. The word 'Москва' is prominently displayed in the center of the map.

‘Your Moscow’: an essential guide to favourite residential areas

Guides of Moscow are packed full of information, however not many of them will give you the low-down you actually need to decide on where to live. Will it feel right? Is it affordable? Is it handy for shops, schools, culture? Is it a good place for a young family?

This month, *Passport* launches a major series covering eight of the best residential areas, close to the center of Moscow, starting with the oldest and best-known neighborhood, NW of the city.

This first guide has been compiled by Ross Hunter, regu-

lar *Passport* contributor, English International School Headmaster, and explorer of Moscow by bicycle and metro. He has sampled local opinion already, but *Passport* now asks all our readers to send in their opinions and information about their areas, at any time, to him at: rossdhunter@hotmail.com

Next month, our roving eye focuses on Taganska and the South East. After that, not yet in order, we will be in Prospect Mira (N), Chisty Prudy (NE), Kitay Gorod (E), Zamoskvorechye (S), Park Kultury (SW) and the Arbat (W). We look forward to hearing from you.

Your Moscow (1)

North by North West:

Patriarshiye Ponds & neighborhoods

text and photos by Ross Hunter

The arc from Petrovka westwards to Barrikadnaya includes many of Moscow's most famous sights – and best loved inner city residential areas. On the metro map, this is within the Brown ring line, and between the Green and Violet lines.

North By Northwest: in the epic Hitchcock film, Cary Grant runs frantically across an endless landscape pursued by a very hostile biplane. This corner of Moscow is wonderfully visualized in *The Master and Margarita*, as our heroine warms up her newly acquired witchcraft skills by test riding her broomstick around the suburb. Let us take a gentler tour, without shaking up the neighborhood or burning down any buildings.

This is generally agreed to be the most 'des res' district of inner Moscow, and has been for at least a century. This was reinforced in Soviet times, attracting the well connected, ambassadors and then, elite boutique shops. This is an oasis of safe and cultured calm, bounded by a quartet of busy roads. These should ensure excellent accessibility, and the competing centers of central Moscow/Tverskaya; the growing Belorussky area and the Moskva-City/World Trade Center district are all handy. Aiming NE-SW, if the Garden Ring has long lost its green under a ghastly screech of car on tarmac, then the inner Boulevard Ring can still be an absolute delight for a stroll or more vigorous exercises, with children, pets, bikes or running shoes. Going N or NW, Nikitskaya and Tverskaya radiate themselves and are radiant with retailing. A brisk ten minutes' walk brings any number of shops, offices, theaters and more within range.

Of course, it is the ponds that draw everybody here. Ponds? One magnificent square sheet of inviting water does not merit a plural. There used to be at least three, as the name Tryokhpudny Pereulok suggests (see pg. 40). As ever with Moscow, the battle between land and water has ebbed and flowed, and the former goat marshes were rationalized into distinct ponds in the 17th century, and two of these drained in the early 19th century. In winter or summer, this crosspath abounds with life. It has the beauty, freshness and vitality of a London square. Possibly even too much vitality. While peace and calm are what attract families, the reality is slightly more kaleidoscopic. While one corner is an adventure playground for small children and their chatting mums, they are not alone. A steady stream of folk wander, jog and cycle by, and a varied collection of young and not so young are there for a chat, a romance, and a spot of music. The ears can get confused between pop, rock, blues, amateur guitar and raucous goth beats, and getting the dress code right is equally confusing. Is the pond the preserve of families, romantics, tourists or the thirsty? All, of course – as the old saying goes, this place would be more popular if it wasn't so crowded.



The café Margarita



Malaya Bronnaya Ulitsa



Trehprudny Pereulok



The famous bits:

The Patriarshiye Ponds act as both a breathing space and a magnet. They are restful on the eye, the ear and the pulse rate, and a meeting place for all ages.

Streets: the clockwise square made by Tverskaya Ulitsa, Tverskoy Boulevard, Nikitskaya and Kudrinskaya Ulitsa/Krasnaya Presnaya gives you four of Moscow's most throbbing thoroughfares, with astonishing calm between them.

Buildings & statues: tick them off as you go: Kudrinskaya skyscraper, the zoo, Gorky House, the Museum of the Revolution, the Chekhov House and then the theaters at Malaya Bronnaya, the Mossovet's Theater on Bolshaya Sadovaya, the Moscow Satire, the Luna and the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall; the Stanislavsky House museum, Morosov Mansion, the Tass building and the Belorussky Station; and in stone, Mr and Mrs Pushkin, V. V. Mayakovsky and dozens more.

The Best metro stations: is a highly subjective list, but try and beat Mendelevskaya/Novoslobodskaya, Chekhovskaya/Tverskaya/Pushkinkaya, Ploshchad Revolyutsii, Belorusskaya and best of all Mayakovskaya.

Nearby? If your dream apartment doesn't show up in this area, cross any of the four framing roads and keep looking: between Tverskaya and Dmitrovka; nearer the city across Tverskoy Boulevard, tucked in between Nikitskaya and Novy Arbat or out by the zoo all offer nearly the same ambience – but beware of high prices and traffic noise in these areas, too.

Apartments For Rent

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PENNY LANE REALTY

The Third Eye**What the locals say:**

by different residents – some Muscovites, some expats.

Who

Families like to live west of Tverskaya, towards the pond while young professionals look nearer to the center of Moscow inside the Boulevard Ring

History

The soul of Moscow, old Moscow, the Moscow of the intelligentsia, the cultural history in a compressed form, thousands of literary references within a few steps

Emotion

Love the feeling of living here, quiet in the summer when the trees are greenleaf heavy, compressed countryside – until you hit the road again; but half the people are away at the dacha anyway

Frustration

No local shops any more, all fur and jewellery and overpriced unnecessaries. Bring your own!

Location

Handy for Red Square, GUM, TSUM, galaxies of theaters – all possible on foot

But not so good for the metro, and worse for parking

Security

Lots of embassies and important residents (as well as you), so the area is very safe

Verdicts:

"This is Moscow as theater – everything stage perfect, staged, and made up"
"Wouldn't live anywhere else"

**Top 10 +/-
The list of all that matters most**

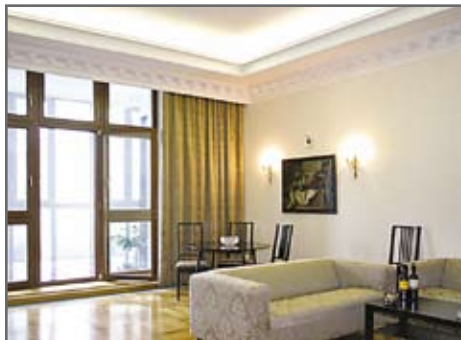
- 1 The Mayfair and Park Lane of the Moscow Monopoly board (with Stary Arbat of course)
 - 2 Lots of top-class expat accommodation
 - 3 At a price
 - 4 Very well served with restaurants, medical services, green spaces, churches, expat bars
 - 5 But not enough metro stations
 - 6 The top shops are eye watering ...
 - 7 and plastic card melting; selling furs and bangles, but not bread and jam
 - 8 Several kindergartens nearby – and on all the main senior schools' bus routes
 - 9 Very missable: Prices, traffic on the main roads
 - 10 Unmissable: The zoo, the pond, Pushkinskaya Ploshchad, strolling along Tverskoy Boulevard in the sun
- Thanks! I am indebted to the following, and more, for their expert and local insights: Leanne, John, Marina, Andrei Sado at Penny Lane Realty, Anna at www.eolia-relocation.ru, and EIS parents www.englishedmoscow.com*

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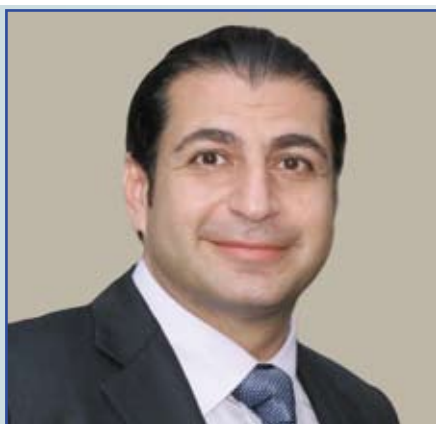
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PENNY LANE REALTY

“Apart from the rent, what bills do I have to pay, and why can’t I get them all included in the rental price?”



by Andrei Sado
Director, Elite Residential
Rental Department
Penny Lane Realty

This issue is one the most important things discussed by tenants and landlords during the process of signing a

rental agreement. It is not a corner stone of rental agreement, but very often if not properly discussed, can lead to feuds and difficult arguments during the rental term. Utilities in Russia include: water, gas, electricity, telephone bill, satellite TV and Internet connection. During the negotiation of the rental contract, parties can agree to any possible options, but most commonly water and gas are included in the rental price for an apartment. Electricity is quite often not included, and the decision to include it is considered in a way a bonus from the landlord. However parties may agree to a certain limit on the amount of the bill, and if this limit is passed, the tenant pays the difference. This limit is calculated and depends on the size of the apartment; usually a 2-3 bedroom apartment uses 200-300 kilowatts of electricity a month, which may cost between 200-300 rubles

per kW. Landlords are happy to assist clients in providing figures for average use of electricity in the apartment.

Regarding telephone bills, everything is much easier. Local calls are all included in the rental price, but international and inter-city calls are paid extra by tenants. Internet and Satellite TV are not included, because their use depends on the traffic and the channels chosen. Landlords usually pay those services themselves but provide bills for reimbursement. Most clients have no problems with this arrangement.

It is really important to mention all of your concerns to your real estate agent and he or she will gladly discuss them with the landlord. Do not put off mentioning these topics; discuss them before signing your lease, and your experience of living in Moscow will be much more pleasant.



by Michael Bartley
General Manager
Four Squares

One of the most frequent questions from first-time expat renters is about what is included in the rent and what they have to pay for themselves, or more precisely, where they have to pay themselves. Their office colleagues will have regaled them with tales of how they queue up monthly in their local Sberbank branch for days on end, fill in forms in Russian and submit the exact sum right to the last kopeck (because Sberbank cashiers never give change), just to pay a 61 rouble telephone bill. As a new expat you are gullible for anything.

In the vast majority of rental contracts the following items should be included in the rent;

Municipal charges (*жилищные услуги*), which are charged on a per-head basis and cover the cost of such things as maintenance and renovation of the building, the entrance and the stairwells. This bill is issued monthly.

Utilities charges – heating, gas and water supply. These charges come in the same bill as the municipal charges.

Fixed monthly fee for telephone connection.

The rent does not usually cover the following items;

Electricity.

The cost of long-distance and international calls.

Internet monthly traffic.

Satellite TV monthly tariff.

So, can I get any or all of the bills included in the rent?

Electricity is always worth haggling over. The landlord will usually argue that he cannot foretell how much electricity you are going to use, especially if you have a habit of leaving the air-conditioning on whilst you are at work. Tell him that you agree to an electricity cap – the landlord should pay up to an x amount of kW and you pay above that. The benchmark norm for electricity usage is 300 kW for a 2-room apartment, 400 kW for a 3-room apartment, 500 kW for a 4-room apartment.

International telephone calls; ask him to switch off the use of international calls, in which case he will probably

agree to pay for local phone calls. You can make all your long-distance and international calls using a telephone card or Skype. You will save money too.

Internet monthly traffic; there are many cable providers who bundle internet and satellite TV into one package. This makes the internet cheaper than using a stand-alone provider. A lot depends on if your building is connected to a fibre-optic network. You can get a basic Internet/satellite TV package for 600 rubles, which your landlord may agree to cover if you smile nicely.

Satellite TV – if you ask for the Sports, Movies and Adult package the landlord will likely tell you to take a running jump, but if you ask for the basic package and bundle it with the Internet he may agree to pay it.

You can inform the landlord that you are willing to pay more rent if he or she agrees to pay the bills for you, but talk with your realtor beforehand so that you know what the extra costs are, that way you will negotiate a fair rate.

If you do have to pay bills yourself, most expats get their cleaner to visit Sberbank on their behalf – just leave the bill and the money on the coffee table and she will pay it. If you don't have a cleaner you could ask a kind neighbor (yes, they do exist in Moscow) or colleague to pay yours the next time they are paying their own bills. A box of chocolates on special holidays and birthdays should do the trick! **P**

A Moving Wish-list

by Sherman Pereira,

Crown Relocations, Regional Director – Central and Eastern Europe



Any expat who has been posted to different locations around the world knows that moving your personal belongings across the road, to another town or even to the other side of the world is a daunting task. However the magnitude of such a move is increased by the number of years you have been living in a place, the number of people in your household (including pets) and the number of things that you're moving. To make the process easier and to reduce the stress levels, most choose not to attempt to do it themselves, but to hand the job over to a professional moving company. Try asking people who have tried to do this themselves to find out why.

How do you choose the right moving company, one might well ask? The trick is to make a wish-list of what qualities you believe an ideal moving company should possess, and work down from there, understanding that every time a criterion does not match your wish-list you increase the likelihood of things going wrong and hence your stress level skyrockets.

The number one thing to consider on your list is that the company you choose has its own office at your destination. This way you can ensure the same high levels of standards and procedures at both origin and destination, plus eliminating the need for making expensive overseas calls throughout the day for various clarifications. If needed, you can even visit the local office upon arrival and speak to someone face to face.


Global companies usually also have their act together with regards to certifications and accreditations, they have policies and guidelines mirroring industry standards, they have English-proficient staff and provide 'good old' customer service. If the company has no office at your destination, an acceptable option is to choose a company which works within the guidelines of a worldwide or regional moving organization; this will provide you some safeguards.

The second item to consider on your wish-list should be the financial security of the moving company. In these days of companies going to the wall, it is important to find out more about the finances of the moving company you are considering. The last thing you want to do is pay for a shipment only to find out that it's sitting in a warehouse somewhere or getting stuck in a port – because the company you have chosen is unable to pay their bills... Be careful, it happens!

Next is to make sure that the company you choose can handle any additional moving needs you might have, such as the transport of your pets or car, insurance coverage for your belongings during transit and services which will reduce your stress levels even further, such as home/school search programs, orientations and preview trips at your destination, spouse support, visas etc.

Other wish-list items can include; the company has a rich operational history, professionalism of the people you meet from the company and finally, the company can provide services at a good value for money, which doesn't necessarily mean the cheapest price.

By obtaining two or three quotes from reputable moving companies and comparing them based on the above, you'll increase your chances of a more seamless transition to your new home. Good luck!

I will be writing more about moving and relocations topics in next month's column and hopefully also answering some of your questions. Please write to me at: spereira@crownrelo.com 

How to: negotiate your way around the supermarket.

Although the old 'Produkty' shops, where you make your selection from across the counter before paying at a cash desk and then returning to claim your goods, are a dying breed, the new supermarkets are not always as user-friendly as one might hope. Here are some phrases to help you out:

Can't find what you're looking for?

Где можно найти горчицу? Where can I find mustard? (NB, mustard's in the accusative – it's the object of what you're looking for).

Не могу найти зубную пасту. I can't find the toothpaste.

Помогите, пожалуйста, я ищу изюм. Can you help me please, I'm looking for raisins.

At the deli counter:

Курица на костях? Is the chicken on the bone?

Скажите, пожалуйста, салат сегодняшний? Can you tell me please, is that salad fresh? (literally: today's).

В салате есть мясо/орехи? Is there meat/nuts in the salad?

Дайте, пожалуйста, двести грамм. Can I have 200g (just under half a pound) please?

Дайте, пожалуйста, грамм двести. Can I have 200g or so please? (the inversion makes the measurement approximate rather than precise).

Don't forget to weigh your produce before you hit the tills:

Взвесьте, пожалуйста. Could you weigh this please?

Это поштучно. It's by the unit (i.e. once price per item, you don't need to weigh).

Так много? Я не буду брать. So much? I'm not going to take it.

The bakery counter:

Дайте, пожалуйста, кусочек/целый торт. Can I have a piece/the whole cake.

Булочки у вас свежие? Are the rolls fresh?

Хорошо выглядит, а как на вкус? It looks good, what does it taste like?

The last hurdle:

Дисконтная карта есть? Do you have a discount card?

Пакет платный. You have to pay for a plastic bag.

Поменьше не будет? Do you have anything smaller?

Мы не принимаем кредитные карты. We don't take cards.

Courtesy of Ruslingua
www.ruslingua.com



BlackBerry Comes to Russia



text by Ian Mitchell

Everybody knows that Barak Obama was the first BlackBerry man to be elected President of the United States. Will he, won't he, be allowed to take his treasured Canadian smart-phone into the White House? That was the question that was on the world's backlit displays last winter. The answer came shortly before he was sworn into office in January: no, or at least: not just yet. Despite this setback, the international electronic community now knows that it is cool to be seen with a BlackBerry.

Amongst the coolest celebrities who own one are Mekhi Phifer, Ne-Yo, P Diddy, Seal, Milo Ventimiglia, Summer Glau and, of course, 50 Cent. A less cool B-List would include John McCain, Brad Pitt, Dustin Hoffman, Hillary Clinton, Harrison Ford, Guy Ritchie, Ross Hunter, Peaches and Pixey Geldof, Serena Williams and, just to show you don't have to be smart to own a smart-phone, David Beckham and his very slim wife, Victoria.

Nobody knows if Gordon Brown owns one, and President Medvedev is said to prefer his iPhone. Perhaps they don't realize that you can buy a Homer Simpson ringtone for your BlackBerry, or upload the theme-tune from *Mission Impossible*.

Why is this gadget so popular? Certainly it has impressive technical specifications, but one wonders whether Ivanka Trump really chose her BlackBerry for the 802.11 b/g wi-fi support, or if Paris Hilton plumped for hers on the basis of its 312 MHz Xscale ARMv5TE PXA900 CPU? Anything is possible, of course, but I am inclined to the view that they, like Amy Winehouse, Dakota Fanning and Lady Gaga, were happy with the one feature which BlackBerry offers which no other phone, computer, watch, handbag or make of trainer does: full spec, open-source, cultural cross-over Obama-compatibility. Whatever.

The fact that will be of greatest interest to *Passport* readers is that you can now, as of May 18 this year, get a top-of-the-range BlackBerry in Moscow. This is the BlackBerry Curve 8900, which is billed as the thinnest smart-phone to date. It is almost as thin as Victoria Beckham, and much cheaper, coming in at a mere 24,400 rubles.

At 110 grams, its weight puts Posh Spice to shame. Moreover, it features a "sleek and refined design" and, as the vendors claim, "feels comfortable for either one-handed or two-handed use". Also, it will sustain conversation for more than 5 hours, and keep going in "sleep" mode for 360 hours.

Unlike Mrs Beckham, it has 256 megabytes of memory, built-in GPS, an intuitive trackball and a full qwerty keyboard. The expandable memory slot permits the insertion of 16GB

cards, which will give you more songs than all the Spice Girls put together. And if you are into a visual groove, the Curve 8900 also has a 3.2 megapixel camera, with auto-focus, digital zoom, flash and video recording.

But we live in amazing times and one still has to ask: what is unique about the BlackBerry? It is not the only smart-phone on the market with more unusual features than an intergalactic mutant. So why chose BlackBerry rather than a less heavily celebrity-endorsed make?

I went to the Sukharevskaya Ploshchad shop of MTS, who are the only suppliers of BlackBerry in Russia, and put that question to the staff there. The basic answer is e-mail. If you want to be able to receive e-mails without having to go on-line to download them, you need BIS, or BlackBerry Internet Services, which is available only through MTS. For 350 roubles per month you can receive unlimited e-mail traffic, 24/7, on a sort of "broad-band" basis, enabling the user to edit texts, as well as to send and receive attachments in a variety of popular formats.

The service is on-line constantly, and you receive e-mails as they come into your mailbox. No more dial-up, "oh my God, I'm already at the meeting" misery with a BlackBerry.

That is the unique feature of this phone and the service MTS offers with it. I say "mailbox", but BIS allows you to register up to 10 different mailboxes, all of which are tracked constantly.

You pay for your telephoning and your internet traffic separately, on whatever tariff you choose, but your e-mail connection cost is fixed at 350 roubles per month, which is probably equivalent to the cost of three mailbox checks per day. How many of us make as few as that? And if you do, you can be hours behind with your inbox, and turning up to meetings that were canceled just as you were logging off last time.

This service operates everywhere within Russia that you can get MTS coverage. You can also "roam" internationally, though that is charged extra. For 3,500 roubles per month (a current special offer) you can have unlimited BIS roaming.

Finally, it should be mentioned that you do not have to buy so expensive a phone as the Curve 8900. MTS also offer the 8800, at 17,700 roubles, and the 8700g at 13,000. Naturally, "... at so low a price there is a cost in terms of functionality. On the 8700g you can talk for only 4 hours, not 5, before recharging the battery; the built-in memory is only 64 megabytes, not 256; and, horror of horrors, the phone weighs a pocket-sagging 134 grams. But that is probably less than the weight of all the credit and debit cards you needed to carry around in order to pay for your dial-up email services." **P**

What is:

7,686,369,774,870

2,465,099,745,779

X

Human Computer Meets Journalists at Imperial Tailoring

Photo by The Russia Corporate World magazine



text by Elena Krivovyaz

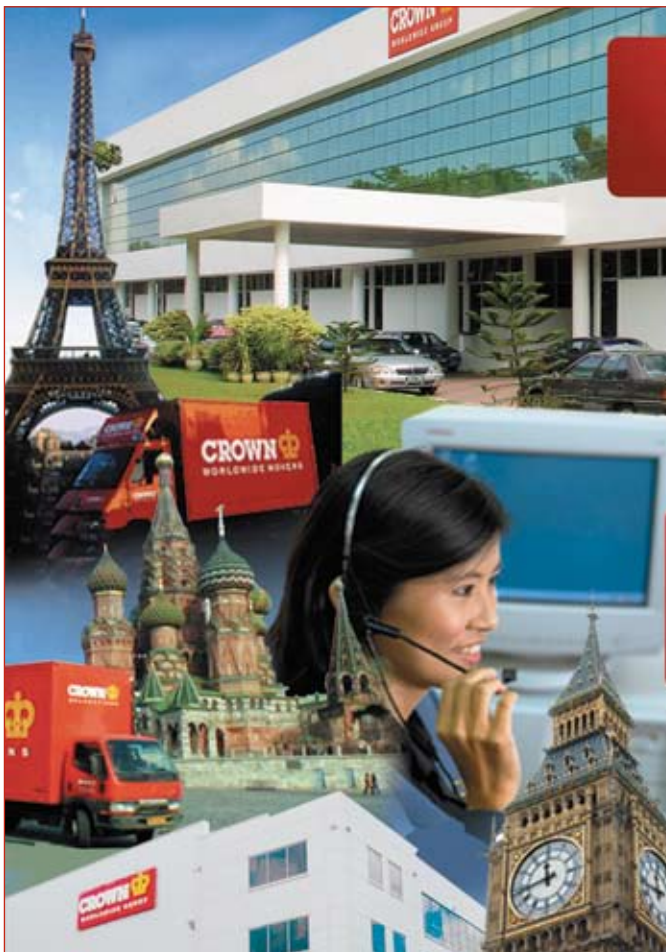
This meeting, called "Seminar on Mathematics Through Mind Dynamics" was held on June 10 in the context of The Year of India in Russia at the Imperial Tailoring shop. The presenter Shakun-

tala Devi is a world-renowned Indian mathematician.

She has been nicknamed the 'Human Computer' because of her extraordinary talents and skills in solving complex mathematical problems without any mechanical aid. For example, on June 18, 1980, Shakuntala Devi demonstrated the multiplication of two 13-digit numbers: 7,686,369,774,870 x 2,465,099,745,779 picked randomly by the computer department of Imperial College, London. She produced the correct answer of 18,947,668,177,995,426,462,773,730 in just 28 seconds. Devi can find the cube root of 332 812 557 in under a minute. For number-crunching feats such as this,

she earned herself entries into the Guinness Book of World Records in 1980 and 1995. Devi has demonstrated her unique talents to the students of many universities and has met well-known figures such as Hillary Clinton, Nelson Mandela, Indira Gandhi and others.

On June 10, the audience was allowed to give her quizzes and puzzles of their own to solve. She solved them all. For example, she asked me to give her my date of birth, and when I said July 29, 1982, she replied promptly that it was a Thursday. I checked this in my mobile phone (it took me a minute) and realized she was right. After the quizzes, the guests enjoyed scrumptious Indian food and drinks. **P**



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Diary of a Tsar-in-Waiting

by Michael Romanov

The audience at last night's private concert by ABBA, the Swedish fogey-pop band, was small. In fact, including myself and my wife, Bettina, there were just six of us. The guest of honor was a spring-heeled but unsmiling blonde with laser eyes who, if I caught him right, said his name was Waldemort Pluto. Apparently, he owns the large white office block down by the Moscow River, opposite the Ukraine Hotel, and is looking for tenants.

'I'm your man,' I said. 'I need more office space as I am running for Tsar.'

He had the decency to look surprised. While the ABBA's sang their 1974 Eurovision-winning song, 'Borodino', I gave him my card and explained that I was leader of the Horizontal Party. Our policy is to reverse the policies of the Vertical Party. In particular, we intend to stop the erection of so many high-rise buildings in Moscow. When my great-uncle Nicky was in charge, a century ago, the city had a low-rise look, and the inhabitants were late-risers. I think both trends are desirable. The longer we all stay horizontal, the better.

Gospodin Pluto looked unimpressed. He said his building was tall, and also that he likes to wake early and do an hour's off-shirtly power-chesting in the upright position every morning. Without another word, he wandered off to mingle with my wife. I got the impression he did not consider me an ideal tenant. Perhaps it was because Bettina is taller than him.

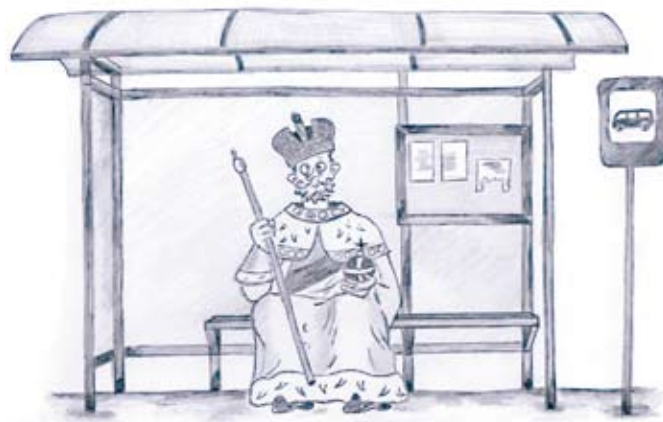
Busy all morning getting the office ready for Barack O'Bama's visit on the 6th. We've been hanging Irish flags all over the place, and ordering up kegs of Guinness. I am not sure what the protocol is, but it seems that he intends paying a quick call on President Medvedev before he checks in.

Barack and I are old mates from our Kenya days. My Uncle Vsevolod had a coffee estate in the Nguni highlands and I was often sent out from prep school during the winter holidays to stay with him. Young Barack and I used to run around barefoot together, chasing old pram wheels and stealing fruit from the avocado plantations.

Though we've both gone straight since then, we have kept in touch. So when he texted me recently to say he was hitting Moscow for a couple of days in July, and could he crash at my place because the embassy's such a drag, I said, 'Only a pleasure, Barack old boy!'

The news that 69-year-old Phil Spector has been sent to prison for the murder of Lena Clarkson hits Rublyovka like a bombshell.

I first met the legendary Wall of Sound producer when I was dating Ronnie Bennett who, despite her name, physique and



muscular voice was actually female. As a teenager, my father used to send me to New York for the Christmas holidays, I think in the hope that I would learn the "facts of life" there without causing him the embarrassment of having to explain them to me.

Be that as it may, Bennett and her band, The Ronettes, were playing at the Peppermint Lounge on West 45th Street, where Jackie Kennedy, Marilyn Monroe and even Greta Garbo were occasionally to be seen tapping a discrete toe. They were all too old for me, so I sent a bottle of champagne round to Ronnie's dressing room. The result was that it was actually me who, because I was still under age, provided the inspiration for The Ronettes' first hit: Be My Baby.

But back to Spector, who still had his own hair. He had a mad quality which was both attractive and frightening. Tinged with the hyper-active radicalism that has animated many of the world's most creative people – Leon Trotsky, the Ukrainian military artist, is a local example – Spector approached life with gun in hand, so to speak. Trotsky did the same, though he used his weapon more often than the mad music producer ever did. Despite this, Spector will be 88 when first eligible for parole.

I doubt he will make it that far. You only have to look at the huge, absurd and very amusing wigs he wore in court to appreciate just what a culture-shock the California prison system will be to this sensitive man. The Marsha Hunt-style, Afro one he sported during the chauffeur's testimony must have been almost two feet tall, as high as the bee-hive Ronnie was wearing when I first met her.

Fittingly, Trotsky suffered a more grisly fate than Spector, being killed when an agent of Stalin's plunged an ice axe into the back of his head while he was at his desk in Mexico, writing. If only the founder of the Red Army had worn Afro wigs as huge, thick and impenetrable as Spector's, the axe would have got lost in the tangle. I have always said that the problem with military artists is that they lack a sense of humor.

Likewise Moscow property owners. In Mistah Pluto's case Bettina discovered on washing day that his laser-like stare had burnt tiny, pin-point holes in my dress shirt at nipple height. If I ever have to visit him in an official capacity, I think I'll present him with a two foot-high Afro wig. That'd wipe the frown off his face. He'd look taller, too. **P**

Next month: What happened when Barack O'Bama hit town – and the Guinness

Naomi Britz



Those of you who have studied Russian may have met Naomi Britz, founder of the Ruslingua language school. For friends and acquaintances, her departure is a loss. Let's hope she'll be winging her way back here soon, despite her plans. Naomi studied Russian at Bristol University (UK), and came out to Moscow directly after graduation. After 3 years working in advertising, she thought she had had enough of Moscow (familiar story?) and went home but after two years in the UK she was back. Naomi has lived in Moscow for 8 out of the last 10 years.

What caused you to come to Russia – and what did you leave behind in the UK?

This time round I've been here for 5 years. I'd tried my hand teaching at a state secondary school in the UK but was always more passionate about the work I was also doing at a private English language school, teaching adults from around the world. My students were genuinely grateful and excited when I explained a word, the meaning of which had long eluded them, or provided them with a new phrase they were sure to use. I found this incredibly satisfying and felt inspired. I realized there was a way to combine my joy in providing people with real communication skills and my enthusiasm for the Russian

language by moving out here and starting my own language school. I knew first-hand how incredibly badly Russian is taught, really old school, with all the emphasis on complicated endings and conjugations. I decided I could do better and designed a course putting the language in context, teaching useful words and phrases and keeping the grammar to a minimum.

I miss my friends and family in the UK, but that's all. I decided long ago that I didn't want to follow a traditional career path, that I'd rather do things my own way, so I don't regret having gotten out of London, opting out of the big money and the rat race. And there were a lot of things about the UK I didn't mind leaving behind. You only have to ride a London bus with a crowd of school kids on it to understand what those things are. The experience of teaching in an inner-city school, the policies of which I could not condone, honestly made me feel depressed about teaching in the UK.

Having spent most of your career thus far in Russia, what do you consider your biggest accomplishment?

For sure my biggest accomplishment has been negotiating Russian bureaucracy, about which I had no inkling when I arrived, excited and eager to start doing something worthwhile. You would not believe the paperwork involved in setting up a school. An educational establishment, even a private one for adults, has to be licensed. The premises need certifying, whether or not you teach on them (we mostly teach on location). Everything has to be ok'd by the health and safety authorities, the fire authorities, the licensing commission... I've had to learn about tax regimes, company charters, HR regulations – believe me, nothing has been user-friendly.

I guess I was most proud when one of the girls who worked for me took her mother on holiday to Spain one summer – neither of them had left the country before. I was so pleased to think that I'd created an employment situation which had made this possible.

Why did you stay here so long?

Not for the food, that's for sure. I can't stomach *pelmeni*, *kasha*, *kvas*... though I have developed an odd fondness for dill. Here I have been able to do something I truly consider worthwhile and it's all been incredibly exciting. I felt like my life in the UK was staid, like the most exciting thing I could accomplish was to book an exotic holiday. Mad things happen here in Russia all the time. You're always having to deal with one crazy thing or another, and while that's frustrating, each time you do manage to achieve something, you experience true satisfaction.

I've also enjoyed meeting such a variety of high-achieving people from all different walks of life. The expats drawn to Russia are generally passionate, enthusiastic, even eccentric people. I've loved spending time with them.

Among the wonderful people I've come across here is the most lovely American, who I met at a party a year and a half ago. In fact, I'd planned to stay here for many years to come but leaving comes as part of the package: he's a diplomat at the US Embassy and he isn't supposed to stay here forever. Now that I've chosen marriage over Moscow and have agreed to leave with Geoff, I must admit I'm ready to go. I'm leaving Ruslingua in capable hands and I'm excited about my next adventure. **P**

Restaurants & Bars

Academy
Adriatico
Adzhanta
Aist
Alrosa
American Bar & Grill
Apshu
Art Bazar
Art Chaikhona
Australian Open
Baan Thai
Beavers
BeerHouse
Bellezza
Bistrot
Blooming Sakura
Blue Elephant
Bookafe
Cafe des Artistes
Cafe Atlas
Cafe Courvoisier
Cafe Cipollino
Cafe Gorozhanin
Cafe Michelle
Cafe Mokka
Cantinetta Antinori
Carre Blanc
Che
Chenonceau
China Dream
Cicco Pizza
Coffee Bean
Colonna
Costa Coffee
Cutty Sark
Da Cicco
Darbar
Djonka
Dom Kompozitorov
Donna Klara
Esterhazy
Fat Mo
Feras
French Cafe
Gallery of Art
Gandhara
Ginger Cafe
Gorki
Grand Havana
Guilly's
Hard Rock Cafe
Hotdogs
Ichiban Boshi
Il Patio
Italianets
Ju-Ju
Khajuraho
Labardans
Liga Pub
Louisiana Steak House
Mikstura
Molly Gwynn's Pub
Navarros
Night Flight
Nostalgie
Old Havana Club
Pancho Villa
Pizza Express
Pizza Maxima

Planeta Sushi
Porto Maltese
Prognoz Pogody
Pyramid
Real McCoy
Rendezvous
R&B Cafe
Scandinavia
Seiji
Shafran
Shamrock
Shanti
Shokolad
Silvers Irish Pub
Simple Pleasures
Starlite Diner
Sudar
SunGate
T. G. I. Friday's
Talk of the Town
Tapa de Comida
Tesoro
The Place
Trattoria Macaroni
Tunnel
Vanilla Sky
Vogue Cafe
Vesna
White Sun of the Desert
Yapona Mama
Zapravochnya

Hotels

Akvarel Hotel Moscow
Ararat Park Hyatt
Art-Hotel
Barvikha Hotel&spa
Belgrad
Courtyard by Marriott
Globus
Golden Apple Hotel
East-West
Iris Hotel
Katerina-City Hotel
Marriott Grand
Marriot Royal Aurora
Marriott Tverskaya
Metropol
Mezhdunarodnaya 2
Maxima Hotels
National
Novotel 1, 2
Proton
Radisson Slavyanskaya
Renaissance
Sheraton Palace
Soyuz
Sretenskaya
Swissotel Krasnye Holmy
Tiflis
Volga
Zavidovo
Zolotoye Koltso

Business Centers

American Center
Business Center Degtyarny
Business Center Mokhovaya
Dayev Plaza
Ducat Place 2

Dunaevsky 7
Gogolevsky 11
Iris Business Center
Japan House
Lotte Plaza
Meyerkhod House
Morskoi Dom
Mosalarko Plaza
Mosbusiness Center
Moscow Business Center
Mosenka 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Novinsky Passage
Olympic Plaza
Romanov Dvor
Samsung Center
Sodexho

Embassies

Australia
Austria
Belgium
Brazil
Canada
China
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Delegation of EC
Egypt
Finland
France
Germany
Hungary
Iceland
Indonesia
India
Israel
Italy
Japan
Kuwait
Luxembourg
Malaysia
Mauritius
Mexico
Netherlands
New Zealand
Norway
Pakistan
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Saudi Arabia
Singapore
Slovenia
South Africa
South Korea
Spain
Sweden
Thailand
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom
United States

Medical Centers

American Clinic
American Dental Clinic
American Dental Center
American Medical Center
European Dental Center

European Medical Center
German Dental Center
International SOS
US Dental Care
MedinCentre

Others

American Chamber of Commerce
American Express
Anglo-American School
American Institute of Business and Economics
Astravel
Aviatransagentstvo
Baker Hughes
British International School
Cara & Co.
Citibank
Concept MR, ZAO
Dr. Loder's
DHL
English International School
Ernst & Young
Evans Property Services
Expat Salon
Foreign Ministry Press Center
General Electric
General Motors CIS
Gold's Gym
Halliburton International
Hinkson Christian Academy
Imperial Tailoring Co.
Indian Shop
Interpochta
Ital-Market
JAL
JCC
Jones Lang LaSalle
LG Electronics
Mega/IKEA
Moscow Voyage Bureau
Move One Relocations
NB Gallery
Park Place
Passport Office
PBN Company
Penny Lane Realty
Philips Russia
Pilates Yoga
Pokrovsky Hills
PricewaterhouseCoopers
Procter & Gamble
Pulford
Reuters
Renaissance Capital
Respublika
Ruslingua
Russo-British Chamber of Commerce
St. Andrew's Anglican Church
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