

PASSPORT MOSCOW

JUNE 2009

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The Low-Down on Fitness Clubs

The Nanai People of the Amur River

The Moscow Hash House Harriers

Cartoonist Boris Efimov

The Moscow Metro



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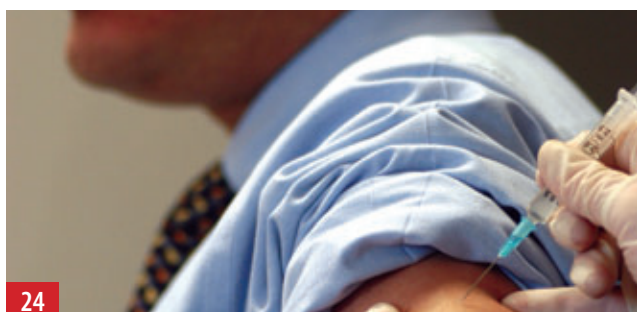




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John Ortega
Owner and Publisher

– to try out a dram or two of Bruichladdich whisky. The editor, carefully disguised as a Sassenach Kulak, managed to commandeer a wee bit more.

In a major scoop, *Passport* has secured the rights to the diary of Michael Romanov, pretender to the Russian throne. He has recently emigrated from London to Moscow in order to campaign for election as Tsar Michael II. The first edition of this exclusive material is printed in this issue.

Passport Magazine has been through many changes since the first issue was published way back in rosy-spectacled 2003. Our editorial mission, even in times of crisis, remains the same: to provide news, articles and information useful and entertaining for the community of English-speaking expats living in Russia.

If you are an organizer of such events and wish to be included in the calendar of events, or reviewed specially, please write to me: j.harrison@passportmagazine.ru

Still on the community front, in this issue we cover the Moscow Hash Harriers runners, who (despite their name), have nothing to do with drugs, and everything to do with living life to the full. We print an article on Big Brothers Big Sisters, a charity which is being supported by a number of foreign companies, yet which members of the expat community know surprisingly little about. Without wishing to appear alarmist, we publish an article in this issue on the danger; perceived or real, of swine flu for those of us living in Russia, and assess the risk.

Enjoy!

To help you relax, we take you on a trip down the Moscow river, on a tour of the Moscow metro, a quick spin up the Amur to visit the Nanai people, introduce you to famous Soviet cartoonist Boris Efimov, give you the low-down on fitness clubs, review two books that you might actually read. We massage your crisis-worn brows with an important Out & About communication concerning a marauding Scot who cajoled unsuspecting Russians – and a few willing expats

Thierry Spinnelli

We post this article about Bordeaux on the heels of very sad news for the Moscow expat and wine community. By now most may have heard of the tragic end of the lives of Thierry and Olga Spinelli and their two-year-old daughter Elisa. Thierry was formerly marketing manager for Chateau Le Grand Vostok in Krasnodar region from its founding and had worked in the Moscow wine trade as a marketer since 1999. For the past three years a French wine advocate, Olga headed the wine club at Simple Wines. I did not know his family but was acquainted with Thierry since his time at Chateau Le Grand Vostok. He was a kind, courteous and quiet person. He made a significant and fine impact on the wine industry, and will be remembered well by all who had the opportunity to work with him. He deserves more than a few well-earned toasts. Reserve a few drops for him and his family the next time you open a bottle.

Irish Trade Delegation

A reception was held in the Irish Embassy on May 20 to mark the arrival in Russia of a 30-strong trade mission from Ireland. The team was led by Irish Trade Minister, Minister Billy Kelleher, and the reception was hosted by Justin Harman, Ireland's long-serving ambassador in Russia. The trade mission was organized by Enterprise Ireland, the Irish government agency promoting Irish industry abroad. Co-hosting the event was the Association of European Businesses, which was represented by Dr Frank Schauff, the Chief Executive Officer. The usual generous Irish hospitality was enjoyed by a large crowd of guests. Both Jameson's whiskey and pints of "porter" were on offer. There is a feeling that "Ireland is open for business", as Billy Kelleher said in his address to the gathering.

Announcement:

Summer Club at EIS: 6-17 July

Education and fun for 3-15s; all welcome. Languages, arts, music, sport & games

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Monday, 1st

Djivan Gasparyan (Duduk)

Legendary duduk virtuoso Djivan Gasparyan with his new program. In Armenian Duduk means "a soul of an apricot tree". In 2002, Gasparyan received the World Music Expo award for distinguished service to musical art and later was awarded a Golden Globe for the Gladiator soundtrack. The ethnic sound of the Armenian Duduk also contributed to compositions by such famous musicians as Peter Gabriel, Lionel Richie, Brian May, Michael Brook, Brian Eno and Boris Grebenshchikov.

MMDM Svetlanov Hall, 19:00



Lara Fabian

Lara was born in 1970 in the Belgian town of Etterbeek. Her Flemish father and Sicilian mother, inspired by the theme song of the film *Doctor Zhivago*, named her Lara. Right from the age of five, Lara knew she wanted to sing. Her songs *Croire* and *Je sais* sold 500,000 and 300,000 copies respectively.

Operetta Theater, 19:00, also 2nd

Tuesday, 2nd

Mötley Crüe (rock concert)

A Grammy Award-nominated American hard rock band formed in Los Angeles, California in 1981. Mötley Crüe has sold more than 50 million album copies worldwide. As one of the first and most influential heavy metal bands of the 1980s, Mötley Crüe had a series of hit albums, the biggest and most noteworthy being 1989's *Dr. Feelgood*.

B1 Maximum, 21:00

Ocean of Compassion (Tibetan-Buddhist music festival)

Ocean of Compassion is a grandiose ethnic rock-festival with participants mostly being famous performers of ethnic music from countries and

regions practicing Tibetan Buddhism – Kalmykia, Buryatia, Tuva, Mongolia and Tibet. This unique festival aims to present music that is based on Buddhist ideas of compassion and kindness.

MMDM, Svetlanov Hall, 19:00

Wednesday, 3rd

Foreign Employees in Your Company (business-conference)

The program of this RBCC-organized conference includes: Labor legislation changes review; Recruitment and hiring trends; Attracting foreign employees; Is there a need for foreign staff?; Labor relations with expatriate employees: what should be considered?; Hiring/firing foreign employees; Employers' most frequent violations in relation to foreign individuals. The conference is in Russian, translation available. Price: 12,000 rubles (VAT is not included). Registration ends: 02.06.2009, 16:00. To receive additional information regarding registration, please contact Viktoria Klimova, 232-4774, 232-1769.

Marriott Royal Aurora, 10:00

Masterpieces of the Old Masters (classical music)

Soloist of the Moscow Philharmonic.

Roman Catholic Cathedral of Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 19:30

Thursday, 4th

Igor Butman Big Band, Vadim Eilenkrieg Quintet (jazz)

Butman will present two first releases issued on his new label: Igor Butman Big Band's new record *Moscow @ 3 am* featuring music of the prominent composer Nikolay Levinovsky, and the album of Big Band's soloist, trumpet player Vadim Eilenkrieg *The Shadow Of Your Smile*, recorded as a modern jazz joint project with members of the legendary Brecker Brothers.

MMDM, Svetlanov Hall, 19:30



International Women's Club of Moscow

General Meeting

GlavUpDk Cultural Center, 10:00

Friday, 5th

Anglomania (art festival)

The British Embassy and *Seasons* magazine is holding a festival of English culture, art and music. Organizers promise that guests can visit Britain for just 300 rubles. The only thing to do is to come to the Hermitage Garden. A two-story red bus, English sausages, Oxford lectures, porcelain, Shakespeare and much more...

Hermitage Garden, 19:00, also 6th and 7th, details at www.seasons.com.ru



Godskitchen: Marcus Shulz, Sander Van Doorn, Mehno de Jong

Godskitchen is an international club brand which is associated with dance music and is responsible for organizing numerous events worldwide. The company runs a club night of the same name at their own nightclub AIR, in Birmingham and also has an in-house music label. The Godskitchen event in Moscow features Markus Schulz (Germany), Sander van Doorn (Netherlands) and Menno de Jong (Netherlands).

Pavilion Production, 32, Donskaya Ul., 23:00

Moscow Mellow Divas

The British Women's Club of Moscow proudly presents Moscow Mellow Divas featuring folk songs, spirituals, jazz, operetta and show songs. Tickets can be purchased at Starbucks on Stary Arbat every Tuesday from 10am to 12 noon when BWC members meet informally or contact Christina, tel: 755-3578, email: igoemac@hotmail.com. Proceeds will be donated to: Preodelenie, Nastenka, ARC Open Arts Theatre. A contribution will also be made to the St. Andrew's Church Restoration Fund in thanks for hosting the event. Admission: Adults – 300 rubles, children – 150 rubles.

St. Andrew's Church, 19:00, also 6th (at the British Embassy)

Saturday, 6th

Usadba Jazz

Every year more than 30,000 guests come to the Arkhangelskoye Estate to visit Russia's biggest open-air jazz festival, Usadba Jazz. The performances take place on 5 different stages and last from 2 to 3 days. Every year Usadba Jazz welcomes more than fifty bands from Russia and abroad. This year Usadba features Andrei Kondakov and Brazil All Stars (Russia-USA), Alexei Aigi and 4'33" (Russia), Branford Marsalis Quartet (USA), Nils Landgren and Funk Unit (Sweden), Danilo Rea Trio (Italy), Danilo Rea Trio (Italy) and many others.

Arkhangelskoye Estate, find details at: www.arkhangelskoe.ru/eng



Monday, 8th

Andrea Mantegna: Hole Family (exhibition)

One-painting exhibition. Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506) was one of the foremost north Italian painters of the 15th century. A master of perspective and foreshortening, he made important contributions to the compositional techniques of Renaissance painting.

Pushkin Fine Arts Museum, until July, 19th

Illustration Festival, Free Wi-Fi

The Moscow Museum of Modern Art with Andrei Bartenev presents the third festival of young artists exploring the illustration genre, Free Wi-Fi. The festival is comprised of more than 1000 new illustrations and 50 video works. The festival program consists of 3 parts: collection of illustrations, innovative video projects, and personal projects reflecting one or another modern cultural trend.

Zurab Tsereteli Art Gallery, until June, 28th

Tuesday, 9th

Shumann, Brahms, Beethoven, Mendelssohn-Bartholdi (classical music)

MMDM Chamber Hall, 19:00

British Women's Club presents:

Members Coffee Morning

British Embassy, 10:00

Wednesday, 10th

Dream Theater (rock)

Dream Theater is known for its high-energy performances. While they have released several live albums – *Live at the Marquee*, recorded at the London club; *Live in Japan*, recorded during the Music in Progress tour in 1993; and a triple CD and DVD, *Live Scenes from New York* – they remain one of heavy metal's most bootlegged bands.

Luzhniki Sports Complex, 19:00

Thursday, 11th

Nino Katamadze and Insight (jazz)

Nino is a Georgian female jazz singer who has received many different awards during her career: Best Singer of the Year (Ovation Prize, Russia, 2002), Best Composer and Performer (Russia, 2002), Best Original Music (Russia, 2002), Show Business Person of the Year (People of the Year Prize, Russia, 2003), Best Female Singer of the Year (Mega Prize, Russia, 2003), For Exceptional Contributions to the Development of Georgian Music and many others.

B1 Maximum, 19:00

Nicolas Bearde (jazz)

A supremely gifted singer and entertainer who is fluent in soul, jazz and R&B, Nicolas Bearde has been compared to vocal icons like Lou Rawls, Marvin Gaye, Donny Hathaway, and Jon Lucien. Nicolas has compiled an impressive list of credits to his name that includes film roles in *True Crime* with Clint Eastwood, *Final Analysis* with Richard Gere and Kim Basinger, roles on the television series *Nash Bridges* and *Monk*. Besides maintaining this busy sideline as an actor and voice-over artist, he continues to write music and perform concerts at clubs and Jazz festivals around the country.

Soyuz Kompozitorov Club, 20:30, also 12th

Pet Shop Boys (pop)

Pet Shop Boys' cheeky, smart, and utterly danceable music established them among the most commercially and critically successful groups of their era. On March 23, 2009, the album *Yes* was released. *Yes* is this electronic dance band's tenth studio album and reached No.4 in the UK album charts on March

29, 2009, the group's highest placing since their 1996 album *Bilingual*.

Luzhniki Sports Complex, 19:00

Pumajaw (concert)

The ethereal Scottish outfit Pumajaw are back with their retrospective album *Favorites*. This follows hard on the tracks of last year's *Curiosity Box* album, and is no less weird and wonderful than the previous four records.

Central House Of Artists, 19:00

Wednesday, 17th

The Producers (musical)

A musical adapted by Mel Brooks and Thomas Meehan from Brooks' 1968 film of the same name, with lyrics by Brooks and music by Brooks and Glen Kelly.

Et Cetera Theater, 19:00, also 18th, 19th and 20th



Thursday, 18th

AmCham Healthcare Committee Meeting

Four working groups will be formed during the meeting: Free Trade Working Group; Legislative Working Group; Customs Working Group; GR Working Group.

Contact Svetlana Kubrakova at AmCham either by e-mail, sk@amcham.ru or by fax, 961-2142

Aziza Miller (jazz)

"Aziza has mined the depths of black music to come up with a sound that is sophisticated, melodic and funky as hell".... so says Kenny Barron, jazz pianist and composer. Not surprising, there's a richness and warmth to her vocals that is enveloping. Every song, whether it's a vocal or instrumental, a jazz piece or sophisticated rap poetry, is articulated with impeccable style and ease.

Soyuz Kompozitorov Club, 20:30, also 19th

What's On in Moscow

Friday, 26th

MIGS Music & Arts Festival

A brand new type of entertainment that includes a day and night program. Daytime is dedicated to all kinds of creative activities: sound, design, photography and video installations. Night is a party time and famous headliners such as Moon Unit, one of the most successful electronic bands,

Moderat (Germany) and many others will make clubbers dance until 6am.

35 mm, Pokrovka, 47, 13:00



Monday, 29th

Faith No More

Faith No More is an American experimental rock band which formed in San Francisco, California. Faith No More combines elements of heavy metal, funk, progressive rock, hip hop, hardcore punk and jazz among many others, and have been hailed as an influential rock band.

B1 Maximum, 21:00

VENUES

Bolshoi Theater

1 Teatralnaya Ploshchad
(495) 250-7317
M. Teatralnaya
www.bolshoi.ru

B1 Maximum Club

11 Ul. Ordzhonikidze
(495) 648-6777
M. Leninsky Prospekt
www.b1club.ru

Central House Of Artists

10 Krymsky Val
(495) 238-1955
M. Park Kultury
www.cha.ru

CiCterna Hall

26/1 Prospect Mira (The Ring Line)
771-6937
www.cicterna-hall.ru

Chekhov Library/Cultural Center

6 Strastnoi Bulvar
M. Chekhovskaya
www.elemoscow.net

Fine Art Gallery

3/10 Ul. Bolshaya Sadovaya
(495) 251-7649
M. Mayakovskaya

Helikon Opera on the Arbat

11 Novy Arbat, Bldg. 2
(495) 290-0971
M. Arbatskaya
www.helikon.ru

Ikra Club

8 Kazakova Ulitsa
(495) 778-5651
M. Kurskaya
www.ikraclub.ru

Luzhniki Sports Complex

24 Luzhnetskaya Naberezhnaya
(495) 785-9717
M. Sportivnaya
Luzhniki.ru

Mir Concert Hall

11 Tsvetnoi Bulvar, Bldg. 2
(495) 624-9647
M. Tsvetnoi Bulvar
www.mir-hall.ru

Moscow Chaikovsky Conservatory

Grand Hall
11 Ul. Bolshaya Nikitskaya
(495) 629-8183
www.mosconsrv.ru

MMDM

52 Kosmadianskaya Naberezhnaya, Bldg. 2
(495) 730-4350
M. Paveletskaya
www.mmdm.ru

Moscow Museum of Modern Arts

Various venues
(495) 694-6660
www.mmoma.ru

New Opera

3 Karetny Ryad, Hermitage Garden
(495) 694-0868
M. Chekhovskaya
www.novayaopera.ru

Olimpiisky Sports Complex

16 Olimpiisky Prospekt
(495) 688-3777
M. Prospekt Mira
www.olimpik.ru

Stanislavsky and Nemirovitch-Danchenko Musical Theater

17 Bolshaya Dmitrovka
(495) 629-8388
M. Tverskaya
www.stanislavskymusic.ru

State Kremlin Palace

1 Ul. Vozdvizhenka
(495) 628-5232
M. Biblioteka im. Lenina
www.gkd.ru

Taganka Theater

76/21 Ul. Zemlyanoi Val
(495) 915-1217
M. Taganskaya
www.taganka.theatre.ru

Tchaikovsky Concert Hall

4/31 Triumfalnaya Ploshchad
(495) 232-5353
M. Mayakovskaya

Tochka Club

6 Leninsky Prospekt, Bldg. 7
M. Oktyabrskaya (The Ring Line)
www.clubtochka.ru

Winzavod

1/6 The Fourth Syromyatnichesky Pereulok
M. Kurskaya (The Ring Line)
winzavod.ru

World Trade Center

12 Krasnopresnenskaya Naberezhnaya
(495) 258-1212
www.wtcmoscow.ru

16 Tonn

6 Presnensky Val, Bldg. 7
(495) 253-5300
M. Ulitsa 1905 Goda
www.16tons.ru

June Holidays

text by Elena Rubinova



Saturday, June 6th **Pushkinsky Day of Russia**

Alexander Pushkin's place at the center of the Russian literary canon is unassailable. He is not only the nation's most revered bard but also the inventor of the modern Russian language. This is the man who bridged the gap between the stylized literary Russian of the past and the vernacular.

For all these reasons, Pushkin's birthday has been a nationwide holiday since Soviet times when it was marked as a national day of poetry with poetry readings, recitals, discussion groups and lectures.

One can scarcely find a man or woman in Russia who cannot at least manage a line or two of Pushkin's poetry as if approving the belief that a poet in Russia is more than a poet. It is not unusual to see a child barely four feet tall take the stage and recite from Pushkin by heart for 20 minutes or so. Several years ago an opinion poll held across Russia asked people which Russian they thought had made the biggest contribution to world history. Alexander Pushkin, came second, in between Peter the Great and Lenin. In 1998 the decree of President Yeltsin turned this day into Pushkinsky Day of Russia.

Sunday, June 7th **Troitsa (the Trinity)**

The Holiday of the Holy Trinity is one of the few feasts that is celebrated as a doctrine instead of an event. The day is devoted to the contemplation of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity that sees God as an indivisible unity, but also as revealed in three distinct roles, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The actual Descent of the Holy Spirit also has symbolic meaning: the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples on the fiftieth day after Easter and they, never having studied, began to speak in various foreign languages. Through unification, people became united in God. Trinity Sunday is the first Sunday after Pentecost.

Despite the fact that for decades of communism, the celebration of most holidays and religious rituals was forbidden, the custom of decorating churches and houses with trees, plants and flowers, and most often in Russia with young birch branches has survived.

According to the Orthodox calendar, early summer around Trinity Sunday is believed to be a suitable time for weddings.



Friday, June 12th, **Russia Day**

This is Russia's newest holiday that until very recently was called and celebrated as Independence Day. For most people in Russia the holiday is confusing because more than a decade after the events of the early 1990s, ideological roots of the holiday split society into the supporters and opponents of Russia's first president, Boris Yeltsin.

On June 12, 1990 the First Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation adopted the Declaration of Sovereignty of the Russian Federation thus officially burying the Soviet Union. Since 1994, June 12 has been proclaimed Russia's national holiday. The creation of the post of the President of the Russian Federation, the adoption of a new Constitution reflecting the new political reality, along with the national flag and anthem of the Russian Federation, were major landmarks in the consolidation of Russian statehood. In 1998 President Yeltsin suggested that the holiday should be renamed Russia Day to avoid discussions about the collapse of the Soviet Union and to emphasize a new national agenda. Officially the name Russia Day was approved in 2002.

Opinions differ whether the time has come yet for a national holiday like this. Many still believe that national holidays should be born inside society before authorities officially institutionalize them. An opinion poll held in 2008 in 46 regions of the country showed that 58% of Russians still do not attribute great political significance to this date, but take it as an extra chance to enjoy an official day off usually spent in the countryside. The early summer is a perfect time for such a holiday in Russia.

Monday, June 22nd **The Day of Memory and Grief**

Unlike Victory Day on May 9, which is a triumphant event dedicated to winning the Great Patriotic War, June 22

is viewed as a sad, but significant turning point in the country's history. It is a memorial day when the country commemorates the beginning of war with Nazi Germany that broke out on June 22, 1941. On June 8, 1996 the Russian president signed a decree establishing the date as the Day of Memory for war victims. The day is often observed with candle lighting ceremonies and reburials of soldiers in collective graves by volunteer groups that continue their search for the bodies of hundreds of thousands of Soviet soldiers that have never been found.

In 2006, the Russian Ministry of Defense published lists of missing soldiers on a memorial website. This gave another impulse to the work of volunteer battlefield detectives. More than 400 search groups currently work across Russia, especially in the regions that were famous for battlegrounds of the Great Patriotic War. Teaming up with professional historians and archivists and using modern metal detectors, these volunteer groups have achieved really amazing results: since 1990 over 120,000 soldiers have been reburied.



Look At Me. Lorenzo Agius in Moscow



Lorenzo Agius is often referred to as a "Knight of photography." And that is no mean achievement. He is a Maltese photographer who studied arts in England. Agius started working at 18 years of age as a photographer's assistant, then a freelancer and soon moved to his own projects for *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair* and other glamour magazines. Agius made his mark with a series of photographs taken on the sets of the movie *Trainspotting*. Inspired by Richard Avedon's series of photographs, *In the American West*, Agius became the author of the *Trainspotting* posters with Ewan McGregor that hung in students' rooms all over England in the 1990s. Since then he has gradually become one of the top celebrity photographers in the United Kingdom. He never uses the same metaphor in portraits, putting accents on almost invisible details. "I am lucky," Agius says, "to work with very famous people. In a world when my characters are studied very closely, I try to catch something they have never shown to the public."

Lorenzo Agius's exhibition, *Look At Me*, is presented indoors and outdoors at Spiridonov House and in Stoleshnikov Pereulok.

Spiridonov's House
M. Gnezdikovsky Pereulok, 9/8, Bldg. 1
May 20 – June 14
11:00–19:00
Open daily except Mondays

Stoleshnikov Pereulok
May 20 – July 19
12:00–20:00
Open daily except Mondays
Free entrance

Alexander Deyneka. Graphics from the Kursk State Picture Gallery

This current show at the Tretyakov Gallery is a jubilee exhibition dedicated to the Soviet symbolic painter – Alexander Deyneka (1899–1969). A witness to the social revolution in Russia, the painter rendered its vision in pictures and propaganda posters. After directing a revolutionary arts studio in Kursk, Deyneka was sent to Moscow at the beginning of the 1920s to study at the polygraphic department of the Higher Art and Technical Studios in Moscow where his teachers were Vladimir Favorsky and Ignatiy Nivinsky. Being in a circle of like-minded young people, Deyneka helped to create this new Soviet art. In 1925 he became one of the founders of OST – Society of Easel Artists and the style that would be predominant in this country for decades. The exposition displays 150 works divided between different periods of his artistic career from the 1920s to the 1960s, including sketches made during World War II, paintings from Sevastopol, France and Italy and designs for his famous metro mosaics.



Tretyakov Gallery
Krymsky Val, 10
May 26 – September
10:00–18:00
Open daily except
Mondays



Museum of Modern Art
Gololevsky Bulvar, 10
May 22 – June 21
12:00–20:00 except
Monday, June 15

Four Brands and One Funeral

To the great joy of antiglobalists and the deep grief of shopaholics, Petr Axenov opens his exhibition entitled *DeadBrand* at a newly restored and hospitable edifice of the Museum of Modern Art in Gogolevsky Boulevard. Axenov is a master of art-provocation; a photographer, painter, producer and designer – all in one. His background is like a mosaic, with aspects of his theological education at the State Svyato-Tikhonovsky Orthodox University in Moscow and his life photographing fashion shows. Coming from the family of a photographer and icon-painter, knowing the history of costume well, he felt at ease working as a photographer with Russian designers after completing his studies. He organized social events and shoots for leading Russian magazines. His latest presentation touches on the problem of the integration of fashion labels into the arts, their role in the perception of beauty as such. But this is a sign of bitter irony and addiction at the same time. Axenov tries to depict critically this omnipresent idea of consumption but seems to sympathize with it even more.

Carved in Sand

Sand sculpture has become a summer attraction in Moscow. For the second time the mansion and park of Kolomenskoye is hosting an international sand sculpture exhibition. This year the exhibition is displaying the works of masters from Russia and Europe who curiously work equally well with ice in winter and sand in summer. This year's theme runs as *The Greatest Achievements of Human Civilisation*. And it is better to see for yourself what ideas these sand pygmals' imagination have bought to life.



Kolomenskoye Mansion
Prospekt Andropova, 39
June to August
Parks: 08:00–22:00
Museums: 10:00–18:00, except Mondays

A Ball for Violins: The Stradivari Festival

With so many violins of historical importance and harmonious sound gathered together in one hall, this evening cannot but become a highlight in the season for classical music fans. With all respect to the gentlemen who will be performing on stage, this will be a ladies' night: *Venus* and *Lady Harmsworth* made by Antonio Stradivari in 1727 and 1703 respectively, also a violin by Guarneri del Gesù (1730) and a historical violin by Antonio and Geronimo Amati (1615). The latter used to belong to George IV and was later placed in a private collection. Another Stradivari violin which has not been on a stage for a century, created by the Italian master in 1715, will be played. It has recently joined the collection of the Violin Art Foundation, having belonged to the family of the composer Felix Mendelssohn. For the opening, that will feature Yuri Bashmet and Viktor Tretyakov, the Sinfonia Concertante for Violin, Viola and Orchestra in E-flat major, a composition by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, somebody who wanted to perform in Moscow for a long time, has been chosen. Kristof Barati – another well-known violinist from Hungary will close the festival with Antonio Vivaldi's *Le quattro stagioni* (Four Seasons) to be played on four different Stradivari violins.



June 8, 11
Grand Hall of the Conservatory
19:00



Arkhangelskoye Mansion
June 6 – 7
12:00–22:00
For schedule and address see:
www.usadba-jazz.ru

Jazz à la Arkhangelskoe

The beautiful mansion of Arkhangelskoye on the bank of the Moscow River hosts the 6th open-air Usadba Jazz festival. The layout of the park makes it possible to create different zones for music fans of different genres. The event brings together the best jazz musicians and their fans for a week-end of music under the summer sky. All styles — mainstream, lounge, free jazz, acid jazz, jazz rock, funk etc., will be represented on four stages by more than 30 names from Russia and abroad, including Nino Katamadze and her band, Insight. The legendary band from Soviet times, Auktsyon, funk guru Nils Landgren, Russian minimalist composer Alexey Aigi with his band, 4'33, Andrey Kondakov and Brazil All Stars, will also perform. To provide parents with a more comfortable rest, the organizers prepare a special game zone for kids. They are also planning a fireworks display at the end of the festival. A jazzy and relaxed weekend for the whole family.

Festival of Symphony Orchestras



June 12 is Russia Day. The IV Festival of the World's Symphony Orchestras is being held in Moscow to honor this day. This year, the festival will take place in the Column's Hall of the House of Union. The concept of the festival is simple, and this simplicity guarantees its success. High-class performers from a variety of different regions and schools, provide a balanced musical program. Thus, this year we can see and

hear: the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse with Maestro Sokhiev, the Budapest Festival Orchestra conducted by Ivan Fisher, WDR Simfonieorchester Cologne with Semyon Bychkov, and many more. The compositions that will be performed include those of Dmitry Shostakovich, Igor Stravinsky, Sergey Rachmaninov, Claude Debussy, Hector Berlioz, Robert Schumann, Richard Strauss, Modest Mussorgsky... this is a rare treat.

For schedule and tickets see: www.symphonystest.ru



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Romance Lost and Found: The Fabergé Imperial Collection in Moscow



text by Alevtina Kalinina

When Russian entrepreneur Viktor Vekselberg purchased the Fabergé collection of Imperial Easter eggs from the Forbes family in a private sale organized by Sotheby's in 2004, journalists began to write in the Russian mass media about a renaissance of the Russian mécénat traditions. When Vekselberg also said that he had plans to construct private museums in Saint Petersburg and in Moscow, the idea seemed too good to be true.

Time went by, and Vekselberg's foundation acquired premises in Saint Petersburg that will display works drawn from his own holdings and will also show art belonging to other Russian collectors.

Meanwhile in Moscow, one of the institutions of the Pushkin Museum is justifying its name – the Museum of Private Collections; it is here that Vekselberg's private collection is being housed.

The collection includes significant oeuvres such as the first Hen Egg, the first in a series of fifty-two jewelled eggs made by Carl Fabergé for the Russian Imperial family. This is how H.C. Bainbridge, Carl Fabergé's close friend and representative in Europe wrote in his memoir: "When he [Carl Fabergé] proposed to the Emperor Alexander III [the year 1885 is the nearest I can come to a date], that for the next Easter gift for the Empress he should make an egg with some surprise inside it, the Tsar was all agog to know what it was to be. To keep an Emperor on tenterhooks may quite easily prove a dangerous proceeding, but Fabergé kept his secret; and, loving a joke, he produced what was, to all appearances, an ordinary hen's egg, containing a series of "surprises" wrought

in gold and platinum, precious gems and enamel. The Tsar was so pleased that he gave Fabergé a standing order for an egg every Easter-tide, and a bargain was struck between Emperor and Craftsman." After the 2004 acquisition the collection was on display at the Kremlin Museum, in many Russian cities and abroad, but since then it has also been enriched with other Fabergé pieces – articles of fantasie – fine jewelry, watches, cigarette-cases enamelled with gold and silver – that used to belong to the Imperial family of Russia and were dispersed all over the world after 1917. Armand Hammer, an American tycoon who was the first to export Russian art and antiques from post-Soviet-revolution Russia wrote in his memoir, *The Quest of the Romanoff Treasure*, "Business is business, but Russia is romance." The art that partially returns to Russia, and its romance is on display at the Pushkin Museum this June.

Museum of Private Collections at the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts
Volkhonka Ulitsa, 10
Open: 12:00–19:00
except Mondays and Tuesdays



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Who Needs a House Like This?

text by Olga Mikhailova

As they say in court: I promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. But what is truth? A personal opinion – is that truth? So let's say a certain woman appears to you to be plain looking, but this is only because she hasn't slept well, and the light catches her at an unfavorable angle. But on another day she looks great, and some think she's a true beauty. The same is true of food. One person wants their meat well-done, but another would find it leathery, and demands that it be served bloody, almost raw. So the write-ups on the lady and the meat will be entirely contradictory. The same is true of a theatrical performance. The title, the names of the writer and director – these are all facts, we can believe these. But how the play turns out, well-done or bloody, is a matter of taste. So we begin with just the facts: the Moscow School of Modern Drama Theater is performing the play *House*, on the script of Eugeny Grishkovets with the assistance of Anna Matison. The author (as he is listed on the program, rather than as director) is Iosif Rakhelgauz. The director is Sergei Solovyov. The theater is located in an old building on Trubnaya Ploshchad.

It is said that in 1864 the merchant Yakov Pegov and the cook Lucien Olivier (the legendary creator of Russia's most popular salad, the *Olivier*) opened the Hermitage restaurant here, which was graced by the leading lights of the Russian arts, from Tchaikovsky, who celebrated his marriage here in 1877, to Chekhov and Stanislavsky.

I walk in. The rows have been broken up, and the seats are in clusters of three or five, haphazardly. This makes the place feel cramped and disorderly. At length, with difficulty, I get to my seat. Each of the four walls has a video screen. Aha, so this is why Sergei Solovyov is on the program. The show starts. The curtain fully conceals the stage, and the actors sit among the audience in mixed rows. Some can see them from their seats, some can't. But in any case, their faces are shown enlarged on the screens. The protagonist stands up, and makes his way between the seats to the other players. So now he is partially visible. I presume that this leveling of the artists with the audience means that the protagonists are no different to ordinary people, and that this will be about you and me.

Now to the story. Igor, a doctor of around forty, decides all of a sudden to buy a house. In fact, he has yet to pay the mortgage on his apartment, but such trifles do not bother him. I want a house, and that's that. But a house costs money – no small sum. But this isn't a problem either. I'll borrow. But from whom? The bank won't lend anything until the outstanding mortgage is paid off. Friends will lend. It turns out that all of this ordinary doctor's friends are very wealthy people – find-

ing the cash value of the house is no problem for them. They have the money, but they refuse to lend it to their friend Igor. Moreover, their arguments are perfectly logical – how will you pay it back? Where will you find the money to maintain this house? Igor is mortally offended by these rude questions – he has a dream, and here they are affronting him with their practicalities. By the end of the first act, there are two friends left who Igor has yet to ask for money. Interval.

After the interval, the action moves to the screen where these same actors celebrate the purchase of the house, in period costume from the beginning of the last century. And then the hero shoots himself. Either he understood that he couldn't pay the debt, or after moving he was disappointed with his new house. Or perhaps the writers were simply reminded of Chekhov's *The Seagull*, and thought: how cleverly Chekhov rounded off his acts – let's do that too. But what did all this show us? They brought in good actors. There are even media personalities – Alexander Gordon, and the beauty Tatyana Vedeneyeva. But what are they all getting at? Does the theater sympathize with the hero, or condemn him? The frivolity verging on imbecility, and total lack of higher goals, or any interests other than personal material gain, make the hero appear to be a satirical character. But his terrible death should, by theatrical logic, trigger our empathy. However, shown on the screen in pseudo-historical dress, the hero ceases to be a living person. Just a sign, a shadow, a typical representative of the mortgage crisis. Why does he want a house? It would be easier to buy an Olivier salad – a mass of guaranteed pleasure. **P**

**Moscow School
of Modern Drama Theater**
June 11, 12, 13

Galina Volchek ...

text by Marina Lukanina

Galina Volchek, the artistic director of the Sovremennik Theater, comes from an artistic family. Her father was a filmmaker and a cameraman who won four State prizes.

In 1956, Oleg Efremov, a prominent Russian theater director and actor, set up a studio – which was to become the Sovremennik Theater, with his young graduates among whom was Galina Volchek.

After Efremov left, Volchek became the artistic director of Sovremennik in 1972. She has directed over 30 productions. She was the first Soviet theater director to be invited to work to in the USA.

She is a USSR People's Artist (1988), Winner of the State Prize (1967), the Prize of the President of the Russian Federation for literature and art (2002), a recipient of a great many national and foreign awards, including the Order of the Labor Red Banner (1976), and "For services to the Fatherland" of the 3rd Degree (1996), 2nd Degree (2003) and 1st Degree (2008).

What was your impression of your first trip as a director to the US?

I was the first Soviet director invited to stage a production at an American theater and this was the first time in the history of our countries - in 1978, in the midst of Cold War. There were many aspects of that trip that were so strange, uncomfortable and scary; I needed to constantly remind myself that I had to get back here, to where my son, my family and my theater were.

How did you even get invited to begin with?

A sizeable theater delegation arrived from the USA invited by the Agency of Author's Rights. Their goal was to analyze Soviet dramaturgy and to promote it in the West. On their last evening in Moscow they decided to come to the Sovremennik and see the play, Echelon. I tried to discourage them from this idea since it was a very Russian culture-



based play. However, they insisted and brought their own interpreter. I was shocked as I thought they could never relate to this.

During the intermission I suggested to them that they could leave if they wanted. They were silently sitting in their places as if frozen to their seats. Then all of a sudden one of them stood up abruptly and took my hand. I figured she wanted me to take her to the restroom. As we entered the restroom, that was full of people, she said: "Galina, I want to invite you to stage the same performance in a theater in Houston," and she asked me when I could come. I told her in December. It all seemed so bizarre to me – in the middle of the restroom, in the midst of Cold War – an invitation to the USA!

At the end of the performance I went to see them again. They were still sitting there motionless. That night two more theater directors invited me to stage this play at their theaters.

In the morning, during the meeting at the Agency of Author's Rights where I was invited, Nina Vance, the founder and the artistic director of the Alley The-

ater in Houston said she wanted to invite me to stage Echelon in Houston. All the Russians were shocked. A Russia Ministry of Culture representative was always present at all meetings, and he would always prohibit everything. Nina won support from representatives of the US State Department and she immediately asked the opinion of the Russian Ministry of Culture. It was a Saturday and the ministry of culture representative had no one to seek advice from and had to give an immediate answer: that he did not have any objections. So in December of 1978 I crossed the Atlantic.

When did your theater first go abroad on tour?

During Soviet times, very occasionally, we would be sent to socialist-block countries. And in 1989 we were selected by an American producer to perform the plays, Three Sisters and Into the Whirlwind, in Seattle during the Good Will Games. The Sovremennik performed for 1.5 months every day non-stop. It was a great success!

Then we toured twice on Broadway. I was very nervous the first time. The New York Times finally published an excellent review about us and I cried so hard.

So New York audiences accepted you as well?

I do not want to boast but the Sovremennik is the only drama theater to hold a Drama Desk Award. It was awarded in 1947 by US writers and journalists; 600 people voted for this award. No foreign theater has it, including the London Shakespeare Theater which goes on tour there.

Returning to the present: what have been your latest opening nights?

In March we had a unique event – the opening night of a new version of Nikolai Kolyada's play, Murlin Munro. The old version was part of the theater's repertoire for 19 years, starring Elena Yakovleva, Sergei Garmash, Nina Doroshina, and Valery Shalnykh. So I figured that the play had grown tired – the crew got

“America for example is way ahead of us in musical theater but is equally behind in dramatic theater”

older and they outgrew their heroes. But the audience adored this performance and they began writing to the theater asking us not to stop performing.

I decided to let Sergei Garmash, one of my actors, whom I was pushing to try directing anyway to re-stage this play from scratch with a new crew. After three months we held the opening night with new actors. I was nervous as it was a very popular show but they played wonderfully. Sadly, this play has not lost its relevance but has become even more applicable to the present time.

Another new performance is Gaft's Dream, retold by Viktyk, (Valentin Gaft is a Sovremennik actor and Roman Viktyk is a Russian director). Gaft is, for the first time, acting both as an author and an actor. I love Gaft dearly and everything that comes about from his creative work.

Do you attract young actors/directors to your theater?

Definitely. During this season, we took four students from the Russian Academy of Theater Arts. They were to direct their plays on the other stage of the Sovremennik using our actors – no other conditions were imposed upon them. I said that this would be a success even if only one of them ended up working for us.

Currently one for sure will be joining our team - Katya Polovtseva.

We have a good crew of young actors at the theater now so I am trying not to recruit more right now.

What does the future hold for the Sovremennik?

Theater can't exist without plans. Currently, Sergey Puskepalis is directing Yas-



mina Reza's play, God of Carnage. This is a great tragicomedy that was launched on Broadway at the end of March. The Sovremennik received exclusive rights for this play in Russia. We planned the opening night for May in the framework of an Open Festival of Arts, Cherry Forest. Also, the famous playwright Alex-

ander Galin will direct his play with our young actors.

I read that your relationship with your son, Denis Evstigneev – on a professional level – is the source of constant arguments. What does this mean?

Denis indeed has an independent artistic personality. He has proved that many times – at first as a cameraman receiving all possible awards. Then he directed wonderful movies like Limita, Mama and Let's Make Love. And he is constantly asked a question that makes me irritated (I can only imagine how he feels) – how hard it is to be the son of such a mom and dad? When a person is a grown-up and proved himself, how much more does he have to do to justify himself, his art, and his independence?

Yes, we often have arguments but only on an artistic level. In terms of football – we have the same preferences.

How did you end up being a Duma delegate? Your impressions?

For an artist, every experience is an interesting experience, so it was interesting for me. I don't regret it.

What plays would you recommend for someone with a minimum knowledge of Russian?

It's easy to recommend Chekhov as there is a belief that everyone knows him and we have two of his plays – Cherry Orchard and Three Sisters. I would recommend Five Evenings. Foreigners who have seen it really enjoyed it.

Some critics predict the end of repertoire theater in Russia...

America for example is way ahead of us in musical theater but is equally behind in dramatic theater. That's why Stanislavski is like a God there.

I strongly believe in the value of repertoire theater. It is Russia's greatest asset. If it goes, we will lose our upper hand. **P**



Expat Field Hockey Club



interview by John Harrison

Field hockey is a sport which is very popular in other parts of the world, such as the UK, Spain, Germany, Holland, Australia, India, Pakistan, New Zealand, South Africa, Malaysia, parts of Latin America and is alive and well in Russia too!

Vineet Arora, the founder and coordinator of the Moscow Expat Field Hockey team talked about the Moscow team:

How did field hockey start in Russia?

In Russia, in comparison to other parts of the world, field hockey is more popular amongst women than men. During the Soviet period, hockey was a popular sport because it was sponsored by the government. That all changed in the late 1980s. I myself used to play a lot in India before I relocated here in the early 1990s. In those days there wasn't very much to do in Moscow; so most expats would get together to play a sport which was also a form of social networking. That is how we started, in the same way that other expat sports such as cricket started here. We didn't have a lot of hockey kits in Moscow then, so I brought some in from India. We started with a small group of people who knew the sport and at the same time encouraged a group of local Russians, who were beginners and interested, to take part. Thus how the expat field hockey club was formed.

Do a lot of people take part?

We used to have a large attendance throughout the year because in summer we would play outdoors, and in winter indoors. In the old

days, expats would turn up because over the weekend there wasn't much to do. Over the past few years things have changed because most of the facilities that we used to play at have been converted into other sports facilities such as tennis courts, and the stadiums that we used to use in the winter have become horribly expensive and we can't afford to pay these kinds of prices. We used to pay 3,500 an hour, now we have to pay 15,000 or 20,000 an hour to play at an indoor stadium. We have now found an alternative for winter, by playing on a smaller pitch but only playing 5 a-side or 6 a-side, which is better than nothing. People don't mind paying 350 or 400 rubles maximum for a game of hockey, but not 1,000 rubles each. In summer we continue to play outdoors on a full field at Sokolniki.

We only have one team in Russia, so we basically play against ourselves. Foreign teams do visit sometimes and we put a team together to play them. If there is a local tournament going on, we play an exhibition match, which is usually a couple of games each summer.

What sort of hockey do you play in Moscow?

We play what is called mixed hockey and most of the people currently playing have played before. Some of the players are ex-Russian team players who want to keep in touch with the game and come and join us. I am an honorary director of the Russian Field Hockey Federation, trying to help them get sponsorships, help them organize tournaments, invite teams from abroad and other organizational help like that.

Are most of your players expats?

Yes, but now we do have a lot of Russian participation too. Let's say that now it is about 50/50.

How can anybody who wants to play get in touch with you?

Anybody who is interested in playing hockey in Moscow can contact me (see details below). The cost is approximately 300-400 rubles per person, which covers the cost of booking the pitch. This is a non-profit venture, more for social networking, to keep in touch and play the sport and simply get some exercise. We play every Saturday afternoon.

The EXPAT FIELD HOCKEY CLUB invites women and men to play hockey every Saturday from 15:00 to 16:30. Beginners welcome. Sticks provided. For more information, contact Vineet Arora, tel. 768-7317 or e-mail, varora@ricalewis.nsv.ru

Football News

text by Nick Rees

Over the next few months we will bring you an insight into each team in the league and try to give you an idea of who's running them and how useless they are. If they're a good team, I'll take the credit somehow anyway. This month, we're going to feature the Storming Cloggs who were one of the two founding teams of the league, along with the Moscow Flagons, back in 2003. Usually I don't trust men with shaven chests or those which have suits cut sharper than a maniac's razor but I have learnt to make

an exception for one person – the manager of the Cloggs – Darren Keane. As well as being one of the two founders of the league, he has also been elected president of the league due to his honesty, commitment and drive to grow the league. Hundreds of years in the casino business hasn't taught Darren to be a good loser though and his team is the mirror of him. No game against the Cloggs is a friendly as alongside Darren is Dave "The Rave" who runs the team from the sidelines. Known affectionately as "Koont" and "The Knee Terrorist", Dave adds more spice to a game than a dodgy vindaloo in Maharaja!

Over the years, the Cloggs have won the league a total of 3 times, been runners up (ie. losers!) a grand total of 5 times and won the cup once. Always the bridesmaid... rarely the bride! Darren, over the years, has put the blame on their lack of success on global warming, Ghandi's assassination and the American Civil War (which was probably started by one of his players who we will come onto later).

Their best player by far is Rainer Fischer who is probably the best player that Austria has ever produced (or ONLY player that they have ever produced). It's quite rare to see a good player without an ego but Rainer is one of the nicest guys on a pitch that you will ever see. For everything good in the world, there has to be an opposite and he is historically the Cloggs' top scorer, Juan Lopez. Born in Spain, grew up in Plymouth, supports Man United and hated by refs all over the world! More moans come out of his mouth over 90 minutes than Night Flight during a 2for1 offer! The referees might hate him but they can't stop him from scoring which, admittedly, he does well.

Vadim isn't a name you hear much in the expat league but he was 'adopted' by the league and has been the defensive force behind the Cloggs almost since the very beginning along with Big Phil, Little Phil, Paul, Michel, Ivor and the infamous supersub Pete the Meat.

The Cloggs aren't known for their defensive duties as they have a cheeky bunch of creative attackers in Ian, Raul, Lee, Rainer and Darren and proof of this comes in the form of the top scorers table so far this season with just 4 games played:



Clogg's Top Scorer Table

Darren Keane – Storming Cloggs – 4
Ian Crompton – Storming Cloggs – 4
Rainer Fischer – Storming Cloggs – 4
Chris Dobson – Lundbeck United – 4
Hosein Abakpour – Moscow Bhoys – 4

With just the 4 rounds of games gone so far this summer season, the Cloggs are unbeaten and on top but very closely followed by Lundbeck who are possibly the team to watch. The new Turkish team, Real Brothers, are 3rd and unbeaten having beaten Turkish rivals Pasha 2-1 recently.

Come down and watch us during the summer – even if you hate football, we have cold beer, *shashlik*, soft drinks and a great family atmosphere.

For more information, contact me at nickrees99@yahoo.com



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Moscow Hash!

On On!



text by Lick 'n' Blow

photos by Alina Ganenko

When I tell friends and acquaintances that I am a member of the Hash House Harriers they seem to think that it is something to do with taking drugs. Actually this is a group of expats and Russians who meet every Sunday to go for a run in different parks throughout the city. No matter if the temperature drops below -20C degrees, if there is heavy rain or searing heat, there will always be someone there. This is not simply a running group but people who go to socialize, to walk, to see new parts of Moscow and there are those that like to go for the beer and songs.

This is a truly international organization with 1892 groups in 1229 cities in 182 countries from Alaska to Antarctica. Often groups organize events such as skiing trips, cruises, and anniversaries where members from other cities are invited. Every two years, an interhash is organized where all members are invited to come together to celebrate and run. The last one was in 2008 in Perth, Australia with 4500 attendees and the next one will be in 2010 in Kuching, Borneo. The idea was originally formed in the 1930s, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia by a group of British colonial officers who needed to run off the excesses of the weekend. "Hash" comes from the name they adopted from their colonial club, The Royal Selangor Club, which was called the "Hash House" because the food was very much like an English dish made from leftovers or hash stew. The Harriers are a pack of runners who chase after a member, or members of the group called hares. It is an idea that originated from a game called Paper Chase or Hare and Hounds during the early Victorian times in Britain where pieces of paper that were supposed to represent the scent were left behind by the hare. Others would try to follow this

trail and catch the hare before the end of the run. More recently the hares have put marks on the ground in flour so that the harriers can follow a path through the park and these may be arrows, dots, circles or crosses. Finding the correct route from all these different marks is part of the fun and often involves people getting completely lost. Alternatives to flour are used in the winter such as colored water, chilli powder or ribbons. There are stops during the run for games, singing, talking and drinking, depending on the fitness of the group and how sociable they are. At the end of the run members are rewarded with beer or other drinks, and food.

In Moscow the runs are usually set within the MKAD and we will often go to Kolomenskoye, Sokolniki, Sparrow Hills or Izmaylovsky Park. This week the people who are setting the run, our hares, were at a park near Altufyevo. If you have been a few times then it is usually customary to stop using your real name and give yourself a Hash name. Our hares are called Rooted and Burning Lust and joining them for the run were, among others Biggles, Bono, Yo Boy, 007, Wrong Exit and Snap off. There was only a small group of 12 on the run described here and there was none of the usual singers and people who like to play games so this time we were bereft of certain frivolities. The newcomers were welcomed and the marks explained to them and we set off into the woods. On that occasion we had what is known as a "live hare" which means that Burning Lust had set off 15 minutes earlier to put the flour marks on the trail. If you were looking at this as a Russian walking his dog in the park you would probably be wondering what on Earth is going on, what all these people are doing wandering around in a park looking for flour and shouting "on-on", "are you?", "false trail" and "check it out". Well it makes perfect sense if you have done it a few times.

About halfway round there was a chance to catch up with the hare, meet the walkers or just to recuperate some energy. The rest of the run was a little more, well, eventful. The trail went across a small stream and those with long legs jumped over while others found an easier route. One of the false trails led some members onto a frozen lake which then led to everyone getting lost again. Passing through a child's play park some people couldn't resist using the slides and monkey bars. Eventually we arrived at a local bar and after lots of running we were rewarded with drinks and food.

The run is usually between 5 to 8 kilometers but there is a more leisurely walking option. It doesn't matter if you are a serious runner or just want to walk in the park. All are welcome – even children. There are lots of other social events organized by members of this group and it works closely with the children's charity, Kitezh. It costs 150 rubles each time but this money goes towards a drink at the end of the run and your second time is free. We meet every Sunday at 3pm outside the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall near Mayakovskaya or if you join the group e-mail you can find where the run is week by week.

You can sign up to the group e-mail through the website, www.moscowharriers.itgo.com

Information about worldwide hashing can be found at www.gthhh.com and there is more of the history of the Hash House Harriers on Wikipedia. **P**



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Making a Positive Impact on People's Lives – Big Brothers Big Sisters Russia

text by Marina Lukanina



The origins of Russian charities date back to the year 998, to the Epiphany of Russia. During the reign of Ivan the Terrible special legislature focusing on helping people in need was introduced. The early 20th century was marked as a period of high activity for Russian charities. According to the website www.infoblago.ru there were 11,040 registered charities in the Russia Empire in 1902. Most of this work was stopped dead by what happened after 1917, when the funds of all public and private charitable organizations were nationalized.

The late 1980s brought dramatic economic changes in Russia followed by the formation of private capital. This, in turn, led to massive segmentation of the population and made the issue of charities exceptionally acute again.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the first active charitable organizations in Russia were foreign grantors, such as the Ford Fund, the McArthur Foundation and the Soros Fund. The next step was the appearance of Russian charity funds, such as Vladimir Potanin's Fund and Dmitri Zimin's Dynasty Fund.

Currently, there are still quite a few obstacles that prevent Russian charities from effective development, such as an unfavorable tax system for both grantors and grantees, and a distrustful and sometimes even negative attitude from people who have somehow lost the notion of philanthropy being an inalienable part of civil society.

We decided to learn more about one of the charities in Russia – Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) – and talk to its executive director, Roman Sklotskiy, about this organization and the potential challenges it is facing as a non-profit organization.

What is Big Brothers Big Sisters?

BBBS is the world's largest mentoring program helping over 280,000 children around the world reach their potential through professionally supported one-to-one relationships.

How long has BBBS been in Russia? How big is the program?

We have been in Russia for the past fifteen years. Our program started here under the auspices of different youth movements in the regions: Perm, Kirov, Tambov, Yoshkar-Ola; and later it reached Moscow. Together with Moscow we operate in seven regions now (also in Tumen and Yaroslavl). In the regions, the program has developed on the basis of pedagogical universities.

How does the program in Moscow differ from the regions?

In Moscow we exist like our American equivalent. We fully comply with BBBS international standards. The program is independent hence we do not work with any specific university. We work with three boarding schools and one orphanage in Moscow and we plan to expand our network. Currently, we have about 100 matches in Moscow (2008) and about 300 matches in the regions.

How does the program function?

I would say the core of our program is our volunteers. They come to us through the Internet, word-of-mouth, etc. We have a rigorous volunteer selection scheme. We look for specific people who have plenty of patience and understanding to work with different types of children.



What would be a typical profile of a volunteer?

A single female, between 19 and 30 years old, different professional occupation (from students to business executives).

What's the selection process to become a volunteer?

Our case managers conduct an extensive interview with every volunteer to figure out his background, what his motivation is and his personal issues. Basically, they try to identify what brings him to this program. Then a volunteer fills out a written test that gives a more accurate impression of his psychological features and interests. Our case manager makes a psychological portrait of each volunteer and matches him with a child. Before being admitted to the program, a volunteer must bring a health certificate from a mental health clinic and also a note from the police. The children's safety is of the utmost importance to us.

Do they go through any training?

Most definitely. Volunteers go through a 1-month training course (25 hours). During this course they are taught how to work with children, how to react on certain questions, how to address various issues, etc. There is a specific section of training that addresses safety.

What happens next?

For two months a volunteer meets once a week with a child on-site (at the orphanage or at the boarding school). After two months he is allowed to take the child off-site in agreement with the orphanage administration. That is what usually brings most joy to a child – hanging out at a volunteer's house or going to see a movie or a theater play. Children are not allowed to stay overnight, however. Each match is also monitored by our case managers.

How is your cooperation with orphanage administrations going? What's their reaction to BBBS?

They understand the value of the program but they are also afraid to take the responsibility of allowing children to be taken off-site. There is some reservation about the name of our program as well, as sometimes it is associated with some religious movements. We build trust by regular visits of our case managers to the orphanages and maintaining close contact with both children and the administration.

How do you attract the funders?

It does not make sense to ask for money right away. Ideally, we try to get some volunteers from an organization, establish the necessary level of trust and later ask for financial support.

We organize various fundraising events. Our most recent one was a poker tournament at the Metelitsa Club. Among our current supporters are Ernst & Young, Pricewaterhouse Coopers, AIG/Lincoln, Evolution & Philanthropy and United Way.

Do you think you have any competitors in the Russian charity market?

Product-wise – we do not. However, in terms of funding we do compete with other agencies, specifically with the ones that offer adoption services and foster care.

Compared to Western non-profit organizations, the issue of transparency in Russia seems to be quite different. What's your opinion on that?

Just recently I participated in a conference devoted to transparency of non-profit organizations in Russia. I think that such reporting should exist. We are striving for full transparency as the overheads are dramatically lower compared to the real services rendered by Russian volunteers helping Russian children.

Where can we get more information about the program and how to get involved?

You can refer to our web-site, www.bbbsrussia.org, that has the contact details of our Moscow office. **P**

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look Efimov s Bo



text by Kevin McNeer

Editor's Note. Kevin McNeer, an American documentary film maker living in Moscow recently made a documentary about the life of Boris Efimov, one of the most famous Russian political cartoonists of the 20th century. In this article, Kevin shares some of the insights he gained during his meetings with the artist.

The political cartoonist Boris Efimov drew his way through the 20th century in Russia. By the time he passed away last year at 108, his pen had churned out political cartoons for Soviet newspapers and magazines on just about every major world event of the past hundred years. Whether it was during the dark days of WWII, when Russia faced annihilation by the Nazis – who had orders to hang Efimov on sight – or during the super-power days of the Cold War, Efimov always had an inexhaustible supply of images and jokes to deploy against the enemy. His list of satirical casualties ranges from the Tsar to Ronald Reagan, from the epoch of the horse-drawn carriage to the space age.

While perhaps not as skilled a draughtsman or portrait artist as some of his contemporaries, Efimov had an abundance of wit and was exceptionally well read, which gave his drawings a stinging conceptual punch. A telling example is a Efimov drawing from World War II described by Vladimir Mochalov, a fellow cartoonist and artistic director of the famous satirical magazine, *Krokodil*: “Boris Efimov published a famous cartoon with the caption: ‘A True Aryan is Tall’, and he drew a small, scrawny Goebbels; ‘A True Aryan is Fit’, and he drew a fat Goering; and, ‘A True Aryan is Blond’, for which he drew Hitler with his black bangs. This was an absolutely timely, witty drawing, a classic political cartoon that you might call: aiming straight between the eyes.” In the bleak early years of the war, cartoons like this one played a critical role in maintaining morale. Efimov himself says about those cartoons, “I have an entire folder of letters from frontline soldiers who thanked me for those cartoons, who wrote me, ‘Draw their faces even funnier, because then it’s more fun to pull the trigger.’”

I first met Boris in 2005 at his apartment on Kutuzovsky Prospekt, just across the Moscow River from the White

House, when I arrived with a film crew to make a documentary film about him. At 104, he was still drawing, answering letters, writing articles and exercising his ever felicitous wit. The film was initially planned as a short, cute portrait of an ancient man who had witnessed some of the most momentous events in the 20th century – the Russian Revolution, two world wars, the Stalinist Terror – and, miraculously, survived them. I wanted to take the viewer on a visual odyssey through the whole century using Boris's countless political cartoons. But these plans took an unexpected turn when, in preparation for the shoot, I read his autobiography. Much of the book was devoted to Efimov's older brother, Mikhail Koltsov, a famous journalist who was arrested and executed under Stalin. I became increasingly interested in the brothers' relationship to each other and their relationship to Stalin. How could Efimov have continued working for a regime that had killed his brother and best friend? What was his attitude toward Stalin now? This is what we ended up discussing for hours over the course of several summer afternoons, with Efimov taking breaks to draw, browse through his old photographs and cartoons, and recommend books I should read, such as Trotsky's autobiography, *My Life*, or *The Count of Monte Cristo* (better in the original French, he advised).

The two brothers Boris and Mikhail grew up under the Tsar. When the Revolution and Civil War broke out, they supported the Bolsheviks and adopted different surnames, because reprisals were often carried out against whole families, and Kiev, where they lived, was constantly changing hands. As Jews in Ukraine, which before and during the Revolution saw vicious anti-Semitic pogroms, Boris and Mikhail had learned well how to survive by hiding their identities (the family's real name was Friedlund). (This experience and the Stalinist terror certainly helped to make Boris into a master of the evasive answer, incidentally. It was often difficult to get Efimov to express opinions on some of his cartoons: As a Jew, did he really support the Arabs when he drew dozens of cartoons

critical of Israel during The Six-Day War? "Well, that depends on what you mean..." he answered, and never really answered.)

It was Koltsov who brought Boris to Moscow, who helped him find work as a cartoonist. Koltsov was well connected, and by the 30s, his was a star on the rise. He covered the Civil War in Spain for *Pravda*, palled around with Earnest Hemingway there and wrote a book about it that made him the most famous journalist in the Soviet Union. With Stalin's encouragement, he was made an editor at *Pravda* and a

Then one day, Stalin dropped a macabre hint to Koltsov: "Comrade Koltsov, have you ever thought of shooting yourself?" Efimov's older brother was spooked, but he continued to work for and believe in Stalin's regime. Just over a year later, he was arrested and officially sentenced to 10 years in a labor camp. Only after Stalin's death, did Efimov learn that his brother had been executed.

Did you not see it all coming, I had asked, with the mass arrests taking more and more people? Efimov told me how his brother and he were talking late one night in the 30s about the arrests, and his brother had said, "I can't understand a thing about what's going on. Where are all these enemies among us coming from? People who for years we've worked with, fought alongside, been friends with, suddenly turn out to be enemies of the people and instantly confess to everything. As soon as they end up behind bars... they confess to all their crimes. As *Pravda* editor, it would seem I should understand this and explain it to people, but I am like the last man on Earth: I can't understand anything about what is happening."

"But still," I pressed, "Koltsov must have understood, but perhaps couldn't admit that Stalin was the source of the evil, or...?"

Boris thought, and answered, "It would seem he must have understood that Stalin was doing it. But why? It was strange. It didn't make sense. Stalin was such a wise person. Koltsov would tell me his jokes, observations and responses. He liked Stalin." The more I learned about Koltsov's activities in Spain, the clearer it became that he worked very closely with Stalin and that he was likely responsible, or at least aware of executions of supporters of Franco carried out there, i.e., Koltsov, whatever his noble intentions might have been, also probably had blood on his hands.

The marathon interview sessions wore on me, and they must have worn on Efimov.

Only after Stalin's death, did Efimov learn that his brother had been executed.



deputy in the Duma. And Efimov, for his part, was already being published regularly in the country's biggest papers. Both brothers were celebrities.

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mov. Not only his age but the fact that we were talking about his life, his brother's death and events that had deep emotional resonance for him. Often Boris would suddenly stop the interview and thank us – with excessive politeness – for coming, in a not-so-subtle hint for us to leave. But other times, he became so engrossed in the story he was telling that it seemed he could go on through the night. Once, when I asked him if he were tired, he shot back with a smile: “Are YOU tired? Maybe YOU need a break?” And so he went on with his stories, listing full names and dates from the 20s and 30s as if he were reading from a prepared text.

I challenged him about his support for Stalin's purges, his drawings during the infamous Show Trials of the 30s, when Efimov published vicious political cartoons against his friends, including Bukharin and Trotsky, depicting them as Nazis and spies when he knew the accusations against them were false. The cartoonist was sent by *Izvestia* to cover Bukharin's trial, and it was expected that he would portray Bukharin as guilty: “What was I supposed to say when I heard with my own ears how he



confessed that he was a traitor, a turn-coat, an enemy of Soviet power? It was a complicated time. Now it's fine to criticize. I am not Giordano Bruno to burn at the stake on a matter of principle. I knew that if I said, 'No, I won't!' I would end up in the very same place. My family, my wife would be killed. I recall those cartoons with aggravation, with shame, with disappointment, but I couldn't have acted differently then."

Not everyone accepts this answer. The Internet has more than a few nasty postings about Efimov and the propaganda he delivered for Stalin's regime, as well as about his brother. In response to Efimov calling his supernatural longevity a gift of the years taken from his brother's life, one well-known Russian artist, Mikhail Zlatkovsky, wrote: "It is exceedingly difficult for me to imagine how our unhappy country would have endured the proposed longevity of his older brother, Mikhail Koltsov..."

For me, the most difficult part of Efimov's attitude to understand was his obvious respect for and sense of gratitude toward Stalin – gratitude for not killing him after his brother had been killed. "He gave me my life and my work – how can I not be grateful for that?" Efimov said. "He could have lifted his little finger, and we wouldn't be having this conversation today."

"But," I objected, "Stalin didn't have the right to grant or deny people life! Although, maybe..."

Efimov completed my thought: "He didn't have the right, but he had the capability, the power to do it."

Boris and I would go back and forth about this as we filmed, and after one such session, he suddenly realized how bizarre what he was saying must have sounded to me. It was a striking moment of self awareness – he saw himself from my perspective, the perspective of a young American who couldn't fathom what life in the Soviet Union in the 30s was like. On the tape, Boris looks at me almost sympathetically (poor boy, he'll never get it), and says, "It's complex, of course, psychologically complex. And the question is complex." The terrible fact, however, is that this self-awareness did not change Boris's position: "I still can't renounce the idea that I am indebted to him for my life." **P**



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Swine Flu: How Serious is the Threat?

text by Anastasia Kachevskaya

The international press has convinced us that we have been teetering on the brink of a deadly pandemic. How serious is the threat for us in Russia?

As of May 17, 2009, 39 countries have officially reported 8,480 cases of influenza A (H1N1) infection: Mexico has reported 2,895 cases of infection and 66 deaths. 4,714 cases have been confirmed in the United States, and four deaths. Canada has reported 496 cases and one death. Costa Rica has reported nine cases and one death. Russia has (at the time of going to press) so far, reported no laboratory-confirmed cases. You can put away your gas-masks and plans to evacuate to Antarctica, for the time being.

In hindsight, it seems that we may have over-reacted to the 'pandemic'. The spread, not the lethality, of this outbreak was so rapid that WHO raised its pandemic alert level on April 29 from 3 to 5 on a scale that goes to 6. The Avian flu in Asia never made it past 3, though the H5N1 was definitely more virulent. Yet it was not able to hop from person to person effectively. With A/H1N1, no animal contact is required. It is easily transmitted from person to person and presents a toxic cocktail of genes specially designed to smash up your immune system. So far the antiviral Tamiflu has proved to work, although that does not explain in full why deaths outside Mexico have been proportionally few.

Swine flu, unlike ordinary flu, which mostly carries off the old, affects mostly the young and healthy and is a sign of a highly pathogenic virus strain. A highly pathogenic virus is rare, and historically-speaking, usually brings high death tolls. There is no natural immunity and the virus is prone to evolve gaining

new genetic features with each successive wave. We have only seen the first version of this virus. Chances are high that a mass use of the currently effective antivirals (Tamiflu and Relenza) will prompt the virus to develop resistibility and become extremely aggressive.

Given all this and the accompanying media frenzy, it was hardly surprising that the Russian Government tried to protect the state from an uncertain, yet potentially fatal disease. Well, at least it appears to have, considering official statements and news feeds emerging in newspapers, TV bulletins and on web-sites of the most dependable information agencies.

Moscow authorities are said to have been, and to continue to be, particularly vigilant. Security has been tightened at Moscow airports and across the borders. *Passport* has received reports that some arriving passengers (particularly from swine flu smitten countries such as Mexico and the USA) are being subject to close examination with infrared imagers and disposable thermometers. Any passengers with a higher than normal temperature have been temporarily isolated in newly-equipped care centers at the airports. Checking has, as far as we can ascertain, been sporadic. There has been a ban imposed on pork imports from the Americas, Spain, Britain and some Canadian provinces for fear that the virus may be transmitted through pork – a most controversial measure bearing in mind that it has not been proven that swine flu spreads from eating cooked meat. Ludmila Shvetzova, first deputy mayor of Moscow, said in a statement that the air in the Moscow metro and other public places is being treated with ultraviolet for disinfection. It is not clear exactly what this means, and further clarification has not been forthcoming. Nikolai Vlasov, head of the Federal Veterinary and Phytosanitary Monitoring Service, said at a conference that authorities are strength-

Chances are high that a mass use of the currently effective antivirals (Tamiflu and Relenza) will prompt the virus to develop resistibility and become extremely aggressive.



ening disease-surveillance systems, allocating financial resources to fight the flu and improving communication channels between health ministries, their regional outlets and international bodies. He preferred, however, not to elaborate on exactly what measures are being taken.

National stockpiling of drugs has been stepped up, with antiviral factories being put on overtime, a welcome surge in manufacturing capacities, which will be "enough to provide for the whole country," according to Vlasov. Vlasov also said that pig-breeding farms are seeing a lot of swine vaccination activities these days, and laboratories have started to clear the decks after the Avian flu to receive their first samples of the new strain from the CDC (the USD-based Center for Disease Control and Prevention) early in May and work on a human vaccine. This vaccine will become available to "ordinary" Russians in November this year, according to *RIA Novosti*, although how CDC can be so sure that they have developed an effective vaccine is not clear, bearing in mind that the rest of the world is trying, so far unsuccessfully, to produce such a drug. The new drug will apparently be distributed through state health care units or licensed private clinics such as the Moscow outlet of SOS International. Though the regular seasonal flu vaccine is unlikely to provide any effective protection against the current strain, Russian public health-care officials recommend those who have not been vaccinated at all to consider doing so in the near future. There is evidence that even a seasonal flu vaccine may help make a swine flu case milder and reduce death risk, according to Vlasov.

What Russians Think

Two predominant attitudes seem to prevail. One is alarmism with a tinge of mob hysteria. In April and May, *Yandex*, the most popular Russian search engine, registered over 130,000 enquiries about flu on the Internet. Thousands of people all over Russia are following the latest swine-flu-news over the radio and television with a sinking heart and heated debates in local communities. Both state and private companies are working out pandemic action plans and unfolding public awareness campaigns. Chemists in regional centers ran out of existing antiviral drugs and gauze bandages in a matter of hours when news of deaths in Mexico first broke. Macabre doomsday scenarios occupied front pages of newspapers and

people's minds for weeks. According to Nikolai Philatov, head of the Moscow outlet of the Russian Consumer Inspectorate, up to 7 million people could be infected in Moscow in the near future, 3 million people may be taken down with severe infection, 2.7 million people may require out-patient treatment and 480,000 people may be hospitalized. However it is difficult to know whether to take such figures seriously or not.



Doug Stevens,
chief medical officer,
Moscow SOS International

The alarmist attitude didn't last long, and most Russians now regard the swine flu issue with a large degree of *pophigism*, basically a Russian screw-it-all-attitude, highlighting lack of interest in anything but private matters and an unshakable belief in the omnipotence of the state to protect you against any outer menace. While the threat of a world pandemic is looming large, Muscovites, perhaps correctly, have been enjoying a blissful spell of nonchalance and caressing rays of the spring sun, leaving it to the government to deal with anything more substantial. From a *Passport* survey carried out by asking 100 bystanders on Tverskaya on May 15, many do have a vague idea of what is going on, however as yet the problem is too far away to be of any real significance.

Many analytical comments are not devoid of skepticism, though. Some think the flu is just a ploy of pharmaceutical companies, concocted to make money in financially troubled times. The price of Tamiflu in Moscow, has almost doubled, according to one video blog connected with *RIA Novosti*. Even the least effective remedies (for instance, Remantadin) have seen a surge in price here in Russia. Shares of one pharmaceutical company based in Moscow skyrocketed by an average of 19% the other day.

Others view the swine crisis as a helpful tool for the Russian Government to divert public attention from more inconvenient problems such as economic recession, inflation and soaring unemployment rates. After all, protagonists of this attitude claim; the flu appears to be barely more contagious than any normal seasonal flu so far. In Russia, 10% of all the population are affected every year, and that is over 14-15 million people. With the current contagion rate, and the form that the flu has taken, one stands a greater chance of being murdered here than coming down with swine flu, – a 1% chance per 12,000 people roughly, according to official statistics. As a Russian blogger put it, "the swine flu panic appears to be nothing but another TV-driven scare to produce mass hysteria. First, there was SARS, then Avian flu, and now this swine thing, to be followed, perhaps, by an outbreak of a cockroach influenza virus. Of all those infected, only 50 have died, yet enough to scare tens of millions out of their wits to cry 'Wolf' at every sneeze and spread panic."

This ostrich-type attitude will remain in vogue as long as the virus doesn't come to Russia. Undoubtedly, sooner or later the virus will come to Russia. According to Doug Stevens, chief medical officer with Moscow SOS International, most probably it will come from Europe – or will be brought in from Mexico. According to estimates of the Russian Association of Travel Agents, there are over 2,500 Russian tourists in Mexico now. Soon they are to come back home bringing swine flu problems home to roost. According to Doug Stevens, there are 3 factors to aggravate a swine flu outbreak in Moscow. First, a very high percentage of public transport use. Second, unhealthy lifestyles extremely widespread among Russians (heavy smoking, drinking, which saps the strength of the stressed organism and suppresses the immune system). And finally, but not least, social behavior such as spitting in the street and discarding garbage and personal hygiene tissues in public places. However, such grave sentiment came under fire from Gennady Onitschenko, head of the Russian Consumer Inspectorate, who when presented with this view, called such claims "absurd and groundless".

The good news is that that this is the end of the flu season in Russia. Russia is

a long way from Mexico and has a different climate, much more severe than that in Mexico or Europe, and a different national diet with a heavy reliance on onions and garlic, two natural antiviral remedies. Due to regular seasonal onslaughts, with mass vaccination campaigns, Russians have developed a heightened collective immunity, suggesting a milder course of the disease and fewer death cases. Finally, it is not the flu itself that brings about death, rather the complications which it causes in advanced cases when a patient faces lack of proper treatment.

So Russia seems to be quite hardened to weather the swine viral storm, and much better than other involved countries. The swine flu strain may be

now swine flu has broken out, there is considerably more chance that the virus will continue to mutate and create an extremely dangerous form.

To Those Who do not Want to Catch Swine Flu – From Moscow SOS International

As swine flu is a respiratory disease, it spreads from person to person in the same way other flu viruses do – through infectious respiratory droplets. Released when a person coughs, sneezes or talks at a distance of up to a meter or so. Sometimes people may get the infection by touching something with the flu virus on it (doorknobs, keyboards, counters) and then touching their mouth or nose.

what is being planned to be done as part of your company's Pandemic Action Plan.

What about a mask? If you are not sick you do not have to wear a mask. Yet if you are caring for a sick person, you should wear a mask when you are in close contact with them and dispose of it immediately after contact, and cleanse your hands thoroughly afterwards. If you are sick and must travel or be around others, cover your mouth and nose.

According to CDC, infected people are potentially contagious during the incubation period – one day before the symptoms start, and seven days after the symptoms start or as long as they



no more dangerous than any ordinary seasonal flu, yet it is absolutely unpredictable. Even if there is a lull to come for weeks or months, it is too early to feel complacent. There is a danger that the swine flu virus with its ability to hop from human to human may penetrate Indonesia and Central Africa, where another virus, the highly pathogenic H5N1, also known as Avian flu, has become endemic, and mutate there. If these two viruses produce an offspring, which will inherit the worst qualities of its ancestors, then Russia will find itself in a very serious situation indeed. Currently things seem to be under control. It remains to be seen, though, whether the fortifications are strong enough to withstand any new mutation may take. A year ago the whole issue of a flu pandemic was not taken very seriously. However, with swine flu, things have changed. The danger is that 'Wolf' has been called out too many times. The fact is that

So, the best way you can protect yourself is to observe good hygiene. Avoid surface contact as well as people who are obviously or might be sick, wash your hands frequently with soap and water or cleanse them with an alcohol-based hand rub, avoid touching your face, and if you do, be sure your hands are clean. Reduce the time spent in crowded places, improve airflow in your living space by opening windows and practice good health habits including sleep, eating nutritious food, and keeping physically active. To boost your resistibility, take vitamins, eat plenty of vegetables and a minimum of 4 pieces of fruit a day, drink less alcohol, smoke less, restrict travel, monitor your friends and colleagues and get regular check-ups with your doctor. Better strike pork off your diet for a while. Remember, home cleanness and hand washing are essential. At work, check with your HR department

are still showing symptoms. Children, especially young children, might be contagious for longer periods. It is highly advisable to monitor your health for 7 days after possible exposure and stay away from work, school and other public places. Should you develop any symptoms of an influenza-like illness, get in touch with your doctor without fail. Report your symptoms and explain why you think you have influenza A (H1N1) (e.g. if you have recently traveled to a country where there is an outbreak in people). Follow the advice given to you. Before the doctor arrives, rest and take plenty of fluids, use a mask and avoid contact with people. To bring your temperature down, use paracetamol or ibuprofen, but not aspirin which can bring complications! If the illness is serious, call an ambulance (03 or 112 from your cell phone). In any case, if you have any doubts about your health, you should check with your health care provider. **P**

Levina-Rozengolts

Revelation of the 20th Century



From the People series

text by Olga Slobodkina-von Bromssen

Looking at the versatile eclectic panorama of 20th century Russian art one suddenly comes across a phenomenon, which might only be described as a revelation. Such is the art of Eva Pavlovna Levina-Rozengolts.

Levina-Rozengolts (1898-1975) lived in an epoch when experience of previous generations seemed to be unacceptable and art was feverishly looking for new forms. In music, that spiritual work was carried out by Dmitry Shostakovich, in poetry by Anna Akhmatova and Osip Mandelshtam, while in painting, among those well-known, were great artists such as Mikhail Vrubel or Robert Falk, as well as the less famous, but no less important painter Levina-Rozengolts. Her art will be a guide to the spiritual quest of the 20th century for future generations.

The creativity of Levina-Rozengolts can be roughly divided into two periods: before her arrest and after it.

A student of Robert Falk, Levina-Rozengolts started her artistic career as his follower both in manner and color. During the initial period of her work, one can find oils on canvas dating back to the 1930s. *The Old People*, for example, which was her diploma work at VKHUTEMAS (All Russian Higher Artistic and Technical Workshop), won her the rank of a first degree artist. Another work is *Marusya, A Woman of Razyan*. This first period also included early pastels – highly refined still lifes and Moscow city landscapes. The artist lived in

the notorious Dom Na Naberezhnoi (House on the Embankment) where party bosses used to live and this dwelling allowed her interesting perspectives of Moscow. No matter how talented and harmonious these works were, they were created exactly in the manner of Falk's school: the principle of painting from nature, traditional subjects (still lifes and city landscapes). Falk expected Levina-Rozengolts to create something large scale rather than just follow him in his footsteps. The student lived up to the hopes of her teacher after she spent 7 years in exile.

The artist's brother A.P. Rozengolts, People's Commissar of Foreign Trade in the Communist Party's Political Bureau, was executed in 1937 in connection with the prosecution of Nikolai Bukharin (1888-1938), one of the leaders of the Bolshevik Party and the first State of Workers and Peasants, while her other brother G.P. Rozengolts, a well-known microbiologist, was exiled to the town of Karaganda.

For 12 years, Eva Pavlovna was waiting to be arrested. If she heard a car pass by her window she would lie on the windowsill looking out of the window. She was arrested after World War II in 1949 and exiled to the Krasnoyarsk region of Siberia. She worked for a lumberjacking company on the Yenisey River painting names on ships. In order to do this she had to be lifted up to a great height. To survive she also painted rugs and sold them out to the local people. But that was only part of her life there. In Siberia the artist discovered something that became crucial in her life: she found herself alone, face to face with nature – huge spans of land, water and uninterrupted panorama of the sky with its phantasmagoria of the ever-changing clouds. "I'm always on the bosom of nature and always alone," she wrote in her letters home.

One winter day Eva Pavlovna was working in the taiga when suddenly she

saw an interlacing of naked branches against the background of a vast sky and realized that she had seen the rhythm that Falk kept talking about.

Rhythm was a cult in art of the beginning of the century and for Falk it was a symbol of faith. This individual rhythm, which was suddenly discovered by the artist, opened up totally new pictorial opportunities for her. She began to imitate that rhythm on floral ornaments and that put an end to Falk's system in her creativity. Paradoxically, as it might seem, Falk considered her "his only true student." Levina-Rozengolts found her own individual relationship with the surface of the sheet, with the spot, with the line and with the light – all the com-



Untitled, 1963-1964

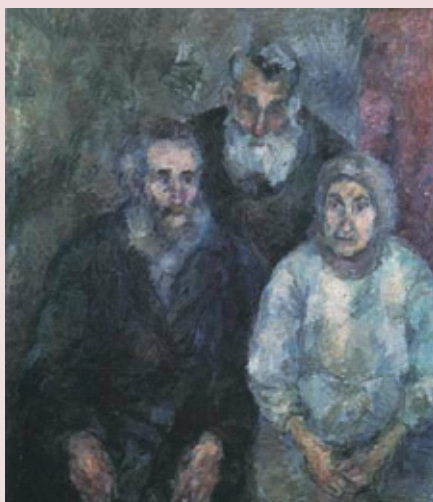
ponents of painting were reconsidered by her, which allowed the artist to begin a principally new work. While in exile, the artist contemplated the hugeness of Earth, which gave her tremendous creative potential. Having no materials to work with, Levina-Rozengolts started drawing right on wet sand and these pictures were immediately washed away by the waves. She continued her drawing experiments in a cheap album and ordinary exercise-books painting with Indian ink and watercolors. In 1954 she got a permission to move to Kara-

ganda where she could work as a theater decorator and a property person.

Her real creativity began, however, when she came back to Moscow after her exile in 1956. She started working both with an irresistible craving to make up for the lost time and to overcome the pain. On the other hand she strived to say whatever she had to say. Luckily for her, Falk was still alive. He was shaken to see the new works of his student. "Eva Levina-Rozengolts is the only justification of my teaching," he used to say.

From 1956 Levina-Rozengolts started working in Indian ink. Another big change concerned the form of her work – she began creating series, because the content of her art became so complicated that it spilled over the boundaries of one single closed image. The series were necessary to express new ideas and images, in which her creative thought could develop in time – from one sheet to the next.

This new period started with the series, *Trees* – bewitched woods with naked dead trees whose branches entangle convulsively creating phantasmal rhythms and evoking a feeling of irreparableness – to be continued by the series, *Bogs* – tragic landscapes without a single human soul creating an impression of total aloofness from all living things. The powerful emotional influence is achieved by the subtlest transitions from black to white revealing a multitude of intermediary shades. This kind of space, which contains nothing but a shifting swamp with an occasional thorn in it, or air saturated with dampness, seems to have an endless stretch.



Old timers, 1925

Falk was astounded by these sheets: "This is something so perfect, so strong, and so incredible. These rhythms are so expressive. The forest now cries, now wails, now moans, now damns," he said.

At the beginning of the 1960s the artist started a new series: *The Sky*, which she continued till her dying day working in Indian ink and in pastels. She said



In the second row from left to right, Robert Falk, Eva Levina-Rozengolts

she could hear and sing the melody of the clouds. The images in this series are diverse and yet they are all one. Like in Beethoven's symphonies, their inner rhythm gradually develops from the increasing dramatism to culmination and abatement.

The mastership in this series is astounding. It's hard to believe that with such simple media as Indian ink, brush and pen one can create images of such emotional force, dramatic power and beauty – both conditional and realistically accurate. Looking at these skies with their transforming sailing clouds and the play of light and shade one starts thinking they are the real sky while the real sky begins to conjure up the visual images created by the artist.

Even before *The Sky* series, Levina-Rozengolts had created the first drawings of her *People* series, which was named "rembrandtian" by art critic Mikhail Alpatov. The images in this series bring forth associations with such giants in art and literature as Shakespeare, Dante and Rembrandt. These generalized images – complicated and allegoric – create a polyphonic action of man's life on Earth. These are not characters of the 20th century reality – they might even be Medieval or from earlier centuries while this lofty artistic language does not picture concrete situations, but speak meta-

phorically making one's experience a flow of rhythms, gestures, movements and the magic transformations of light and darkness. That's why, despite the tragic subject of these pictures, they evoke a purely visual pleasure of expressive form and perfection of mastership. The combination of black and white gives birth to an inimitable play of light whereas light is the most important means.

Alongside the *People* series Levina-Rozengolts began another series called *Portraits*. The name is quite conditional for each portrait is a certain type, an incarnation of human qualities – wisdom, kindness, etc.

After the *Portraits* series the artist continued the *People* series creating its second act, so to speak – *Plastic Compositions*. Unlike the "Rembrandtian" series in "Plastical" compositions the creative thought develops from tense dramatism and turbulent dynamics to searches of a way out – liberation. The characters in this series are not black and white anymore, but silver-grayish or light bluish. They do not look like people from Earth, but rather like spirits, i.e. people after death in different bodies, more subtle than flesh and blood. They seem to have reached the *Sky* in the final sheet of the series – Serenity is upon them, the Kingdom of Clear Azure Light.

Search for Harmony dominates the last sheet of the *Sky* series, which is – and this is common spiritual knowledge – not on Earth, but in the sky. People become lighter and happier on leaving Earth. Likewise in these landscapes, the Earth gives way to the sky. The first sheets of this series still contain a narrow strip of land dissolving in the rays of the light in later sheets until what is left is just the sky alone – solemn, lofty, bereft of earthly troubles.

The *Sky* series was the finale of the artist's creativity as well as her life. Levina-Rozengolts seems to have found her own sky, her heaven and left the earth happy and lucid. What is left for us is her great art, which, if we use medieval terminology, can only be described as a reflection of "light immaterial" and "unspeakable grandeur of Eternity" where every blade of grass is a Breath of God. **P**

Dream Palaces of the Moscow Underground



Mayakovskaya is considered to be one of the most accomplished and balanced stations

text by Dr. Olga Zinovieva

photos by Alina Ganenko

The Moscow Metro was opened in May 15, 1935, as a critical component of the city's Stalinist Master Plan. It was constructed rather late in comparison with the London, Paris or New York City underground transportation systems. However, no other subway in the world could compete with it in the lavishness of the decoration and spaciousness of halls. Even the choice of the word "Metro", short for "Metropolitan" meaning a rapid transit rail system for the capital city, emphasized the grandiose undertaking, instead of more common words, such as a subway, tube, or underground, used in other countries.

It proved to be a very strong manifestation of Soviet technological capability, artistic creativity and pervasive ideology, expressed in stucco and brass sculptures, mosaic pictures and stain glass windows. Several times a day, every passenger had to admire and absorb the myths of the heroic labor and the Communist paradise for all. The underground palaces evoked Russian fairy tales through many artistic methods, which included magic flowers and leaves on the wall and benches, intricate lamps and chandeliers, horns of plenty, as well as ancient helmets and shields, bows and arrows.

It was a truly national construction site, when hundreds of different productions were involved, supplying metal, bricks, cement, staircases, cars, as well as gentle marble, strong granite, sparkling glass



One of the mosaic pictures by Alexander Deineka in the Mayakovskaya station



Mosaic plafond by Alexander Deineka (Novokuznetskaya station)

and picturesque ceramic tiles. A special Art Commission was set up to contract the best architects, sculptors and artists across the Soviet Union. Thousands of young volunteers, as well as political prisoners dug tunnels under very harsh conditions, following the commands to "speed up" and "beat the deadline."

In late 19th – early 20th century the city fathers studied and rejected a number of projects of the Moscow underground for different reasons. The owners of the ground transportation, who did not want to lose their businesses, closed ranks and lobbied aggressively against these proposals. The Moscow Imperial Archeological Society was also against the construction. However, it was the overall economic and political instability, caused by the revolutions of 1905 and 1917, World War I and the Russian Civil War, which interfered with construction. Had the Metro been built earlier, it would have looked very similar to the industrial subways in London, Paris or New York.

The Plenary Session of the Communist party took the decision to build the Metro in 1931. Stalin's dream of Palladian style was reflected in the Metro to the most. The Soviet Leader, the Red Tsar, agreed to have less lines and stations at the cost of their ceremonial appearances and spectacular narrations on the walls and ceilings. Distinguished architects, sculptors and artists felt honored to be awarded state orders for the design and decoration of the new national project. The Moscow Metro has reflected the history, political and economic situation of the country in full.

Its circular and radial plan mirrored the city plan of circular and radial streets. The first radial line (1935), called the Red Line or Sokolnicheskaya now, went from Sokolniki Park to Park Kultury but it also had an extension to Smolenskaya, a part of the contemporary Light Blue Line. The stations were very laconic in expression, some in constructivist style without any decorations, such as Chistie Prudy for example. Among the most distinguished stations are Krasniye Vorota, where Ivan Fomin created the spirit of an ancient grotto and a very elegant and light Kropotkinskaya by Alexei Dushkin, which was designed to be the underground entrance hall to the Palace of Soviets, being built nearby but never accomplished. Komsomolskaya presented an attempt by Dmitry Chechulin to build an underground palace with

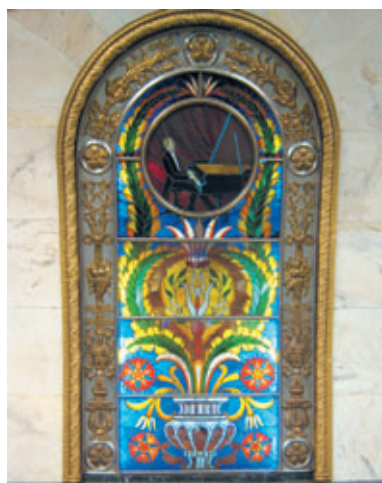
columns crowned with capitals, staircases and balconies, decorated with gold plated sheaves of wheat in order to satisfy his Kremlin customers. Evgeny Lancere, an esteemed artist, made sketches of miners, working in this area and finally his majolica picture of the festive labor, was placed on the wall of the transition hall to the Ring (Brown) Line.

Already in 1937 the line from Smolenskaya was extended to Kievskaya and in 1938 a line was launched from Kurskaya to Sokol. The speed of the construction accelerated but the underground stations became more decorated to meet the demand of the totalitarian regime in monumental propaganda. Ploshchad Revolyutsii was Stalin's favorite station according to his daughter Svetlana Allilueva, now a US resident. The station presents the Soviet Mount Olympus with gods of labor, agriculture, military service, agronomy, education, maternity, aeronautics, etc. Each expressive sculpture by Matvey Manizer gives an example to follow – work hard, study well, go in for sports, be aware of the enemies around you and be ready to defend your homeland at any time.

Today, Mayakovskaya, located on the Green Line and designed by Alexei Dushkin, is thought to be one of the most accomplished and well balanced stations. Its slim columns, faced with precious rhodonite and trimmed with stainless steel, transport the vaults upwards to windows which opened right to the skies, to the heavens. One can almost breathe the fresh air; see airplanes, balloons and paratroopers and admire mothers, who raise their healthy children to the skies. These are 34 mosaic pictures created by Alexander Deineka, who modestly called them "Twenty Four Hours of the Soviet Sky". In 1938, a model of the station won the Grand Prix at the World Fair in New York; and in the late 1980s, it received the status of an architectural monument.

The idea of windows, which could take you from the underground straight behind the clouds, was very popular at that time. Oktyabrskaya ring station (Leonid Poliakov, 1950) has an iron-grill door with such a realistic blue sky behind it that it tempts you to take out a golden key and open the door to another world.

One should not deny the educational value of the Metro narrations. Elektrozavodskaya (Electrical Bulb Factory) of the Dark Blue Line (Vladimir Gelfreich and Igor Rozhin,



Illusive stain glass windows, brass flow-ers and stucco, outlining marble koko-shniks in the Novoslobodskaya station



Ploshad Revolyutsii station, sculptor: Mat-vei Manizer, architect: Alexei Dushkin



Prospect Mira (Brown) Ring Station



Constructivist style Park Kulturi station

1944) guides us through the science history of the origin of electricity, as well as the invention and production of electrical bulbs. Marble reliefs by Gregory Motovilov portray engineers, draftsmen, workers, quality control people along with kolkhoz men and women supplying food for the workers.

During WWII, some of the stations served as bomb shelters and conference halls for the communist party. It is very hard to believe that the construction of stations never ceased during the whole military campaign – but it's true. Seven stations were put into service during the war.

In 1950, the first section of the Ring Line (Brown Line) was opened to the public. The circle was completed in 1954, already after Stalin's death. No wonder, that this is the most popular line amongst tourists. Its spectacular stations, transfer halls, staircases and tunnels reflect Stalinist mature post-war architectural style. It was meant to celebrate Soviet victory in WWII and the glory of Stalin's Empire. The designers' unrestrained fantasy brought together classical elements of folk art and cutting-edge technologies. The Komsomolskaya ring station (architects: Alexei Shusev, Victor Kokorin, mosaics by Pavel Korin, 1952) is a retrospective look of the Russian victories by regular regiments in shining mosaics. The Belorusskaya stations (architects: Ivan Taranov, Nadezhda Bykova, sculptors: Sergei Orlov and Saul Rabinovich, 1952), show partisans, common people, involved in the liberation movement, through imposing sculptures. Kievskaya station (sculptors: Evgeny Katonin, Vadim Skugarev, Geory Golubev, artist: A.V. Mizin, 1954) is an anthem to workers, collective farmers and engineers, guided by the Communist party. Park Kultury (architect: Igor Rozhin, sculptor: Saul Rabinovich) is a narration of how the Soviet people should spend their leisure time, going in for sports, singing, dancing and performing.

The Metro had a lot of sculptures, mosaics and reliefs of Stalin and Lenin. Semyonovskaya was called Stalinskaya once. Now, one can only see Lenin's images; all Stalin's portraits have disappeared from the underground stations for good.

In 1935-1953 more than 40 stations were built along the tunnels of more than 50 kilometers long. A unique underground museum of monumental art and ideology was created during this short period of time. **P**

Moscow from the River

text and photos
by Ross Hunter

Built on seven hills it may be, but a good panorama of Moscow is hard to find. The Ostankino Tower is closed, new towers are mostly unfinished, and none of the other obvious spots affords a full view (apart from the Swissotel, which I can't afford).

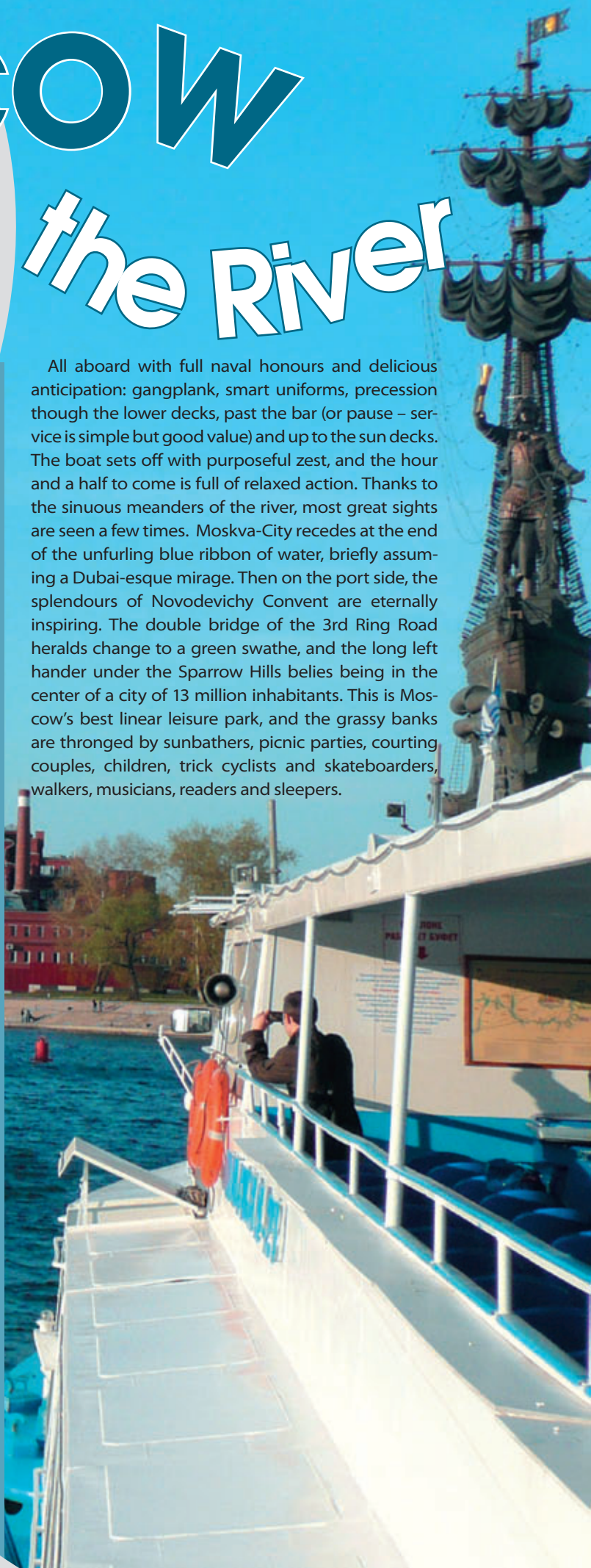
So, how to see the whole city without exertion? Simple! From the river. The Moscow River is as unhurried as the city is frenetic and cuts through it at most of the interesting points. Green views, clean air, fresh water – what more could anyone want? A brisk breeze? Consider it done!

The fleet of water boats that ply the bends are ideal for any purpose – a romantic getaway, exercise for the camera, a party, a sunset aperitif with moving scenery, a children's expedition – any excuse, your cruise awaits you. There are several routes, boats, operators and prices, up river, down river and round trips. Most popular is to glide downstream from Kievskaya, although cruises do start further west under the towering cliffs of the new business areas.

Kievskaya is an ideal starting point. Get there early, and enjoy the views before embarkation. Behind is the fine railway station, the SAS hotel and an imposing, if curiously styled, shopping center; in front, the splendid fountains and flags. A spot of people watching is always entertaining here. Across the river, generous banks sweep up to the Hotel Borodino and behind it the imposing Stalin gothic squat shoulders and sharp spire of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: just one of the five 'Wedding Cakes' in view along the way. And then there is the pedestrian bridge that welds its way across the river. An amazing construction, looking well able to support at least a railway line or two, with seemingly every face and column in a different material and style: solid stone uprights; massive steel arches, crystal faceted glazing and riots of contrasting colour. Theme, pattern, or purpose? I can't find it – happy hunting! It is the first of eleven bridges to play echo-ooohs under (16 on the full route, including passing under the Metro lines twice, as they break surface at Smolenskaya and by the university).

**Cameras ready,
the reel of
photo ops spins
ever faster...**

All aboard with full naval honours and delicious anticipation: gangplank, smart uniforms, precession though the lower decks, past the bar (or pause – service is simple but good value) and up to the sun decks. The boat sets off with purposeful zest, and the hour and a half to come is full of relaxed action. Thanks to the sinuous meanders of the river, most great sights are seen a few times. Moskva-City recedes at the end of the unfurling blue ribbon of water, briefly assuming a Dubai-esque mirage. Then on the port side, the splendours of Novodevichy Convent are eternally inspiring. The double bridge of the 3rd Ring Road heralds change to a green swathe, and the long left hander under the Sparrow Hills belies being in the center of a city of 13 million inhabitants. This is Moscow's best linear leisure park, and the grassy banks are thronged by sunbathers, picnic parties, courting couples, children, trick cyclists and skateboarders, walkers, musicians, readers and sleepers.



As the boat yaws steadily to port around the peninsula, the views are unique. Inside the bend is the imposing symmetry of the Luzhniki Stadium, the famous venue for many great football games involving Spartak, Russia... and last May's match between a couple of English outfits painting the town red and blue. A wonderful stadium – another must-go venue. Opposite, enjoy amazing and unexpected views of Moscow University, the largest and second most elegant of the seven 'Wedding Cakes', peeking imperiously above the trees. In front of this paragon of rationality stands... the ski jump. Majestic in profile, mad in prospect, this is a sport to watch often, but to try probably only once.

Round the bend (meaning the boat has moved, not a commentary on the previous recreational opportunity), and another imposing pair of sights fill both port and starboard sides: to

Vodootvodny Canal

In Moscow's ever turbulent history, while the left bank was repeatedly razed by fire, the right bank risked inundation in wet spells and swampy disease in the sticky summer. After a disaster in 1783, an inspired decision was made to dig out the Vodootvodny Canal and it was completed just three years later. Having saved the city, it is now one of its great treasures, worth an excursion in its own right. The smaller boats offer tours, with guides, along this delightful waterway. The western half is the more scenic, with the chocolate factory, Repin guarding his Bolotnaya Park, the fountains and the Newly Weds' Bridge, and a cacophony of incongruous architectural styles. Being Zamoskvareche, the streets are tighter and less planned, and great views come as quick glimpses and pleasant surprises, making for better photos. A stroll along the canal is the answer to almost any question, whether on foot, bike or from a boat deck.

Round trips, clockwise, take an hour and cost 400 rubles. Leave from Repin/Newly Weds' Bridge.

facing a varied set of buildings on the right with churches, hotels, theaters and power stations elbowing each other.

Ahead, the studied symmetry and elegance of the Stalin skyscraper at Kotelnicheskaya with its white limestone topped by aluminium Soviet sculptures. This for-

your left, the statuesque apartment buildings of Frunzenskaya – arguably some of the best 'des res' properties in Moscow, affording great views of the river, and the morning sun, with the sophisticated areas of Park Kultury, Kropotkinskaya and Tolstoy's house behind. To the right, Gorky Park beckons with its array of amusements to gawk at or squawk from.

Float on by. Next up, under the Garden Ring and past the brutalist cube of the New Tretyakov, assuredly better on the inside than out, flanked by the ever fascinating sculpture park, and watched over by the immense landmark of Peter The Great directing traffic, as here the river keeps left, but the canal takes a shortcut to the right (see side box).

Cameras ready, the reel of photo ops spins ever faster: what's left of the historic Red October chocolate factory opposite the gleaming gold of the new Christ the Saviour cathedral, the pair linked by the splendid promenade footbridge. Salute the Kremlin and St Basil's, and if you are lucky at dusk, watch the twinkles of GUM's lights as they flicker on for the evening. The remains of the less than lovely Hotel Rossiya are cased in car adverts,

mer residence of the elite writers and artists rivals the university for location and beats it for beauty.

Alight here for Kitai Gorod on the city side, or Tretyakovskaya on the south side. Or carry on down to Novospasskiy Most, under the shadow of the Swissotel, and head for Paveletskaya or Proletarskaya. In 80 minutes, you have effortlessly glided past most of the best of Moscow's sights, as unhurried as the river, a welcome break before the bustle of the city reasserts itself. Or turn round and do it again; or carry on downstream to Kolomenskaya... But that is another story. All that for 400 rubles. **P**



Fad? or Fitness ■

text by Elena Krivovvaz,
drawings by Maria Luneva

The Soviet system of sport education in schools stipulated numerous tests and standards and they were the same for all. Those who couldn't jump as high and run as fast as they were supposed got bad marks and were made fun of. Many pupils, whose lives were turned into nightmares because of PT, turned to doctors to try and get a fake health certificate in order to avoid the lessons they hated so much. To my shame, I did the same, until I fortunately broke my leg. That was my salvation and I could sit on the bench and watch others being tormented. These memories are hard to forget and it is one reason why many post-Soviet Russians don't go in for sports. The owners of the first fitness clubs realized that they had to spend huge sums of money to make people believe that "fitness" has nothing to do with those school sports. Millions for advertising, millions for rent and millions for equipment...



Twenty years ago Russians didn't know what the word "fitness" meant. There was "sports" and that was it. Anybody wanting to get fit had to visit their local so-called sports clubs, usually stocked with old-fashioned training equipment, a constant smell of sweat and total absence of service. Today's fitness clubs are a totally different story, but have their own peculiarities.

Pre-history

As a Soviet Union-bred citizen I must confess that the emergence of fitness clubs during the last fifteen years is a true revolution. Many of my contemporaries and our parents remember PT lessons at school. It would be an understatement to say that those lessons were scary. Soviet PT teachers were mostly men with unsuccessful sports careers. Not all of them were good teachers. "Everybody is playing volley-ball!" Our teacher always began the lesson with these words. "Those who don't like volleyball can sit on the bench like losers." He found this very funny.

hardly a good business to be in – in the 1990's. The only way to make money was to make Russians think it was a new trend. The first visitors of fitness clubs were rich criminals, they were the only who could afford the club memberships, as membership cost more than an application to Eton College. Eventually, fitness clubs became kind of a fashion.

Oases of the Soviet Past

Over 300 – that was the number of fitness clubs I found in a recently published reference book. Basically, fitness clubs can be divided into three groups or categories. Exclusive – clubs for the well-off, (about 10-15% of all fitness clubs), with membership prices starting at 60,000 rubles per year, middle-class level (more than 35-40 % of all clubs) which encompasses those that cost 25,000-50,000 rubles per a year. The third category (about 50%) of clubs needs no introduction to most Russians – local gyms stylized in a 1980s or 1990s way. They cost from 500-1,000 rubles per month and can give you nothing but old and rusty equipment and unsanitary bathrooms.

"I spent two or three years in a local gym," recalls Oleg Vorobyov, a 29-year old business analyst. "It was in the cellar of a block of flats. I only went there for the company. But it was awful. When it was rainy the floor of our gym was wet and fleas bit us terribly. There wasn't any staff, just a security man who could sometimes go away for an hour or so and leave us locked inside."

That's why people turn their eyes to middle-class clubs. These establishments can offer more service – like swimming pools, aerobics, yoga, boxing, a solarium in addition to equipment which looks much better than those in local gyms. The floors and cloakrooms are clean, but there can be exceptions. There can be queues for the most popular training stations. Men and women – all mixed together. The piped music depends on the taste of the managers and trainers, and is usually pop, whether



you like that or not. Some of the clubs charge low fees but make you pay extra for use of the changing rooms and towels.

"When I was trying to find a fitness club not far from my home, I found Fitness Empire (Imperiya Fitnesa)," said Maria, a 23-year old designer. "It cost 5,000 rubles a year, and I've never seen such low prices in a fitness club before. But when I started going there, I understood that I had to pay extra for everything: for using a cloakroom, for using the swimming pool and for some of the training equipment, too. When I asked the staff what the membership card gave me, they just shrugged their shoulders."

Middle-class level clubs can offer you free lessons (from one to three) with a trainer. He gives you a medical check, asks questions about your medical history and gives some advice. But then if you want to train on your own, he may put pressure on you to try to make you pay for personal training. That's because such personal lessons constitute the instructor's main wages. Some clients find this kind of pressure intimidating and leave.

"One day I decided to lose weight and went to the nearest Planet Fitness club," recounted Julia, a 26-year old businesswoman. "This was about a year ago, so I paid 5,000 rubles for the first month. It was a special; I didn't have the 30,000 I'd needed for the whole year. I liked the first free lesson and the trainer. But when I started training on my own, he started to follow me around, saying I should pay an extra 7,000 rubles per month for personal lessons. 'You can't do it all yourself, you will just sweat and not lose your weight,' he said. Then I decided to quit and never went back."

This is one of the reasons why the management of these clubs tries to persuade clients to buy a year's or at least six-months membership up front. The staff tries to be polite and friendly, but not everybody can. Don't be surprised when calling reception at one of these clubs to find out that the staff treat you as if you aren't actually there ("Can't you see, I'm busy with the other clients, please wait for ten minutes!"). Stay where you are and get used to it, or swap clubs.

Special Clubs for Special People

During the last five to eight years, the number of special clubs for men and women has increased. If you are a woman and don't want to bump into sweaty unknown men in a training session, visit a fitness club for women. Well-known clubs such as World Class, for example, have a club for women – World Class Lady's. There is also a network of clubs for women – Miss Fitness and many others. There are many fitness clubs for men only, such as Sport&Spa, Terra Sport Kopernik and others. The price for these specialized clubs is considerably higher than for an ordinary middle-class club.

The price for luxury club membership, for mixed or single sex establishments, can be over 100,000 rubles. These clubs can invite you for a couple of test visits. There are no queues here, and the staff smile naturally. There are fitness bars, shops, children's rooms and other facilities at your disposal. You're always given a fresh towel, slippers, and tooth-brush, etc, all as part of the ordinary admission fee. Clients pay not just for good service and impressive and splendid interior design, but for the chance to meet people: businessmen, diplomats, etc. There are no occasional visitors in these clubs. Such fitness clubs don't need more than 500-800 members, in contrast to big fitness club chains, which may have thousands of members. Membership fees for the top clubs can be over 200,000 rubles (Biosphere, Rixos Royal SPA Wellness center, Vitasport) but not all offer better service than those which charge 100,000 rubles per year.

Though there are many places to go for fitness, Russians are still divided into two camps: those who cannot afford it and think it's just a whim of rich, and others who take fitness as a kind of fashion and choose the most expensive clubs. Are there people who understand that fitness is an everyday necessity and has nothing to do with either whims and fashion? Well, they exist, but many consider it better to do physical training at home or have a run or walk in the nearest park rather than pay money for their own efforts.

These are some of the reasons that fitness clubs in Russia are still the reserve of the elite, and fees are still considerably higher than equivalent establishments in other countries. **P**

*A young Nanai girl
standing outside her house
in Sikachi-Alyan*

The Nanai People of the Amur River

text and photos
by Piers Gladstone

At the village of Sikachi-Alyan, 40km downstream from Khabarovsk on the banks of the fast-flowing Amur River, a collection of 11th century BC petroglyphs (rock carvings) on basalt boulders

lie in the traditional territory of one of the Amur region's indigenous cultures, the Nanai. Like many indigenous cultures around the world, the Nanai's way of life has been under constant threat from the modern, industrial world that has grown up around it.

The 70km drive from Khabarovsk to The Museum of the Indigenous Culture of the Amur River, close to the village of Sikachi-Alyan, is devastatingly beautiful. Cabbage fields flank the road, dotted with bending figures attending their crops. Lush rolling hills and forests set a backdrop for the scene, while meandering rivers make their

*Dmitry and Volodya prepare
the boat to head up-stream*



way leisurely across the landscape. Every conceivable shade of green is vibrantly on display wherever the eye travels, occasionally dotted with specks of orange of wild lilies growing by the side of the road.

I drink tea and wait at The Museum of the Indigenous Culture of the Amur

River for Dmitry Aktanko, the Nanai village elder and my guide, to get his ancient Ural motorcycle and sidecar push started. We go along a bumpy track down to the river's edge, the two metal milk pails in his sidecar clanking loudly with every bump. Dmitry parks his bike and makes for an old tin boat with virtually no paint left on it – an equally old outboard engine attached to its back. "In recent years our people have come under a lot of pressure because of the tremendous amounts of logging," Dmitry explains while preparing the boat. "We have lost our traditional places for hunting," he continues, "and now there are very few fish left for us in this river." Recent tests on the water of the Amur River revealed it contains dangerously high levels of chemicals, oil and copper.

Hunting and fishing were an integral part of the Nanai way of life. The Nanai traditionally lived in isolated villages scattered alongside a 600km stretch of the Amur River and its tributaries in Russia and in China which sits on the opposite bank of the Amur. There are now less than 10,000 Nanai in Russia and approximately 4,000 in China.

The Nanai used to wear clothes and shoes made from fish skins and were known also as the "fish skin people". In 1858 the entire left bank of the Amur River, which had formerly been part of China, was claimed as Russian and a long process of colonization began. Until the end of the 19th century the Nanai bartered and lived close to nature. In the late summer and early autumn months they would fish for salmon in the rivers, with the whole community involved in the process of catching, preserving and storing the fish. Groups of men would head out into the forests on long hunt-



Dmitry at the helm of his metal boat

ing trips for furs during the winter, while in spring and early summer they would hunt for meat. Summers would see the communities living in tipi-like tents or circular huts made from birch bark, and in winter people would live in dugouts. This life ended soon after the revolution however.



Arrival at Gasya, site of the 11th century BC petroglyphs

By the 20th century the majority of Nanai had been forced from their traditional hunting and fishing grounds. The collectivised farming of the 1930s *kolkhozes* put yet further pressure on the Nanai. "The process of our culture dying out started in the 1930s," Dmitry explains as he carries a jerry can of fuel to the boat. "My grandfather had four brothers in the 1930s, one of whom was deported to Sakhalin Island. Then they were practicing a traditional life. My grandfather was a local judge among the Nanai people. The Soviets came and asked him why he was not a communist and had not joined the kolkhoz. So he too was sent to Sakhalin. The village started to really die out in the 1960s with the enlargement of the kolkhoz," he says with no trace of emotion on his weather-beaten face.

Once the boat is prepared, Dmitry introduces Volodya, a young man in his early twenties dressed in the ubiquitous Adidas sportswear of Russia's provincial youth. He is to take me a kilometer up-river to the site of a collection of 11th century BC petroglyphs carved on basalt rocks. I climb into the tin boat and Volodya pushes us out from the shore with one oar before lowering the out-board and pulling hard on the cord to start it. Nothing happens. He pulls again. Nothing. We start to drift out into the fast flowing river. A hydrofoil that looks like some strange insect passes us by, bound for the Chinese town of Fuyuan as Volodya repeatedly tries to start the engine before giving up and rowing us back to shore, where we are met by Dmitry. "Did you bring vodka for the spirits?" he asks. "You must bring vodka and cigarettes as a gift for the spirits at the rocks." I have no vodka, only cigarettes, which is apparently the reason why the engine won't start. After several attempts Dmitry manages to get the ancient engine to splutter and

cough into life in a cloud of smoke. We head off upstream, still with no vodka.

Volodya leads me over some boulders and through the reeds on the bank of the river pointing out the large rocks that have carvings on them. Some have strange human faces on them, others animals and fish, some recognizable others not. I carefully place some cigarettes by the carvings to appease the spirits and hopefully ensure a safe journey back to Sikachi-Alyan. Soon Dmitry joins us. "Russian people came in the early nineties in boats and took at least half of the rocks with pictures on them," he says with a shake of his head.

I imagine some oligarch reclining in his mansion with some of the rocks scattered liberally around his garden. "As children we would come to this place because we were interested in the rocks," Dmitry says, "but then we grew up. Usually we do not visit this place. It is called Gasyan, but I cannot remember what it means. Maybe our babushka knows. We will ask her when we return to the village." The Nanai are a shamanistic culture and sites such as Gasyan once played an important role in their daily lives. But, like most of their culture, this aspect too has faded. "There is no shaman here. They were from an older generation and they all died. The last one in 1973."



*Dmitry's daughter
and babushka at home*



*Dmitry's house
in Sikachi-Alyan*

*The strange shaped animals
and faces of Gasya's petroglyphs*

Dimitry invites me to his house to meet his babushka. It is a single-story clapboard and corrugated iron affair with an old rotting Lada sitting in front of it with weeds growing out of the wheel arches and radiator. Dimitry's 9 year-old daughter Nadia is sitting on its roof playing with a centipede she has found. We find his 77 year-old babushka round the back, sitting in the late afternoon sun, regally dressed in embroidered traditional clothing. Dimitry asks her if she knows what the meaning of Gasyan is, but she cannot remember either. "We hardly have our own language now. The language is dying because our education has been in Russian," Dimitry says rather apologetically. Of the 315 residents of Sikachi-Alyan, it seems that only the babushka and two other elderly residents still speak Nanai fluently. The younger generation only speaks Russian.

Language however is the least of their concerns. Like most marginalized communities, the lack of work and poor healthcare are the main issues on people's minds. Dimitry is the eldest man in the village. He is 50 years old. The average life expectancy of a man in Russia is 58. "There is no future for the Nanai," Dimitry states bluntly. "There is no work here. The government gives people \$30 per month. This is no life. The only work here is to find vodka." This, plus the fact that the river on which the Nanai rely on for fish has at times been horrendously polluted and this perhaps explains the shockingly young mortality rate of the male inhabitants of the village. In 1989, the water of the Amur up-river in the city of Komsomolsk contained 13 times the amount of phenols permissible, five times

the amount of oil products and 40 times more copper than is considered safe.

I leave Sikachi-Alyan and head back to Khabarovsk with a heavy

heart, knowing that in less than a generation the last remnants of the Nanai culture that I have just seen will almost certainly have been lost forever. **P**



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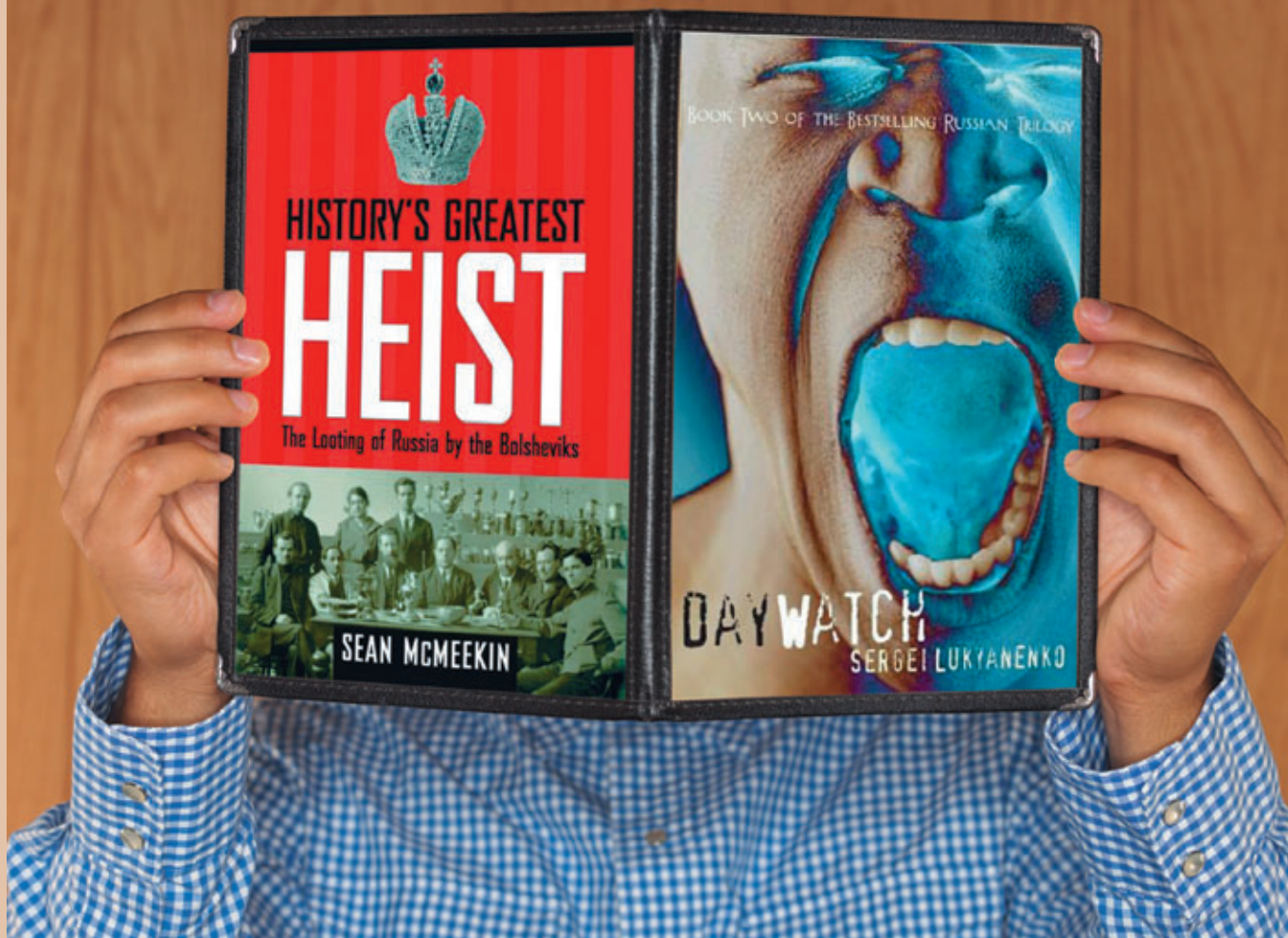
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The Destruction of Russia



By Ian Mitchell

History's Greatest Heist:

the Looting of Russia by the Bolsheviks
Sean McMeekin, Yale University Press, 2009,
hardback pp. 302, \$29.64 (amazon.com)

Day Watch

Sergei Lukyanenko, Arrow Books, 2007,
paperback pp. 487, 625 rubles (Bukberi)

Until the fall of Communism, the most popular version of Soviet history in the West was: 'Lenin good (-ish), Stalin bad (no -ish)'. Communism was, many felt, a benevolent concept which was promoted by the idealistic, if occasionally thuggish, Lenin, but when he died it was turned into an unmitigated evil by Stalin, who was thuggish at all times and without any redeeming idealism.

Since 1991, with the partial opening of archives in Russia, it has become apparent, through the work of historians like Edvard Radzinsky and Dmitri Volkogonov, that Lenin was at least as bad as Stalin, in

terms of his thuggery, and arguably less idealistic, since Stalin at least had the general goal of building up Soviet industrial and defensive power. Lenin destroyed everything and built nothing, whereas Stalin at least turned the socio-economic wreckage left by the Civil War and War Communism into a force which was capable, admittedly with Western help, of turning the Nazis out of the country after they invaded in the early 1940s.

Lenin did not have the apparatus of repression available to him which Stalin had. But the viciousness and violence with which he responded to even the slightest challenge to his authority seems to indicate that if he had had, he might well have used it as savagely (and counter-productively) as Stalin did. But that is speculation — at least it was until Sean McMeekin published the extraordinary book under review. In it he describes in minute detail how Lenin and his cohorts destroyed Russia in order to take power for themselves.

What is so interesting about McMeekin's approach to the subject is his primarily economic analysis — by their loots ye shall know them! This makes a refreshing change from tales of the Gulag and the Lubyanka. No one has yet made so careful a study of the Bolshevik's economic crimes. Yet this story is central to any understanding of how the Communists killed Russia.

It is extraordinary to discover that Marxists, who operated on the axiom that economics determined everything, understood nothing whatsoever about the practical workings of an economy — any economy, whether capitalist or socialist. They really had no ideas in their collective head other than theft and destruction, plus arrest and murder for anyone who opposed them. If McMeekin drives one point home above all else, it is that the Bolshevik revolution was entirely negative. There was not a single redeeming aspect of idealism in the make-up of any of the major figures. Lenin was the worst of the lot.

Winston Churchill was one of the first to appreciate this. But even he, who wanted 'to strangle Bolshevism in its cradle', was only half right when he said of the Father of the Revolution: 'His aim – to save the world; his method – to blow it up.' The first part of that sentence, we now know, was nonsense. Lenin's aim was to take power, keep it and to make sure the Russian people paid for everything he required in order to enslave them.

McMeekin starts by describing just how wealthy Russia was in 1914. Though a country with considerable economic problems, and burdened with a political regime which was medieval and inimical to progress, Russia nonetheless had the fourth largest industrial economy in the world, one which was growing at a rate of 8-9% per annum.

It was also the world's largest exporter of food. It had Europe's largest gold reserves — about 1,200 metric tonnes — due to running a continual trade surplus. The stock exchange was booming; agriculture was being modernized; and the arts and culture were all flourishing. It was a desirable place to be. McMeekin comments: 'Russia in the last days of the tsars was a substantial net importer of both people and capital, a telling fact that, after 1917, would never be true again.'

In his Prologue, McMeekin poses the question his book aims to answer:

'All this wealth taken together was the national patrimony of centuries... The riveting scenes of the Revolution, which saw desperate Russians selling priceless jewels and family heirlooms for food and fuel to survive the winter, would be repeated again after the collapse of Communism in 1991 — with one crucial difference. At the century's end, in a crude measure of how badly the Bolsheviks had beggared the country, Russia's dispossessed hawked not expensive jewellery, but ragged mittens and small handfuls of vegetables raised on dacha plots. It was an extraordinary fall: from world-famous opulence to subsistence agriculture in only seventy-five years. How did it happen?'

The short answer is that the Bolsheviks stole everything, then squandered it on armaments and their own comfort.

Lenin established a system whereby every item of value in the country was confiscated without compensation.

This went from the gold reserves and the stock of rubles in the Central Bank, through to art treasures in public and private hands, and down to any items of value, like clocks, icons and silver spoons, which were held by individuals or the Church. Those family heirlooms sold on the streets were often disposed of simply in order to pre-empt the kommissars.

One of the most original parts of McMeekin's book is the long description of how all the money raised by selling this loot abroad was used for purchasing armaments with which to fight the people from whom it was stolen. Lenin made peace with the Germans at Brest-Litovsk in March 1918, then started trading with them, initially through sympathetic bankers in Stockholm. He bought pistols, machine guns, military uniforms, artillery, aircraft, trucks, field telephones, signalling equipment, locomotives and all the other apparatus necessary to wage war on his real enemy — the Russians.

Though the country was starving, the Bolsheviks bought food only for themselves — in fact considerable quantities of it. (Lenin also purchased spare parts for the Rolls-Royce he used, which can now be seen in the museum at Leninsky-Gorky.) The Red Army was the only well-fed group of people in the country, apart from the Communist leadership. The war, McMeekin says, was essentially a war for control of the food supply so that once the gold, roubles, art-works, jewellery and church silver ran out, the Communists could still feed themselves, courtesy of the now enslaved peasantry.

By this stage, even Lenin's original power base in the urban factories had largely deserted him. McMeekin says that by the winter of 1919-20 only 2 per cent of industrial laborers still belonged to the Bolshevik Party.

Why did the Germans co-operate? They did so because, McMeekin says, 'they were blinded by anti-Allied rage and imperial greed.' They had a dream of colonizing Russia with the aid of the Bolsheviks. Only Allied victory on the Western Front prevented that from happening.

Even after defeat, the Germans continued helping the Bolsheviks, right up to 1931. In that year, their government allowed the Soviet Union, now ruled by

Stalin, to place orders worth \$10 billion in today's money for armaments to be used in the final showdown with the peasants during the collectivization of agriculture. The result was that 'the Bolsheviks had imported enough German Mausers, machine-guns, and motor-cars to ensure that resistance to Stalin's collectivisation offensive in the Ukraine could be suppressed with ease by army and secret police enforcers.'

Five months later, the Soviet Union, pleading poverty, defaulted on the bill for all of this, thereby getting it from impoverished Weimar Germany effectively for nothing, just at the time Hitler was emerging onto the political scene arguing that Bolshevism should be opposed rather than assisted.

Is it not legitimate to ask whether, in these circumstances, the Soviets themselves did not bear a small part of the responsibility for creating the public mood in Germany which made the Nazi revolution possible?

McMeekin's extraordinary story perhaps explains something of the background to the fantasy thrillers written by Sergei Lukyanenko. Like many post-Soviet Russian authors, Lukyanenko sets his novels in a bleakly dystopian world — in this case an explicitly modern Moscow — where everyone in power is either a thief, a thug or someone with supernatural powers of the sort which are as far removed from 'street' reality of the other characters as the worlds of Lenin and Stalin were from the life of the toiling masses in the workers' paradise.

Lukyanenko started writing for money when he found that, after the collapse of Communism, he could not make a living as a child psychiatrist. Many critics think his experiences at the time helped to form his dark artistic vision. After publishing several books in the science-fiction and fantasy genres, he struck gold in 2004 when his book *Night Watch*, the predecessor of *Day Watch*, was made into a film. It grossed over \$16 million in Russia, a record at the time, and was later released in America.

Two years later, *Day Watch* was published in an English translation and a year ago, the film version was released by Fox Searchlight. It, too, has become a best-seller. **P**



Poster Child

text by Charles Borden,
photos by Maria Savelieva

The restaurant openings that had been queued up for Moscow pre-crisis are finally thinning out. On recommendation we decided to try one of the last, Alioli. Billed as a Spanish/tapas restaurant, it is on Neglinaya just up the street from the Ararat Park Hyatt hotel, and near the Bolshoi Theater and Lubyanka. Since *Passport* publisher John Ortega was still raving about the tapas he enjoyed on a recent trip to Barcelona, and Moscow has few if any tapas bars, Alioli was an easy sell.

We had warmed up at a tasting of Galician wines put on by the commercial office of the Spanish embassy and arrived early on a Wednesday evening. The entry to Alioli is directly off the street, bright with a view through a wall of tall windows that beckons passersby. This is a new

trend in Moscow, though the norm in the West – the habit in Moscow has been to hide both restaurants and customers, and even restaurants that had windows closed them off behind heavy curtains. From the door, Alioli appeared pleasant, if empty, and even the modern style window graphics would lead one to believe that we might be in for a pleasant meal.

Directly past the door, Alioli's modest-sized dining area has a subdued interior, amply lit with modern furnishings and a bar spread across the very back. The waiting staff was friendly and helpful, and presented us with a four-page English menu: appetizers, salads, hot snacks, soups, paellas, hot fish and seafood dishes and meat dishes. The tapas is laid out at the bar, with a chalkboard specialty menu.

So far so good, but Alioli is a Spanish restaurant – where were the scents of





hot olive oil, saffron, mint and other wild spices, and grilled meats and fish? And where was the Spanish chef, the master of Catalanian, Andalusian or Valencian cuisine? On inquiry, it appears there is none at Alioli. The assistant manager on duty even had to call the absent manager just to get permission to give us the chef's name.

As usual we ordered a range of dishes to share: Alcachofitas Crujentes con Lacas de Iberica (fried eggs with crunchy artichokes and jamon – 340 rubles), Patatas Panadera con Iberico de Guijuelo y Huevo Roto (fried egg, potato chips and jamon served with green sauce – 300 rubles), Arroz de Huerta (paella with seasonal vegetables – 310 rubles), Arroz con Gambas y Trigueros (paella with red prawns and green asparagus – 490 rubles), Surtido de Carnas a la Plancha (assorted grilled meat with lettuce leaves and green oil – 730 rubles), and Solomillo de Ternera con Salsa de Queso (grilled veal fillet with potatoes, asparagus and piquant cheese sauce – 650 rubles).

To check the soups, I also ordered Sopa de Espinacas con Queso (spinach

soup with cheese – 250 rubles). I went to the bar and picked an assortment of tapas to share at the table (sold by weight – per 100 grams) and a plate of jamón serrano (sold by weight – per 50 grams) was also sent over.

For a restaurant review we look for adjectives to describe each of the dishes and wine, and also at *Passport* we also normally prefer to say nothing if unable to say anything good. I am afraid we now break the second principle – with few exceptions the principle descriptor that could be used for the food was “forgettable”, the exceptions being, in the case of the paella (which we dubbed “plov”, a Soviet Central Asian rice dish) and some of the tapas dishes – “memorable for poor imitation” of the Spanish originals. The one highlight of the evening was the red wine, Marques de Vitoria Tinto Crianza 2002 (2140 rubles), which was very delightful and balanced.

The kind supposition would be that perhaps the owners decided budget cuts were in order after the crisis hit, so the authentic chef was cut out – the less kind that a Spanish chef was never

intended. In the case of Alioli, it appears that the foreign chef never made it to Moscow and that the current staff has never been near real Spanish food.

The elimination of the expensive foreign chef within a few months of opening has been a common occurrence at Moscow restaurants, once management believes that the newly trained domestic cooks will be adequate. At Japanese and sushi restaurants in Moscow, the belief that form means substance is driven to an extreme where Central Asian cooks and waitresses take the place of Japanese simply because they look Asian.

It would be great to have a good Spanish/tapas restaurant in Moscow, and although the location and premises for Alioli are good, this isn't it (yet). Instead, Alioli is a kind of poster child for some of the problems that Moscow restaurant culture exhibits where form is emphasized over substance and name over reality. **P**

Alioli
Ulitsa Neglinaya, 8
Tel: +7 (495) 621-9080

Night Flight

Really Does Have a Restaurant

text Charles W. Borden,
photos Maria Savelieva

There were more than a few expressions of surprise a year ago when Night Flight appeared on a list that I prepared of top 30 Moscow restaurants. "Does Night Flight have a restaurant?" was the usual question. But despite the "Must be Seen to Believe" reputation that follows the nightclub, the separate Night Flight restaurant is one of the best in town. Under Swedish ownership and management for more than 18 years now, the Night Flight restaurant is the place to find elk carpaccio, grilled reindeer steak and genuine Swedish meatballs prepared by Swedish chef Michael Willuhn.



At the invitation of manager Toby Domert, Passport publisher John Ortega and I decided to stop by to check out the latest menu. The prominent entrance to Night Flight is on the west side of Tverskaya just south of the boulevard ring. Restaurant guests bypass the 1100 ruble nightclub entrance fee and are ushered to the separate second floor dining, a cozy, open room with big windows overlooking Tverskaya street below. Since the nightclub doesn't open until 11pm, it's quiet when we arrive at 6:30 pm.

The Swedish business group that owns Night Flight and Scandinavia up the street were invited to open a nightclub in Moscow during the waning days of the Soviet Union. They were shown several possible locations and in October 1991, Night Flight opened in the space formerly occupied by Café Morojhennoye Sever (North Ice Cream Café). Café Sever served delicious ice cream that is still fondly remembered by those who stood in line to get in at the time. The restaurant opened about a year later, and though still overshadowed by the nightclub, it has served a Swedish-continental menu ever since. Its classic "Planksteak" fillet of beef served on oak (1400r) has been on the menu since day one.

The menu is presented on a large format card with English on one side, Russian on the other. One of the first things we noticed is that virtually all items have three possible serving sizes – "tasting," "starter," and "main course" – a great innovation. In addition to Swedish-continental, there are a number of Asian and Russian items listed.

The separate wine list has a broad selection of wines by the glass ranging from an Australian Hardy's VR Chardonnay at 350 rubles to a California Kendall Jackson Cabernet Sauvignon at 540 rubles. For wines by the bottle, there are about four pages of a global range of wines. Although some are very expensive, there are numerous good wines in the range from 1500 to 3000 rubles. We might recommend the white New Zealand Villa Maria Marlboro Sauvignon Blanc (1990r) or Marco Felluga Pinot Grigio (2800 rubles), or red South African Robertson Winery Shiraz (1520r) or Spanish Beronia Reserve Rioja (which we tried).

Though a relative newcomer to Moscow, Chef Willuhn has worked in Russia



for about 11 years including six years in Vladivostok. He described Night Flight at a "meat restaurant with experimental starters," carefully avoiding the trendy "fusion" label. Apparently the Swedish owners source the meat themselves from their home country and ship directly to Night Flight and Scandinavia. We decided to let the chef select our menu for the evening.

First out was a selection of three tasters, presented together: Swedish Elk (carpaccio) with Cheese Fritter and Truffle Vinaigrette (250r), Smoked Salmon (250r), and Sashimi Blackened Tuna in Thai Spices with a Truffle Puree (280r). The burgundy disks of near paper thin elk were a pleasant new taste, with a distinctive but not gamey, which nicely contrasted the crisp globe-shaped fritter filled with sharp flavored cheese. Night Flight cold smokes its Norwegian salmon on the premises, and in this case served as a cube bearing a light and pleasant smoke and garnished with a tad of dill. The tuna is rolled in spices before a light sear, very fresh.

Next out was a starter of Tiger Shrimp with Mango, Avocado and Glass Noodle (750r), with shrimp presented on a long skewer laid over the spicy, sweet glass noodles. The shrimp were excellent and the noodles, to my taste, pleasantly spiced, sharper than the toned down Asian that is often served in Moscow restaurants to please Russian palettes.

The "Planksteak" main course was an ample, very tender chunk of beef laid as promised on a dark wood plank with a dab of sweet ginger and roasted rosettes of potato puree on the side. The steak ranks up there with the best in Moscow. The finale was a tasty if not perfect finish Crème Brule Cacao (290r) garnished with a few fresh berries.

We decided to forego the free entry to the nightclub that comes with a meal, but we promised to return for the next Passport magazine wine tasting. I have my eye on a number of items on the menu yet untried: salmon soufflé, Jerusalem artichoke soup, Kachatka crab roll, and even the Swedish meatballs... **P**

Night Flight
Ulitsa Tverskaya 17
Tel. +7 495 629 4165
www.nightflight.ru

People's Bordeaux

text by Charles Borden

Last month we sampled wines from five of the most famous (and expensive) châteaux of Bordeaux – the “first growth” châteaux that were classified in 1855. Though this rating system is 150-years old these châteaux still make very highly rated wines. However, we learned some hard lessons about transport, care and handling of these delicate jewels to and in the rough Russian environment – the wines all scored poorly with our panel. We promised to return with a review of some more “democratic” Bordeaux wines on Moscow’s shelves.

A visit to a supermarket shows that there appear to be a greater variety of Bordeaux wines in Moscow than any

other wine region. Even the little corner market near my home has a shelf with about 20% Bordeaux. This is not surprising given that the region is the world’s second largest wine producer and the longstanding Russia fascination with French wines. Bordeaux wines are mostly red (called claret), and the appellation rules under which they are produced require that they are primarily blends of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc grapes. Sauternes is a specialty white dessert wine from the region.

Most Bordeaux wines are simply labeled Bordeaux and are basic table wines, made from grapes from any area of the region. Wines labeled Bordeaux Supérieur are produced under a stricter quality regime. Greater restrictions apply to wines with AOC designation from various district names such as Saint-Emilion, Entre-Deux-Mers or Saint-Estèphe and they must be made from grapes of that district. Some of the more renowned are Pauillac, Margaux, Médoc and Haut-Médoc. More attention is paid to the vintage year in Bordeaux than most wine regions. The Bordeaux vintage of 2005, 2003 and 2000 are generally considered the best of recent years.

Most Bordeaux wines are made at one of about 9,000 châteaux but some are bottled by wine merchants (négociants) such as Cordier and the famous,



Moscow-born wine writer Alexis Lichine. Négociants buy grapes or wines from various estates and blend them to bottle under their own label.

The first tip for purchasing wines in Moscow is to check the importer listed on the back label, though you may need a magnifying glass to read the print. Although there are dozens of importers, several stand out that have a good history of reliable offerings and a successful track record. Even if you don’t know much about the winery, a wine brought in by one of these importers is more likely to prove a successful pick.

We rank DP Trade with its Magnum and Decanter shops, and Simple Wines with Grand Cru shops at the top. Other reliable importers are Svarog from St. Petersburg and MBG Wine Group with its L’Intendant wine boutique on Kutuzovsky Prospekt. Each importer has its own exclusive import relationships with various wine producers around the world. Although it is difficult for the importer to control storage conditions at a supermarket or corner shop, one could expect that wines in the importer’s shop have had reasonable care.

More so than most regions, Bordeaux wines are expensive in Russia and you should expect to pay two or three times US retail prices. The selection is dizzy-



	Importer	Producer	District	Year*	Price (RUR)	Parker	Wine Spectator
White							
1	K	Bel Air Perponcher	Bordeaux Supérieur AOC	2007	645		
2	DP	Château Carbonnieux Blanc	Graves / Pessac-Leognan	2006	4380	91	--
Red							
1	K	Bel Air Perponcher	Bordeaux Supérieur AOC	2006	741		86
2	MBG	Château La Cardonne	Medoc AOC	2001	1150		87
3	MBG	Château Croix Mouton	Bordeaux Supérieur AOC	2005	1575	89	86
4	DP	Château Carbonnieux	Graves / Pessac-Leognan	2004	3740	90	87
5	DP	Domaine de Chevalier	Graves / Pessac-Leognan	2004	3880	90	92
6	DP	Domaine De L'Eglise	Pomerol	2003	3950	88	90
7	DP	Château Brane-Cantenac	Margaux	2003/2001	5970/5170	91/89	90/91
8	DP	Château Sociando-Mallet	Haut-Médoc	2005/2003	5970/6110	91/94	92/88

*Ratings vary considerably from year to year. The ratings and recommendation are only for this particular year.

DP- Magnum and Decanter shops

K – Kauffman shops

MBG – Intendant shop



ing with hundreds of château names: DP Trade alone has more than 100 and MBG has more than 40. Bordeaux wine labels tend to be simple and traditional with little artistic liberty, and this complicates shopping and blurs visual distinction. There is no “shopping with the eyes” with Bordeaux wines.

For this issue, we have resumed our recent systematic quest for value by conducting a desktop review of wines available in the market. We first extracted a list of wines that appear on importer price lists and then checked the ratings with the three top wine rating services: Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate, Wine Spectator, and Stephen Tanzer’s International Wine Cellar. Once we have worked the list down to the apparent top raters, we check shelf prices and availability. Most of the Bordeaux wines listed are still budget busters and for special occasions. In the lower price range, a Chilean or Australian wine is likely to be much better value and more satisfying.

The Wines A Visit to Bordeaux

Bordeaux, located on France’s west coast at the head of the estuary of the Gironde, is well worth a wine and lovers’ pilgrimage. If you can qualify as a specialist, every odd year Bordeaux hosts one of the world’s largest industry wine exhibitions for importers, wholesalers and retailers, VinExpo – this year from June 21 to 25. In even years Bordeaux holds one of the world’s largest wine trade exhibitions, which focuses on technology and equipment for winery and vineyard operators. The TGV train takes you to Bordeaux in just three hours from Paris and there are several trains a day direct from Charles de Gaulle Airport.

A visitor to Bordeaux should first stop at the 18th century building that is home to the Maison du Vin de Bordeaux for a two-hour tasting course of the region’s magnificent wines. Top Bordeaux wine cellars are L’Intendant near the Grand Theatre, Les Caves d’Ausone and Le Bô Bar.

Bordeaux regional food dishes feature Bordelaise sauce made with red wine, shallot and bone marrow, perfect with a grilled entrecôte of Aquitaine beef, Almis de Palombe (wood pigeon in wine sauce), Lamproie au Pomerol (lamprey prepared with red wine and chocolate) and Cèpes à la Périgourdine (cep mush-

rooms prepared with bacon and grape juice). The land and waters of Bordeaux yield Pauillac lamb, fresh local Arcachon gravette oysters, sturgeon caviar from the Gironde estuary, duck or goose foie gras from Landes, black Périgord truffles and Reine Blanche du Blayais (white asparagus). Fishermen also take cod, eel, sturgeon, sole, lobster and scallops from the estuary and ocean. St. Emilion almond macaroons and Cannelles de Bordeaux (a small fluted rum and vanilla cake) are local sweets. For fresh oysters try the oyster restaurants in Cape Ferret overlooking the Bassin d’Archachon and Atlantic, 70 kilometers to the west. **P**

DP Trade Shops

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 22,
Tel: +7 (499) 249-6114

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

Grand Cru Shops – several in Moscow including:

Novinsky Passage, Novinsky Bulvar 31,
Tel: +7 (495) 775-5553

Website: www.grandcru.ru

E-mail: grandcru@grandcru.ru

Kollektsiya Vin – several in Moscow including:

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

Website: www.vine.ru

Kauffman Shops

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

NOTE:

**Indicates Passport Magazine Top 10 Restaurants 2009.

AMERICAN

**CORREA'S

Isaac Correa is a master of New American comfort food at his several Moscow locations. Luscious desserts. Great for a business lunch or takeout. Smoke-free.

7 Ulitsa Gashka, 789-9654

M. Mayakovskaya

www.correas.ru

STARLITE DINER

Paul O'Brien's '50s-style American Starlite Diners not only have the best traditional American breakfasts, lunches, and dinners in town, they draw a daily crowd for early morning business and lunchtime business meetings. Open 24 hours. Four locations.

16 Ul. Bolshaya Sadovaya, 650-0246

M. Mayakovskaya

9a Ul. Korovy Val, 959-8919

M. Oktyabrskaya

6 Prospekt Vernadskovo, 783-4037

M. Universitet

www.starlite.ru

AMERICAN BAR & GRILL

Listed here for its status as a Moscow veteran, the American Bar & Grill still does good hamburgers, steaks, bacon & eggs and more. Open 24 hours. 2/1 1st Tverskaya-Yamskaya Ul, 250-9525

M. Mayakovskaya

ambar.rosinter.com

BEAVERS

Way down south (across from John Ortega's Fashion Mart), American proprietor and drinks importer Robert Greco serves some family recipes from back home. Pizza, wings, salads, steaks and other favorites. 171 Ulitsa Lyublinskaya, 783-9184

M. Marino

www.beavers.ru

HARD ROCK CAFÉ

The Moscow HRC has a great location on the Old Arbat with a nice summer terrace overlooking the busy pedestrian mall. The usual HRC menu and rock paraphernalia. 44 Sary Arbat, 205-8335

M. Smolenskaya

www.hardrock.com

ASIAN

**TURANDOT

Fabulous Asian food in a palatial and exquisite setting – the owners reportedly spent a mid-eight figure amount on the fitout including a two million dollar dim-sum kitchen. Try the Wasabi shrimp. 26/5 Tverskoi Bulvar, 739-0011

M. Tverskaya, Pushkinskaya

www.turandotpallace.ru

BLUE ELEPHANT

Thai cuisine with impeccable service in an elegant royal setting. Try the Royal Thai Platter.

31 Novinsky Bulvar, 580-7757

M. Barrikadnaya

www.blueelephant.com

BUDDIES CAFE

No frills but very expat friendly – Szechuan, Thai, or Vietnamese from Singaporean Kelvin Pang. Sports bar. 12/8 Tverskaya Ulitsa, 694-0229

M. Tverskaya, Pushkinskaya

DARBAR

Hidden away in the Soviet relic Sputnik Hotel, veteran expats say it's the city's best Indian. In addition to the usual north Indian fare, Darbar has an extensive south Indian menu. 38 Leninsky Prospekt, 930-2365

M. Leninsky Prospekt

INDUS

"Elitny" modern Indian restaurant with Chivas bar on the first floor.

15 Plotnikov Pereulok, (499) 252-7979

M. Smolenskaya

COFFEE AND PASTRIES

COFFEE BEAN

Jerry Ruditsker opened the first coffee shops in Moscow, and still serves the best coffee. Smoke-free. Several locations.

56 Leningradsky Prospekt, 742-3755

www.coffeebean.ru

COFFEE MANIA

The Coffee Mania next to the Moscow Conservatory is a popular daytime informal business venue. Open 24 hours. Several locations. 13 Ulitsa Bolshaya Nikitskaya, 775-5188, 775-4310

M. Arbatskaya, Biblioteka im. Lenina

www.coffeeemia.ru

STARBUCKS

Starbucks arrived in late 2007 and already has too many shops (16) to list. starbuckscoffee.ru

VOLKONSKY PEKARNYA-KONDITERSKAYA

The coffee service at this bakery takes second place to its fabulous French-style baked goods. Smoke-free. 2/46 Bolshoi Sadovaya

M. Mayakovskaya

EUROPEAN

**CARRE BLANC

Moscow's top French restaurant. Try the bistro and weekend brunch.

9/2 Ul. Seleznevskaya, 258-4403

M. Novoslobodskaya

www.carreblanc.ru

NEW BLACKBERRY

Elegant but comfortable with an eclectic international menu – Asian, Russian, Italian, sushi and other cuisines.

10 Academic Sakharov Prospekt, 926-1640, 926-1645

M. Chistiye Prudy

NEW BOLSHOI

The latest high-end Novikov restaurant. Modern in a Ralph Lauren kind of way, with a continental-Russian menu. 3/6 Ulitsa Petrovka, 789-8652

M. Kuznetsky Most

eng.novikovgroup.ru/restaurants/

CAFE DES ARTISTES

Restaurant and bar offers fine European cuisine in a relaxed atmosphere, often with recent art on the walls of the upstairs room.

5/6 Kamergersky Pereulok, 692-4042

M. Teatralnaya

www.artistico.ru

ELSE CLUB

A small jewel next to the Pokrovsky Hills development and the Anglo-American School and complement the neighboring extravagant health spa. 5 Ivankovskoye Shosse, 234-4444

www.elseclub.ru

GALEREYA

Trendy, lavish and expensive. The place to see and be seen. 27 Ulitsa Petrovka, 937-4544

M. Pushkinskaya

eng.novikovgroup.ru/restaurants/

GRAND ALEXANDER

Named after poet Alexander Pushkin, this opulent restaurant at the Marriott Grand Hotel is one of Moscow's top French-European restaurants. 26 Tverskaya Ulitsa, 937-0000

M. Tverskaya

JEROBOAM

Ritz-Carlton's Jeroboam, under the stewardship of celebrity German chef Heinz Winkler, offers his "la Cuisine Vitale" in the new building that replaced the eyesore that was the

Soviet-era Intourist Hotel. 3 Tverskaya Ulitsa, 225-8888

M. Okhotny Ryad

KAI RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE

Contemporary French cuisine with an Asian touch at Swisshotel Krasnye Holmy.

52/6 Kosmodamianskaya Nab, 221-5358

M. Paveletskaya

SCANDINAVIA

The summer cafe is one of Moscow's main after work meeting venues. Excellent Scandinavian and continental menu. 19 Tverskaya Ulitsa, 937-5630

M. Pushkinskaya

www.scandinavia.ru

SKY LOUNGE

Dining on the roof of the Russian Academy of Sciences offers guests unparalleled views of the city. 32a Leninsky Prospekt, 915-1042, 938-5775

M. Leninsky Prospekt

www.skylounge.ru

VANIL

Hip French and Japanese near Christ the Savior Cathedral.

1 Ulitsa Ostozhenka, 202-3341

M. Kropotkinskaya

eng.novikovgroup.ru/restaurants/

VOGUE CAFE

Elegant, trendy partnership with *Vogue* magazine. 7/9 Ul. Kuznetsky Most, 623-1701

M. Kuznetsky Most

http://eng.novikovgroup.ru/restaurants/

FUSION

**NE DALNY VOSTOK

Passport's 2009 number one Moscow restaurant. Chef Glen Ballis turns out fabulous crab specialties, Asian, grill, salads. Come by when they bring in a big tuna. "Classny." 15 Tverskoy Bulvar

694-0641, 694-0154

M. Tverskaya

http://eng.novikovgroup.ru/restaurants/

**GQ BAR

A warm, active hang-out for the elite just up from the Kempinski Baltshug Hotel. Partnership with *GQ* magazine. 5 Ulitsa Baltshug, 956-7775

M. Novokuznetskaya

eng.novikovgroup.ru/restaurants/

SOHO ROOMS

Chef Laura Bridge mixes it up at this trendy restaurant-club along the embankment near Novodivichy Monastery. 12 Savinskaya Nab., 988-7474

M. Sportivnaya

www.sohorooms.com

HEALTHY

JAGGANNATH CAFÉ

A simple but excellent vegetarian buffet with an eclectic mix of Asian and other dishes.

11 Kuznetsky Most, 628-3580

M. Kuznetsky Most

www.jagannath.ru

LE PAIN QUOTIDIEN

Simple and healthy food and bakery at the Moscow extension of an international chain. Delivery. Multiple locations.

5/6 Kamergerski Pereulok, 649-7050

www.lpq.ru/

LATIN AMERICAN

**NABARRO'S BAR & GRILL

El Salvador born chef-owner Yuri Navarro excels at everything from tapas to eclectic Peruvian-Mediterranean fusion, seafood to grilled meat. One of Moscow's few chef-owned restaurants. 23 Shmitovskiy Proezd, 259-3791

M. Mezhdunarodnaya

www.navarros.ru

OLD HAVANA

An amazing place, with a stunning Brazilian tableside show nightly from Thursday to Saturday. The food is good, but the highlight is the unbelievable three-hour extravaganza with about two dozen dancers and capoeira performers. 28 Ulitsa Talalikhina, 723-1656

M. Proletarskaya

www.old-havana.ru

ITALIAN

**SEMIFREDDO MULINNAZO

Sicilian chef Nino Graziano dishes up the best of Sicily and the Mediterranean with the help of his personal grill out front. Huge Italian wine list. 2 Rossolimo Ulitsa, (499) 766-4646

M. Park Kultury

www.semifreddo-restaurant.com

**MARIO

Delightful elegance and style with the best-quality Italian dishes. Open noon-last guest.

17 Ulitsa Klimashkina, 253-6505

M. Barrikadnaya

BOCCACINO

Quiet elegant Italian and pizza. A nice date venue without extravagant prices. 7 Strastnoi Bulvar, 299-7359

M. Pushkinskaya

CASTA DIVA

Great Italian and pizza to die for with award-winning Italian pizza chef. Try the Black Truffle Pizza. 26 Tverskoi Bulvar, 651-8181

M. Tverskaya, Pushkinskaya

www.castadiva.ru

CIPOLLINO

Coffee and cream-colored stylish Italian cafe a stone's throw from Christ the Savior Cathedral. 7 Soimonovskiy Proyezd, 695-2936, 695-2950

M. Kropotkinskaya

www.cipollino.ru

JAPANESE

**NOBU

The Moscow branch of the legendary Nobu is now open on Bolshaya Dmitrovka. Nobu moves directly to *Passport's* Moscow top 10 list. 20 Bolshaya Dmitrovka, 645-3191

M. Okhotny Ryad

www.noburestaurants.ru

ICHIBAN BOSHI

High-quality, affordable Japanese with cool ambience. Several locations. 22 Krasnaya Presnya Ulitsa, (499) 255-0909

M. Krasnopresnenskaya

50 Ulitsa Bolshaya Yakimanka

M. Polyanka

www.ichiban.ru

SUMOSAN

Located in the Radisson SAS hotel, we have heard from many that Sumosan has Moscow's freshest and best sushi but this naturally comes at a cost. 2 Ploschad Evropy, 941-8020

M. Kievskaya

TSVETENIYE SAKURY

Completely new restaurant concept in Moscow based on the combination of traditional and contemporary Japanese cuisine. Ancient recipes are joined by recent innovations. 7 Ulitsa Krasina, 506-0033

M. Mayakovskaya

SEIJI

One of the few Moscow sushi restaurants that actually has a Japanese chef, even a celebrity chef – Seiji Kusano, who also set up the O2 Lounge at the Ritz-Carlton. 5/2 Komsomolsky Prospekt, 246-7624

M. Park Kultury

CAUCASUS

ARARAT

A little corner of Armenia right in the center of Moscow at the Ararat Park Hyatt. Cozy atmosphere and spicy Armenian fare. All ingredients delivered straight from Armenia including fine Armenian brandies.

4 Neglinnaya Ulitsa, 783-1234

M. Teatralnaya, Kuznetsky Most

BAGRATIONI

Great Georgian food and entertainment in a stylish mansion near Novodivichy Monastery and the Korean Embassy.

1/7 Spartakovskaya Plushchad, 267-6881, 266-0531

M. Baumanskaya

BARASHKA

Our Azerbaijani friends swear it's the best Azeri restaurant in town. Contemporary updates.

20/1 Petrovka Ulitsa, 200-4714

M. Kuznetsky Most

21/1 Novy Arbat

M. Arbatskaya

<http://eng.novikovgroup.ru/restaurants/>

BELOYE SOLNTSE PUSTYNI

Named after *White Desert Sun*, one of the USSR's favorite films. An eclectic Central Asian menu that includes Azerbaijan and Uzbek cuisine.

29 Ul. Neglinnaya, 625-2596, 200-6836

M. Kuznetsky Most, Teatralnaya

<http://eng.novikovgroup.ru/restaurants/>

RUSSIAN

*CAFE PUSHKIN

A Moscow classic serving upmarket Russian cuisine in a lavish, 19th-century setting. Bustling, ground-floor dining hall and a more sophisticated (and pricier) experience upstairs. Reservation essential.

26a Tverskoi Bulvar, 739-0033

M. Pushkinskaya, Tverskaya, Chekhovskaya

GODUNOV

For real lovers of all things Russian, including traditional Russian dancing, rivers of vodka and plates stacked with food in the Tsar's chambers from the time of Boris Godunov.

5 Teatralnaya Plushchad, 698-5609

M. Teatralnaya

NEW GUSYATNIKOFF

The latest VIP Russian restaurant in an 18th century estate.

2a Ulitsa Aleksandra Solzhenitsyna

M. Taganskaya

<http://eng.novikovgroup.ru/restaurants/>

NA MELNITSE

Homemade cuisine – kvas, mors, vodka, pickles. Russian style with plenty of wood. The food is far from cheap, but the portions are enormous: it's like being fed by an overzealous babushka.

7 Tverskoi Bulvar, 290-3737

M. Pushkinskaya, Tverskaya, Chekhovskaya

24 Sadovo-Spasskaya Ulitsa, 625-8890, 625-8753

M. Krasniye Vorota

www.namelnitse.ru

OBLOMOV

Authentic Russian cuisine in a restored 19th-century mansion.

5 Monetchikovskiy Pereulok, 953-6828

M. Dobryninskaya

ONE RED SQUARE

The menu features lavish, centuries-old recipes in the State Historical Museum on Red Square. Expect cream-laden meat dishes with fruit-based sauces and live folk music.

1 Krasnaya Plushchad, 625-3600, 692-1196

M. Okhotny Ryad, Teatralnaya

www.redsquare.ru

TSDL

The Central House of Writers' opulent Russian-French restaurant is located in the building with the same name.

A memorable, top-notch meal in luxurious surroundings.

50 Povarskaya Ul, 290-1589

M. Barrikadnaya

YOLKI-PALKI

A Russian chain that serves a great selection of typical Russian specialties at modest prices. Many locations.

23 Bolshaya Dmitrovka, 200-0965

M. Okhotny Ryad, Teatralnaya

<http://eng.novikovgroup.ru/restaurants/>

SEAFOOD

FILIMONOVA & YANKEL

You will find an outlet near many of the Goodman Steakhouses. Very fresh fish and a straightforward menu. Several locations.

23 Tverskaya Ulitsa, 223-0707

M. Tverskaya, Pushkinskaya

www.fishhouse.ru

LA MAREE

La Maree is Moscow's number one seafood restaurant, built by Tunisian Mehdi Douss, owner of Moscow's leading fresh seafood importer.

28/2 Ulitsa Petrovka, 694-0930

www.la-maree.ru

STEAKS

*BEEF BAR

The latest branch of the Monte Carlo hotspot serves top cuts of the finest imported beef: American, Australian, Dutch and French. Overlooks the river across from the House of Artists.

13 Prechistinskaya Nab., 982-5553

M. Park Kultury

www.beefbar.com

EL GAUCHO

True Argentine menu. THE place for charcoal-grilled meats and fish.

4 Ul. Sadovaya-Triumfalnaya, 699-7974

M. Mayakovskaya

6/13 Ul. Zatspeysky Val, 953-2876

M. Paveletskaya

3 Bolshoi Kozlovsky Pereulok, 623-1098

M. Krasniye Vorota

www.elgaucho.ru

GOODMAN

Moscow's premium steak house chain. Crisis menu added. Numerous locations.

23 Tverskaya Ulitsa, 775-9888

M. Tverskaya, Pushkinskaya

www.goodman.ru

POLO CLUB

Dining at its finest at the Marriott Aurora. Features American prime beef and steaks.

Ulitsa Petrovka 11/20, 937-1024

M. Kuznetsky Most

TORRO GRILL

The focus is on the best mid-priced meat in Moscow. Wine Bar. Several locations.

6 Prospekt Vernadskogo, 775-4503

M. Universitet

www.torrogrill.ru

BARS AND CLUBS

BOOZE PUB

English-style pub with real British beer and original cocktails.

Daily from 5 a.m. to noon:

English breakfast for only 100 rubles.

Weekdays from 12:00 to 17:00.

Business lunch from 140 rubles and

35% menu discount. Sport matches on

the big screen.

5 Potapovsky Pereulok, Bldg. 2, 621

4717

M. Chistiye Prudy

www.boozebub.ru

KARMA BAR

One of the most popular night-clubs in town. Eastern-inspired interior, hookahs, and pan-Asian cuisine. Latin American dancing, Thursday-Saturday, 21:00-midnight. Every Saturday, the amazing Show Girls night. Every Sunday 12:00-6:00 – R'n'B and hip-hop party night.

3 Pushechnaya Ulitsa, 624-5633

M. Kuznetsky Most

www.karma-bar.ru

KRYSHA MIRA

The club has a reputation of being a most closed place. Rich clubbers and beauties will do anything just to get in, so every Friday and Saturday they stand in line all night long asking face control to let them in.

Face control

Open 23:00-06:00

2/3 Tarasa Shevchenko Naberezhnaya,

203-6008, 203-6556

M. Kievskaya

B2 CLUB

4 bars, sushi bar, concert hall for 800 people. Reasonable prices.

Open daily noon-06:00

8 Bolshaya Sadovaya Ul., 650-9918

M. Marksistskaya, Tretyakovskaya

NIGHT FLIGHT

If you don't know about Night Flight – ask somebody.

Open 18:00-05:00

17 Tverskaya Ulitsa, 629-4165

www.nightflight.ru

M. Mayakovskaya

NOTE:

For restaurants with multiple locations the most popular location is given – see the website for others. All phone numbers have city code 495 unless otherwise indicated. Reservations suggested for most restaurants.

PAPA'S

Master night spot host Doug Steele is back, at Papa's tucked in the basement below the Johnny the Fat Boy Pizzeria, Papa features live music and lots of sweaty young bodies.

2 Myasnikskaya Ulitsa, 755-9554

M. Kitai-Gorod

PROPAGANDA

One of the best and oldest clubs in Moscow. At midnight all dining tables are taken off and party usually begins. Stylish and delicious lunches, salads and other simple but unforgettable snacks. House, techno, minimal, disco.

Face control

Open: noon-06:00

7, Bolshoi Zlatoustinsky Pereulok,

624-5732

M. Kitai-Gorod

TOCHKA

Open Monday-Sunday, 18:00-06:00

6 Leninsky Prospekt, Bldg. 7, 737-7666

M. Oktyabrskaya

SAKHAR

Open Tues.-Thurs. 20:00-06:00, Fri.

12:00-6:00, Sat. 20:00-07:00.

23/25 Bolshoi Sukharevsky Pereulok,

207-2838

M. Sukharevskaya

CENTRAL HOUSE OF ARCHITECTS

Face control. Open Mon.-Sat. 24:00-

12:00.

7 Granatny Pereulok, 290-3249

M. Tretykovskaya

Russian and european antique porcelain

Professional expertise, advising.

Creating collection.

Guided excursions.

Customs advising.



Phone: +7(985)997-2087
porcelain@aporcelain.ru

British Council Donates Books to the Library for Foreign Literature



UK Ambassador Jane Pringle opening the library

On May 15, a ceremony was held in the Library for Foreign Languages (VGLBL) to mark the donation of a large number of British Council books & materials to the library. In her opening remarks, Ekateri-

na Genieva, director of the library, mentioned that during a meeting with Sergey Mironov, the Chairman of the Federation Council, Mironov commented: "we have been absolutely overwhelmed with letters in connection with the British Council, from teachers, students and others from all over the country who are demanding that 'we return to us our British Council.'" Genieva thanked the most important people whom she stressed are the users and the readers, for their support of the library.

UK Ambassador Anne Pringle, then proceeded to open the library. The ambassador thanked the proprietors of the library building for hosting the British Council collection, "a treasure trove of books, teaching materials, films and

information about the arts in the UK," where it has been for some 17 years. She stressed that learning English to an ever higher level means access to good and exciting materials and access to the internet, "and I am glad to see that you have all of this around you now."

Various Russian teachers and readers made short and moving speeches expressing their gratitude to the British Council for supplying reading and learning materials, which one teacher described as having "changed my life". The opening ceremony was attended by approximately fifty people.

Library for Foreign Literature, Nikoloy-amskaya 1, Moscow 109189, tel: (495) 915-3669/915-3503

Anglo-American School's Moscow Viennese Ball

The AAS Moscow Spring Gala is a popular annual event in Moscow's expat community. This year it was held on May 2 in the Ritz-Carlton hotel.

The Ritz-Carlton provided a glamorous venue and extraordinary cuisine. Guests waltzed and tangoed to the music of the Ensemble Divertimento, and then competed with equal energy for auction lots sold under the hammer of international auctioneer and school parent Laurien Schroeder. Tony Watkins and the Smokebreakers kept guests happy and rocking till the wee hours as only Tony knows how to do. Co-chairs Adrienn Seregi and Jennifer Galenkamp noted that "we were particularly grate-



ful this year to both the long standing sponsors such as Coca-Cola, Pepsi and Wimm-Bill-Dann and also to newcomers like Samsung and LG Electronics for supporting our event, and our school." Corporate sponsors for the event included: Mozart level: Coca-Cola Hellenic, Mr. Octavian Dascalescu (BAT Russia), Deloitte, The Pepsi Bottling Company Russia, Samsung Electronics, Wimm-Bill-Dann. Strauss level: Chevron Neftegaz,



Organising Committee of the Anglo American School Gala (from left to right): Petra Gerendasi, Agnes Kindrachuk, Jennifer Galenkamp, Adrienn Seregi, Samantha Volkov, Patricia Evanno

Mr. Kevin Tomlinson (JTI International), PricewaterhouseCoopers, Schlumberger. Mahler level: The Boston Consulting Group, The Byer Family, ConocoPhillips Russia, White & Case. And also Citi Russia and METRO Cash and Carry.

Polish Embassy 2nd Charity Gala Reception, Concert and Dinner

The 2nd Charity Gala Reception, concert and dinner took place at the Polish Embassy on Tuesday, May 26. It was held by kind invitation of Mr. Jerzy Bahr, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in the Russian Federation. The evening began with welcome drinks and then followed by a concert starring the celebrated singer Vika Tsiganova who performed Russian songs. During the dinner the guests had the opportunity to enjoy good food and wine and socialize in a pleasant company and atmosphere. Proceeds from the event were earmarked for The charitable foundation, Doroga



Vmeste (www.unitedway.ru), and The Moscow Ianno-Bocko Charitable Child-Youth Educational Centre. For further information about future events, email ad@tolstoy-miloslavsky.com

Right to left: Chaplain of Ianno-Bocko Child-Youth Educational Centre, The Polish Ambassador Mr. Jerzy Bahr, T. Zadirako, United Way Russia, and Andrei D. Tolstoy-Miloslavsky - Director of United Way Russia

English Language Evening Invaded by Marauding Scots and Fine Auld Scotch

There was nae Larkin' about at the auld Chekhov center on Friday, May 15 and deep into Saturday or so it seemed, as old 'mad McMitchell' [ed. note: respectable author and teacher Ian Mitchell] rambled across the Highlands like a demented Haggis wi' a broken wing. Mercy was in shorter supply than the Bruichladdich Visskiy, doled out generously by Veld-21 in quantities to make only an Aberdonian smile (if such a thing is philosophically possible) as he droned like a wounded set of pipes, now in Gallic, now in Glasgie maybe in Russky too, for his dram-swollen tongue was harder to bear than the very pitchpine pews of the Kirk. In his hands Philip Larkin sounded flat and dull, no tricky feat I grant, but his Para Handy was near as paralytic as his interlocutor, and fair as paralyzed as his pained imprisoned philologically poisoned parish. Like an aged stripper whose dress might once have been fetching but has long been carryin', he feigned and fainted to let loose each tale, specs waving on and off his nose as he teased his rabbit-eyed audience



with an interminable will-he won't-he. He found it harder to get to the end of a sentence than me [another paralytically morose Scotsman]. Improbable, but proved possible! After a monologue that bettered Rumpelstiltskin's longest nap, at last: the magic moment arrived, a wee molecule of Malt in a medicinally miniscule measure, so a brief moment it was too, especially as some Sassenach Kulak – that's repetitious, I ken - hogged the bottle tae himself. But it was not all Gallic gloom, doom and Doun-



Ian Mitchell

reay, as the throngs of sponging freeloading skinflints who only turned up for a free noggin will ne'er try that again.

A taste of Scotland's finest, indeed. As ever, ELE evenings are erudite, intense and rewardingly unpredictable. An unusual number of first timers got excellent value for their Rb.50.

Rabble Burns

Anglo-Moskva Book Review

On the Saturday of the May Day holidays, a select group of political enthusiasts gathered in a conference room on the 29th floor of the Swissotel at Krasni Holmi, to hear the editor of London's GQ magazine, Dylan Jones, answer questions posed by *Times* columnist, Hugo Rifkind, on the

subject of Jones's recent book about the leader of the Conservative Party in Britain, David Cameron MP. The book, which was published late last year, takes the form of conversations with Cameron, so it was natural that Jones was happy to engage in conversation with Rifkind, who is, incidentally, the son of Malcolm Rifkind MP, the Conservative politician who was both

Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary in the 1990s under Prime Minister John Major. Jones gave an interesting and personally nuanced portrait of the man who most political commentators are certain will be Prime Minister of Great Britain after next summer's general election. The event was part of the AngloMoskva weekend, which brought English culture to Moscow.

British Alumni Club



Oksana Dmitrieva

Early in May, the British Alumni Club, an off-shoot of the British Council, held a very informative evening at the British Embassy with Oksana Dmitrieva, the deputy leader of the

Spravedlivaya Party in the Duma. Dmitrieva, a professional economist and former minister, is a member of the Duma's Budget Committee. She spoke about the state of the Russian economy in the context of the present crisis, its priorities for development as her party sees them (less neftigas; more hi-tech), and about her conversations with the leadership who, she stressed, listen more willingly than their predecessors did in the 1990s. The audience was largely Russian. Both questions and answers were very detailed. Dmitriena ascribed the mistakes of current policy-makers more to economic illiteracy than to personal favouritism, as has been alleged. Hopefully, more such meetings can be held in the embassy, where the atmosphere is calm and well-organised, yet hospitable.



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The Inferno:

A Flat Finding Journey Through the Depths of Moscow

text by Philip Baillie

Dumping my bags on the lightly dusted wooden tiles of a fourth-floor hostel room, I sat on the bed and exhaled all the nervous tension built up during the taxi rush from Domodedovo Airport. Getting to Moscow had been tough enough – involving months of planning. However, I now had a week before work started to achieve what seemed to be impossible to the average student; to find a flat in an infernal ring of towering flats, real estate crooks and bureaucratic chaos.

Stuffing a selection of complimentary maps from the hostel into my padded jacket I set off into the cold February morning, the sun dormant behind a blue-grey masked sky, towards an unknown internet café. Stumbling into the first place with a Wi-Fi sign displayed in the window on my road to nowhere I set up a temporary base camp and made a quick checklist, despite the gritty business lunch. Laptop – check. Internet – check. Patience – so far, check. Luck... would be useful. While gulping down some watery soup I began flicking through various expatriate websites suggested by the hostel staff, including the more trustworthy expat.ru, redtape.ru and flatmates.ru. Since I was restricted by a student budget, I couldn't afford to go through an agency, so a flat-share was the only real option. At least the credit crunch would gradually gnash down the prices. Instead of agency fees, the main administration costs were spent on sickly sweet apple juice to excuse my presence at headquarters. Following hours of waving away the waiter, my endeavors resulted in a shortlist of flats plotted around the city at various metro stations; each a capital of regional kiosk subculture.

There are two main methods to find a flat. The first and most obvious method, as I

initially tested, would be to find a reputable agency to do it for you through a newspaper or friend. However, due to financial restraints, I decided to abandon the high road, instead choosing to freely slide down the property ladder to ground level. The second option was more exciting, more Russian and therefore more unpredictable. Taking a risk, I got a chance to test my classroom language skills over the phone to set up some visits, having exhausted the normal flat finding channels. On the Russian side, LiveJournal forums and slando.ru were the best two websites amongst a network of scams and pitfalls for unsuspecting foreigners in English. One chain of e-mails in response to a thread from craigslist.com led to a comically unthinkable story of a family who were spread over the world from the UK to India, and wanted to rent out their Arbat apartment for a knockdown price. Discussing the issue with Russians had taught me that such realtor agents even let apartments only to disappear after a few weeks. Not great when the real owners of the flat arrive to their horror as they find a little red-faced (taken for a ride) expat sleeping in their bed.

Headquarters got busy around dinner time, signaling the end of the business day. While floods of tired workers spilled out of the carriages and onto the marbled platforms, I slipped through the crowds, continually checking the metro plan on the reverse side of my weathered city map. Most evenings would involve two visits to exhausted yet eager young professionals who were keen to let out their extra room to subsidize crisis squeeze. One in Yugo-Zapadnaya to Pechatniki, another in VDNK to Slavyanski Bulvar or from Kitai Gorod to Tverskaya. Aside from the fact that each flat had its own problems, they met basic survival standards... apart from the flat that had no furniture.

Judging by the websites, the same principle applies for flats as for visiting a museum or going to the theater in that there are two price levels: one for foreigners and one for Russians. Keenly approached by expats and Russians alike, who were keen to find an English-speaking flat mate, I had to make a tough decision. Nonetheless, the crisis provided a chance to negotiate the price, and saw my chosen flat's rent fall by over 30%. Potential renters are in a privileged position as jobs begin to disappear and rents become arrears. If you are adventurous, sharing with a Russian can be cheaper and a developing experience, exchanging language and culture over a Friday evening pizza and beer. However, a severe warning should be heeded. One scarring experience led me to take a trial run at a central flat, shared with two Russians that became a surreal hubbub of debauched nighttime activity...

Following a swift getaway, I looked over at my former flat-mate who was drifting off to sleep beside my suitcase in the metro carriage. Passing the illuminated Luzhniki Stadium visible through the glass fronted bridge, a few reflective thoughts rested on my mind, helping me to understand what is really important when looking for a flat-share in Moscow. The first is obvious but essential; to know what you want – area, size, and price. The second is to visit as many places as possible to have a good basis for comparison, to know what prices are reasonable; corresponding to the flat's interior quality and proximity to the metro. The third and most troublesome point is to find someone you can trust, or at least establish a sturdy contract with to avoid a future run through the Moscow flat-finding Malebolge. **P**



Fancy Riding?



text by Elena Krivovyaz

photo Alina Ganenko

Judging by the amount of times you see something flashing by you as you try to crawl along in Moscow traffic these days, riding a motorbike has become trendy in Moscow. For trafficjam sitters, bike riders are the object of envy. How do you get to be a biker?

If you already know how to ride a moped or a scooter, maybe it's time to take the next step and buy a motorbike. Prices vary from \$2,000 to \$25,000 and much more for some professional models. It takes a day to get used to a moped, but you need much longer to learn how to ride a motorbike. Your best choice is to sign up for a driving school (about \$400 for a full course). You need to get a category A driving license to drive motorbikes in Russia, which is easier than getting a full driving license. Road rules for motorcycles and for cars are the same, although you wouldn't know from the way that some of our two-wheeled brethren drive. Two wheels provide a lot of maneuverability but double or even triple the probability of having an accident. This is the main reason why biking is catching on in Moscow but you don't see as many bikers here as in other world capitals. The weather also plays a big part in the decision making process of whether to buy a bike or not.

"Frequent falls are an expensive thing," said Alexander Borisov, a professional biker and motorbike-club and service "Garage.dj" owner. "But you won't fall when you're fully confident of your skills. The only thing you shouldn't do on your bike is to cross the tramways at a steep angle – a fall is inevitable," warns Alexander.

Find your kind

The right choice of a bike is very important as different models and types have their own merits and demerits. In general, all bikes fall into three types: road bikes, sports bikes, tourist bikes and hybrids.

Road bikes are the classic type of all bikes and the safest by far if you are a beginner. Your first wobbles and blunders won't be so fatal with a road bike. The main disadvantages are an absence of windbreaks and cowls. One recommended model is the Honda CB 400. When you're skilled enough you may feel this kind of bike a little boring. Maybe it's time to move on to a sports bike, whose main merits are perfect controllability and amazing brakes. But seats on such racing horses are not very convenient, and take some time to get used to. The plastic cases on the bodies of such bikes are fragile and expensive to repair. If you're not a professional rider, you may fall even at a low speed... If a sports bike is you, try the Yamaha R-6.

If you are not planning to become a stunt-rider, live more than a year and do long-distance trips, a touring bike is what you need. They are comfortable, easy to control, dynamic and have good braking; many models being are supplied with ABS. The windbreaks on such bikes are highly developed. But the disadvantages are also serious: they are expensive to repair and heavy. Probably not the best companion to Moscow trafficjams. A recommended model is the Kawasaki ZZR-400.

Hybrids are a universal type of motorbike fit for both city and countryside use. They are not used for sports competitions or acrobatic feats. Hybrids are comfortable and undemanding and not so prone to accidents – that's why they're recommended for novices. But remember, hybrids are not convenient if you are shorter than 5.5 feet.

Bikers' places

The most popular bikers' hangout is Vorobievsky Gory, up on the hill by the university, overlooking Moscow. This is where almost all Moscow bike owners, whether they be amateurs or professionals, gather and then proudly ride in two or three lines around Moscow following a fixed route. They start their exotic gatherings usually on the first weekend of April. The second well-known place for all bikers is a motorbike track in Myachkovo Airdrome in suburban Ramenskoye, to the southeast of Moscow. This is also used by professionals for their risky stunts. **P**

Selection of motorbike manufacturers

Panavto (Панавто) – official distributor of Yamaha motorbikes and mopeds

MKAD, 50th km

www.panavto.ru

Active Motors – official dealer of Honda bikes and mopeds

MKAD, 26th km, Bldg. 5/3

www.active-motors.ru

Bikeland – official dealer Suzuki bikes and mopeds

www.bikeland.ru

They have three huge stores:

1) on Mozhaiskoye Shosse, on the way out of Moscow from Kutuzovsky Prospekt

2) near metro station Voikovskaya, Kosmonavta Volkova Ulitsa, 10.

3) near metro station Schelkovskaya, Schelkovskoye Shosse, 100A.

Can I re-negotiate the lease agreement now that rental prices are falling?

by Michael Bartley, General Manager, Four Squares

For the last eight years we have seen landlords literally “raising the rent through the roof”, sometimes several times in the same year (even though this is technically illegal). We, as renters, had few options, either pay up or go through the time-consuming and costly process of finding a new place to live. Now that rents are falling, can we re-negotiate a better deal with our landlord? The answer is, basically, yes.

The Russian civil code does not contain any clauses forbidding the tenant from trying to renegotiate the contract. Both landlord and tenant base their relationship on the existing lease agreement, which is usually signed for one year with a fixed price and a one-month termination clause for the tenant. The tenant, therefore, can propose a new rental price at any time. The worst case scenario is that the landlord refuses, in which case you have the choice of accepting this or initiating the one-month termination clause (if there is no termination clause in the agreement the tenant can give 3-months notice based upon Article 687 of the civil code). It is more likely that the landlord will accept a rental decrease or negotiate a compromise. If the landlord does agree to lower the rental price then both the landlord and tenant should sign an attachment to the main lease agreement, stating that the new rental price replaces the original rental price stated in the lease agreement.

If you signed your agreement before October 2008 (at pre-crisis prices) and you still haven't renegotiated your agreement, then the chances are that you are paying too much rent.

Here is a list of reasons to give your landlord:

Rental prices have fallen more than 20% (up to 50% for the most expensive properties) since October 2008.

Supply of rental properties has increased 20-25% since the crisis. In addition to the slower take up of existing housing stock, there has been an influx of new properties from sellers on the residential sales market who cannot currently sell their properties and are now renting them out.

There are now 20% less expatriates renting properties than before the crisis, and expatriates account for 50% of the elite rental market in downtown Moscow.

Many of the expatriates remaining in Moscow are forced to reduce expenses and rent is a major expense item.

Salary freezes and reductions for expatriates and Russians are common.

Something is better than nothing – in times of financial uncertainty the landlord doesn't want to lose you and it might take him six months to find another tenant.

So, be bold, be confident – this crisis opportunity won't last forever. Good luck! **P**

How to make (or break) a date

It's not uncommon for a Russian man to approach a lady on the street with the words «Можно с Вами познакомиться?» (Can I get to know you?). This might seem a bit forward, or be just the approach you're looking for. Here are some ways to respond or choose your own style:

How to knock someone back:

Я **замужем**. I'm married (for a woman).

Я **женат**. I'm married (for a man).

Нет, у меня **нет времени**, я **спешу**. No, I have no time, I'm in a hurry.

Я **здесь не один/одна**. I'm not here on my own.

Я **занят/занята**. I'm busy.

But if you are interested:

Да, **конечно**. Yes, of course.

А **почему бы и нет?** And why not?

Никуда **не спешу**. I'm not in a hurry.

If you want to ask someone out:

Можно Вас **угостить**? Can I treat you? (for example to a drink).

Не **хотите ли** прогуляться? Can I take a walk with you?

Не **хотите куда-нибудь сходить** со мной? Will you come out with me?

Могу ли я Вас **пригласить** на **ужин**? Can I take you out for dinner?

Можно Ваш номер **телефона**? Can I have your number?

How to let someone down gently:

Может быть в **другой раз**. Maybe some other time.

У меня **сейчас нет времени** на **свидания**. I don't have time right now for dating.

У меня **завал на работе**. I'm up to my ears at work.

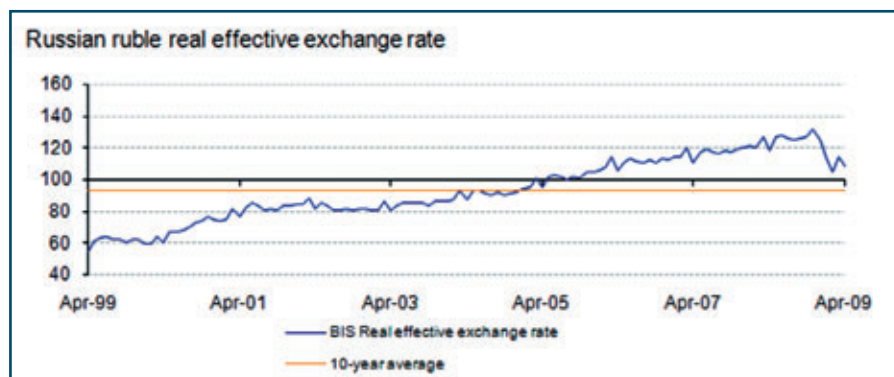
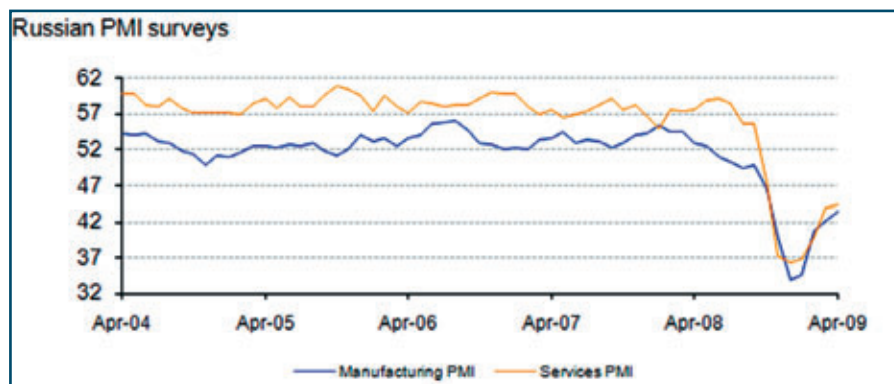
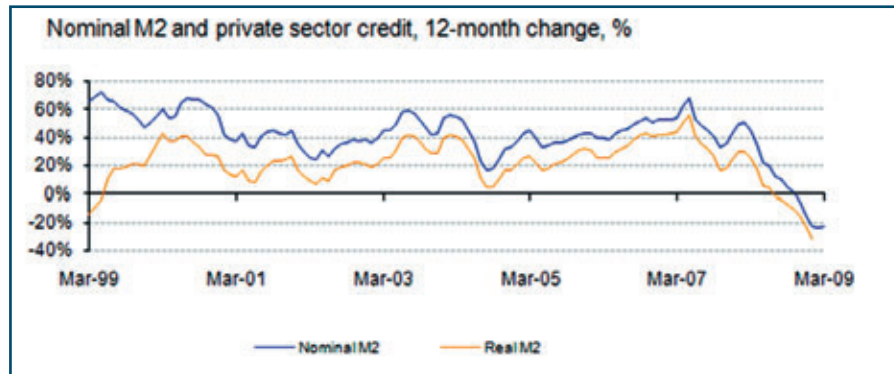
Прошу Вас мне **больше не звонить**. Please don't call me anymore.

В **следующей жизни**! Maybe in another life!


Ruslingua

Russian Economy Still Mired in Recession

text by Matthew Partridge



As with the past two months, there are some positive signs. Urals oils continues to trade above \$50, closing at \$55.35 in the week ending May 15. The manufacturing and service sector PMI continue to improve, rising to 43.4 and 44.4 in the case of manufacturing and services respectively in April. The Central Bank of Russia has also started to loosen monetary policy, cutting the refinancing rate from 13% to 12.5%, and then a fortnight later to 12%. At the same time both the currency and ruble reserves continue to hold steady.

However, these mildly positive signs should not be mistaken for a recovery. Unless there is a catastrophic geopolitical event that disrupts the supply of oil (which is admittedly not outside the realm of possibility), oil is unlikely to rise any further, and could in fact fall back somewhat. Although the data from both PMI surveys look more solid, the balance is still strongly negative, indicating that the economy is merely contracting at a slower rate rather than increasing. Indeed, at 43.4 the manufacturing PMI is only above the level it was at the epicenter of the 1998 crisis.

Most importantly, after rising in February the money supply fell again. It has fallen in six out of the last seven months and is nearly 13% down from its peak last August and contracting at a six-month annualized rate of 22.4%. Given that a rate of monetary expansion of between 15 and 25% is needed to maintain trend growth and the inflation target, the CBR needs to cut rates more drastically and embark on quantitative easing. A looser monetary policy will mean that the ruble will have to fall again, bringing to an end the brief period of relative stability that it has been experiencing since the middle of February.

Russia seems to be at a crossroads. The worldwide depression that many feared only a few months ago, now seems unlikely. Indeed, a return to positive economic growth in the world's major economies seems likely in the next few months, although it will take some time before a return to trend. Similarly, crude oil has bounced back. However, Russia can neither rely on a return to the oil prices of even eighteen months ago nor can it coast along on the coattails of the global economy. Those looking to put money in the stock market should hold off until more decisive action is taken by the monetary authorities. **P**

I'm an expat. Don't let me get out of here!

by Luc Jones, Partner – Technology & Natural Resources, Antal International Russia Ltd

So you're an expat based in Moscow and you're worried about losing your job? Join the (ever expanding) club! Times are tough in Russia; it may have taken longer for the global downturn to hit this part of the world, but once it struck, it hit everyone hard – Russians and foreigners alike. Some in late summer were even naïve enough to think that we were immune here, protected from the world recession by a booming economy and high energy prices. But are we really deep down in the *merde*, and where do we all go from here?

As an expat, your future depends very much on what your company does, how well it is faring and more importantly exactly what your role is within the organization. First to get the chop has been the director of strategy as the firm's key aim is looking at how to survive the coming few months, and this is generally done by focusing on the areas of business that are currently in demand and can bring in immediate revenue. Any 'nice-to-have'

projects, whether planned or in the process are in many cases being shelved.

Since most non-CIS citizens can be grouped into one of three categories, let's take a look at where you stand.

Long-term Moscow expats know the market well, have good contacts within both the Russian and foreign business community and often either run their own business or work for somebody who does. They are invariably settled here with a Russian wife and children, possibly own their own apartment and are here for the long haul. Many survived the August 1998 crisis so should be extremely adept at riding the present storm.

Corporate executives who were posted to Russia with their multinational organization some time ago needn't panic if they are in a position to justify their (expensive) existence within the firm. Whilst generous benefit packages for such expatriates, which can sometimes double their actual salary – housing allowance, flights home, schooling, driver, healthcare for the family – are scarcer than in the 1990s

and still on the decline, they have not gone away, and are unlikely to disappear whilst such skills are not available locally. If you're in this enviable position, milk it while you can – you're a lucky b*stard!

Recent arrivals are probably those that could be at greatest risk – in many cases they were brought in for their specific knowledge of a niche area or to develop a new line of business – classic examples are in financial services or real estate as the Russian market expands and there are insufficient Russian nationals with relevant experience in such sectors. They previously had little or no exposure to Russia and if they do find themselves surplus to requirements in their existing company, they will be the ones struggling to find a new employer. Many were attracted to Russia by the challenge – not to mention the big bucks, and are unlikely to have the transferable skills to be of interest to those employers still hiring – in fact some have packed up and left the country altogether, although this is nothing like the autumn 1998 exodus that we witnessed, when the overwhelming majority of expats were on a one-way ticket out of Sheremetyevo 2. **P**



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In a major scoop, *Passport* has secured the rights to the diary of Michael Romanov, pretender to the Russian throne. He has recently emigrated from London to Moscow in order to campaign for election as Tsar Michael II. Follow his progress exclusively in *Passport*.

Diary of a Tsar-in-Waiting

by Michael Romanov

The phone has not stopped ringing all morning. Half the world, it seems, wants to know me now that I have come out of the *shkaf* (or 'closet') and thrown my hat into the ring, politically-speaking.

TIME wanted to know if I thought that the Russian Presidency should become hereditary. *Le Monde* phoned with a question in French, of which I could understand only the words 'Bastille' and 'guillotine'.

The Berlinische Abendblatt seemed interested in something that sounded like 'the mine shaft'. I assume this refers to my great uncle Nicky who paid a posthumous visit to one in Ekaterinburg in July 1918. But they might have said 'gemeinschaft'. German is Greek to me.

Finally a breathy girl from the *Daily Telegraph* phones from London asking what the Tsarina is wearing this season. I explain that she is not the Tsarina yet, still plain Mrs Bettina Wilhelmovna Romanova. There is a sharp click at the London end and the phone goes dead.

Is this because we have, as yet, no titles? Or could it be because my dear, saintly wife is revealed by her name to be German. Even though an Imperial restoration looked very unlikely when we married thirty years ago, I thought it prudent to make an alliance with someone from the country where most of my reigning ancestors drew spouses.

No true Tsar is complete without a German at his side, though in the cause of domestic harmony it is best to have one who speaks English.

To the Kremlin to present my credentials as Tsar-in-waiting. At first, nobody

seems interested. Then a small, youngish-looking chappie trots out of a dark stairway and takes my card. At first, I assume he is the security manager. But I am pleasantly surprised, in a democratic sort of way, when he announces that his name is Medvedev, and that he actually runs the joint.

He takes me upstairs to a modest apartment, where amidst a clutter of computers, we sit and drink green tea and eat little chocolates that have pictures of peasant girls on the wrapper.

He shows me the blogs he writes, and urges me to do the same if I want to make contact with the general public in so large a country as Russia. The mood is modern, positive and friendly. I can see he does not want to be President for long.

Back at the office, which is a temporary suite attached to the small oil-trading floor that a friend of mine runs on Tverskaya, the phone is ringing again. It is the same *TIME* reporter wanting me to tell him what I discussed in my audience with Medvedev. How did he know about it?

'Elton John,' I say on a whim, just to fox him.

There is an awed hush at the other end of the line, so I volunteer an explanation.

'I am hoping to persuade Elton to come over here for a fund-raising concert in the autumn,' I say. 'I was impressed by the way he played at a friend of mine's funeral in Westminster Abbey in 1997, and think he could do *Candle in the Wind* for me too. I'll provide the candles if he can raise the wind.'



Later in the morning, Father Euphemius drops by to bless our new computer system. He mumbles words in Old Church Slavonic and sprinkles Holy Water left, right and center.

This was my secretary, Tanya's, idea. The goal was increased efficiency. But far from improving the system's performance, it seems to retard it. In fact, it will not boot up at all. My chauffeur, Sasha, says he thinks we have Holy Water on the motherboard.

Just before lunch more bad news arrives. Pete Lyon, my landlord and an old friend, bounds into our little command center with a genial smile saying he wants us out of here within a month. The crisis, blah blah.

I say I have already been looking for larger premises. We will need much more space if we are to mount a serious challenge to the Vertical Party at the next election.

'I have seen a nice big building down by the river that might do,' I say. 'It is a white, slab-like structure; not attractive, but large. It is just opposite the Hotel Ukraine. Do you know it, by any chance?'

Pete sniffs and says, 'I wonder what Mr Putin will say to that!'

Whoever can he be referring to? I think I'll ring the *TIME* chappie, who seems omniscient, and inquire. **P**

Next month: what happens when Michael Romanov is introduced to Mr Putin at a private ABBA concert, where he broaches the subject of office accommodation...

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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
Pokrovky Hills
PricewaterhouseCoopers
Procter & Gamble
Pulford
Reuters
Renaissance Capital
Respublika
Ruslingua
Russo-British Chamber of Commerce
St. Andrew's Anglican Church
Savant
Schwartzkopf & Henkel
Shishkin Gallery
Sport Line Club
Swiss International Airlines
TeamAllied
Tretiakov Gallery
Unilever
Uniastrum Bank
WimmBillDann

