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# PASSPORT

MOSCOW

NOVEMBER 11 2007

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**Ritz Wine Tasting**  
**Elite Modelling Picks a New Face**



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**John Ortega**  
Owner and Publisher

It's already November and we are coming to the end of the year. The first snow has fallen, we are wearing woolen clothing and there's not much time before 2008 will be upon us. We can use November to think over the plans for the future and look back to analyze the year's mistakes and successes.

Coming to our mistakes we offer our apologies for inadvertently omitting in the last issue the mention of Passport's founding editor, Martine Self. Together with Glen Cox, the founding publisher, Martine put together the first three issues, of which the bulk of the content was planned in the Starlite Diner and several obscure pubs. It was only then that J Quinn Martin took over as editor.

Our Culture and Entertainment Editor, Natlia Shuvalova, picks the best events to go to and gives you a wider choice with the new Calendar of Events in Moscow. Our Arts pages, continuing Olga Slobodkina-von Bromssen's series, gives you the academic view on Soviet Art of the middle of the 19th century.

From this month we start a series reviewing Moscow's outdoor markets, to let you know more about where to buy and save money or to buy and bargain for what you like. This time it's Izmailovo Market, a huge area to buy souvenirs from Russia. Our Travel pages continue the Day Out in Moscow with a visit to Tsaritsino by Ian Mitchell.

Our Business section features Daniel Klein's article on the Business growth in Russia for the last couple of years. Sonya Rinkus gives up the proper opinion on the real estate market situation.

The cover story of the month written by our Consultant Editor-in-Chief John Bonar will let you know about Yuri Navarro's life story, now the chef-owner of his own restaurant in Moscow.

Let me share with you the fact that Harper's Wine and Spirits Weekly in London seized on our blind champagne tasting reported in our October issue and trumpeted "Russian fizz beats Cristal". The influential trade newspaper said the 2002 Novy Svet Pinot Noir also beat 1996 Bollinger Extra Brut, 1995 Salon Blanc de Blancs Brut Le Mesnil, and Bilecart-Salmon NV. Stephen Williams of London's Antique Wine Company, one of our guests at the tasting said he was 'amazed' but had subsequently learned that the winning wine was first served at the coronation of the Tsar in 1896, and had also won a Grand Prix in Paris in 1900. For this month we have chosen Australia's best wines and took our expert guests to the Ritz Carlton, one of the newest places in Moscow and fast garnering a reputation.

cover photo by Serge Golovach



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## Autumn Theater Festivals



In each season one can find festivals in Moscow. November is rich with experimental projects: Dance Inversion and NET Festival are both presenting the latest trends from Europe and USA in ballet and theater.

The first invites modern ballet groups from France, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Portugal and the USA. Modern dance like any other kind of modern art is a way to express individual styles, create new combinations, and put together Eastern and Western traditions.

The NET festival first took place in 1998 in Moscow, initiated by the group of theatre critics and was supposed to present to Russian public modern productions from Europe and Russia. Since then it has grown to international level and discovered the new wave of Russian theatre directors: Evgenyi Grishkovets, Olga Subbotina, Kirill Serebrennikov, Ivan Vyrypaev. This year among the participants there are theatre groups from France, Switzerland, Norway, Netherlands, Latvia, Lithuania and Spain. All the performances are in the original languages with subtitles in Russian.

*Dance Inversion Festival – November 2 – November 20*

*New European Theatre Festival – November 16 – November 30*

*For venues and schedule see [www.danceinversion.ru](http://www.danceinversion.ru), [www.netfest.ru](http://www.netfest.ru)*

## Chanel: Art as a Universe

Could you ever imagine an arts exhibition with a smell of a perfume? A luxurious perfume. Chanel... Chanel perfumes are now in the air at the Pushkin museum. The Chanel Foundation suggested the idea, and the curators from the Pushkin Museum easily turned it into an international exhibition project involving exhibits from the Tate Gallery, Pompidou Center, Tretyakov Gallery and the Moscow Kremlin Museum. The concept of the exhibition is based on the color and texture notions that inspired Coco Chanel; Black, Red, Gold, Sand and Tweed. The Black section features the fitted black dress, which became one of Coco Chanel's trademarks. Red stands for Chanel's favorite lipstick color, Gold for Venetian domes and gilded mosaics. The tweeds allude to the English period in Chanel's life. The haute couture dresses and accessories are placed with background of ancient Russian icons, works by Gainsborough, Constable, Renoir, Picasso, Rodchenko and photographs by Man Ray.

Coco Chanel was a true artist who created an individual artistic style through color, shape and fabric textures.



*Art as a Universe*

*Pushkin Fine Arts Museum*

*Till November 21, 10:00–19:00 except Monday*

## Time of the Balkans



*Goran Bregovic and Wedding and Funerals Orchestra*

*USZ Druzhba, Luzhniki*

*November 17, 18, 20:00*

At his very first concert in Moscow one could not but feel desperately bad at mathematics when one choir singer emerged after another bagpipe player on stage after a fierce-looking timpanist started a rhythm which on the one hand is unfamiliar and well known from somewhere inside. This is the Weddings and Funerals Orchestra uniting more than 50 musicians, headed by Goran Bregovic, that made the whole world feel joy and sorrows with the peoples of the Balkans and dance to their rhythms...

Goran Bregovic was born in Sarajevo, studied violin at the conservatory and admitted his love for rock n'roll by forming "The White Button" group at the age of sixteen. Since then he has composed for such varied artists as Iggy Pop and Cesaria Evora. Together with the film director and musician Emir Kusturica Bregovi became known internationally for his scores for the latter's films (Time of the Gypsies, Arizona Dream, Underground – Palme d'Or at the 1995 Cannes Film Festival).

Nowadays Bregovi interprets his own music touring around the world with his orchestra and mix of the Gypsy and Slavic rhythms.

## Il Divo: Opera Stars in the Kremlin

*Il Divo* stands for "Star" in Italian and is indeed one of the brightest events in world popular music in recent years. Four talented singers from different countries perform opera arias along with lyric songs of Tony Brexton, Frank Sinatra and Ennio Moricone in one concert. Their tours are anticipated all over the world. They sell their albums by the millions. The huge success is certainly due to the fusion of the four exceptional voices. David Miller (tenor, from the USA) has a Masters Degree in Opera Theatre, sang leading roles internationally for 10 years and was on Broadway in Baz Luhrmann's *La Boheme*. Sebastien Izambard (pop singer from France) is the only self-taught singer, an accomplished songwriter who plays guitar and piano and produces for many other French artists. Urs Bühler (tenor, from Switzerland) started singing with a hard rock band, then at the Salzburg Festival and Netherlands Opera. Carlos Marin (baritone, from Spain) a star of the opera scene is based in Madrid and was renowned for his work in many operas such as *La Traviata* and *La Boheme*.



*Il Divo Concert*  
State Kremlin Palace  
November 29, 19:00



*International Boxing Arena*  
Ledovy Dvorets at Khodynskoe Pole  
November 30, 19:00

## Fight Without Rules

Ledovy Dvorets (Ice Palace), recently constructed in Moscow, has already hosted the Ice Hockey World Championship. On November 30 it will turn itself into an international boxing arena for the strongest teams of the two countries – Russia and USA – to fight without rules, making a show for thousands of people. The names of the participants make sure that this is going to be an unprecedented match; eight different matches to be more precise. The first one will face Roman Zentsov who is in the world's top 10 heavy-weight boxers, and the American star Erik Pele. The second fight – in medium weight is between Andrey Semyonov and Tim McKenzie. The other matches will feature Konstantin Glukhov vs Zulu, Vladimir Zenin vs TBA, Vladimir Kuchenko vs Jerome Smith, Alexandre Shlemenko vs Diego Vistosky. Two ladies from two continents are going to find out who is the best: Julia Berezikova is going to face Jessica Aguilar.

## Baltic Wave

"Baltic Jazz" has become an annual festival. The participants are the best representatives of the European jazz elite. The festival will open in Kaliningrad (November 9-11). The special guest of this part of the festival is Anna Maria Jopek, who is hailed by the press as a "singing diamond." St. Petersburg (November 12-13) will hear the improvisations by the multinational jazz band "JazzKamikaze," as well as the duet of the famous German pianist Uli Lents and French saxophonist Franscois Jeanno. Moscow will be presented with a parade of celebrities: Helsinki Trio, Lars Danielsson (Sweden), Ulf Wakenius (from the Oscar Peterson Quartet) and the most excellent trumpet player Nils Petter Molvaer. On top of it all is a performance by a legend of Scandinavian Jazz; Palle Mikkelborg. He has been a key personality in the development of European jazz since the early '70's. He worked with Miles Davis on the "Aura" album which received two Grammys in 1989. In 2001 the musician was awarded the Nordic Music Prize (NOMUS).



*Helsinki Trio, Lars Danielsson, Palle Mikkelborg – November 15, 19:00*  
*Cool & Jazzy, Ulf Wakenius, Nils Petter Molvaer – November 16, 19:00*  
Moscow International House of Music

***For venues see page 46***

**November 2, Friday**

**New European Theater Festival**  
until November 20  
see Editor's choice for more info

**5, Monday**

**FOR KIDS**  
**"Bu-ra-ti-no" Musical (in Russian)**  
Mir Concert Hall  
18:00  
500-1,000 rub.

**ROCK**



**Alina Simone (USA)**  
alternative rock  
Ikra Club  
21:00  
500 rub.

**6, Tuesday**

**CLASSICAL MUSIC**  
**"George Gershwin Gala"**  
Pianist Denis Matsuev, soloist Larisa Dolina  
Moscow Conservatory (Big Hall)  
19:00  
200-1,000 rub.

**EXPO**

**World of Gifts**  
9th international exhibition for gifts, New Year decorations, jewellery and accessories.  
www.mir-podarkov.com  
Crocus Expo  
10:00-18:00  
until November 9

**7, Wednesday**

**CONCERT**  
**Bryan Ferry**  
B1 Maximum Club  
20:00  
also on Nov. 8  
1,500-50,000 (VIP) rub.

**8, Thursday**

**BALLET**  
**La Bayadère**  
by L. Minkus  
Bolshoi Theatre  
19:00  
500-3,000 rub.

**FOLK MUSIC**  
**DiDyuLya**

Flamenco by virtuoso guitarist and composer  
Theater of National Art  
19:00  
500-1,800 rub.

**9, Friday**

**CLUB MUSIC**



**De Phazz**  
Lounge music from Germany  
B1 Maximum  
19:00  
500-1,500 rub.

**10, Saturday**

**CLUB MUSIC**  
**Paradox (UK)**  
Dev Pandya's drum'n'bass project  
16 Tons Club  
00:00  
600 rub.

**CLUB MUSIC**  
**Nathan Fake (UK)**  
electronic music artist from Norfolk  
Ikra Club  
23:59  
600 rub.

**ROCK**

**Dolores O'Riordan**  
Soloist of the "Cranberries" rock band  
B1 Maximum Club  
20:00  
1,700-21,000 (VIP) rub.

**11, Sunday**

**FASHION**  
Russian Silhouette Fashion Contest  
Gostiny Dvor  
19:00  
500 rub.

**ROCK**



**Mono (Japan) feat. Dream Mechanics**  
post-rock group from Tokyo  
Ikra Club  
21:00  
850-2,200 rub.

**13, Thursday**

**CINEMA**  
**"Les marchands de sable" (in French)**  
Pierre Salvadori (2000)  
Illusion Cinema  
19:00  
50 rub.

**ROCK**

**Marilyn Manson**  
B1 Maximum Club  
Also on November 14  
9,000-50,000 (VIP) rub.

**MUSICAL**

**Mamma Mia**  
More info on p. 32  
MDM  
19:00  
500-3,000 rub.

**15, Thursday**

**Baltic Jazz Festival**  
Jazz bands from Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Poland and France.  
International House of Music  
schedule at www.mmdm.ru  
300-2,000 rub.

**16, Friday**

**CLUB MUSIC**  
**Amon Tobin (Canada/UK)**  
sampled jazz fused with drum'n'bass, intelligent dance music and samba.  
Ikra Club  
21:00  
850-2,200 rub.

**OPERA**



**Carmen (in Russian)**  
By G. Biset  
Galina Vishnevskaya Opera Centre  
19:00  
300-600 rub.

**17, Saturday**

**BALLET**  
**Swan Lake by P. Tchaikovsky**  
Bolshoi Theatre  
19:00  
also on November 18  
500-4,200 rub.

**CLUB MUSIC**



**Alec Empire (Germany)**  
digital hardcore DJ and producer  
Ikra Club  
23:00  
700-2,000 rub.

**FOLK MUSIC**

**Goran Bregovic and "Wedding and Funeral Band"**  
S/C Druzhba (Luzhniki)  
also on November 18  
See Editor's choice for more info

**SPORTS**

**Dance on the Ice Show**  
Russian figure skating and popular music stars  
Ledovy Dvoretz at Khodynskoe Pole  
19:00  
500-3,000 rub.

**18, Sunday**

**JAZZ**  
**Tessa Souter (USA)**  
Jazz infused with flamenco  
Moscow International House of Music (Svetlanovsky Hall)  
19:00  
300-2,000 rub.

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**SPORTS**



**Moto Cross World series**  
S/C Olimpiyskiy  
12:00  
400-3,000 rub.

**21, Wednesday**

**ROCK**  
**Alice Cooper**  
B1 Maximum Club  
20:00  
also on November 22  
1,100-25,000 (VIP) rub.

**22, Thursday**

**Lisa Gerrard**  
Estrada Theatre  
19:00  
2,500-6,500 rub.

**EXPO**

**Millionaire Fair**  
Crocus Expo  
until November 25  
1,000 rub.

**24, Saturday**

**CLUB MUSIC**  
**Steppin' session: LTJ**  
**BUKEM & MC CONRAD**  
**(UK)**  
Ikra Club  
22:00-06:00  
600-2,500 rub.

**25, Sunday**

**POPULAR MUSIC**  
**Enrique Iglesias**  
S/C Olimpiyskiy  
19:00  
800-5,000 rub.

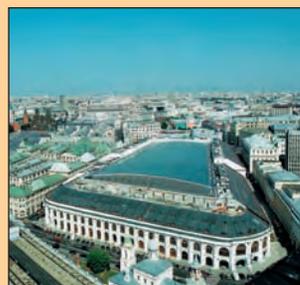
**27, Tuesday**

**SPORTS, FOOTBALL**  
**League of Champions**  
**CSKA (Moscow) - PSV**  
**(Netherlands)**  
Lokomotiv Stadium  
20:00  
9,000-26,000 rub.

**29, Thursday**

**CLASSICAL MUSIC**  
**Il Divo**  
A supergroup of 4 opera singers  
from different countries  
See Editor's choice for more info

**SHOW**



**Food Show**  
Gostiny Dvor  
10:00-19:00  
until December 2  
300 rub.

**CLUB MUSIC**

**Happy Mondays at The**  
**Rolling Stone magazine's**  
**birthday party**  
B1 Maximum Club  
20:00  
900 rub.

**30, Friday**

**CLUB MUSIC**  
**DJ Food (UK)**  
Ikra Club  
23:59  
600-1,800 rub.

**JAZZ**



**Jazz Night.**  
**Chris Botti**  
B1 Maximum Club  
20:00  
6,000-13,000 rub.

**SPORTS, BOXING**

**Box fights without rules**  
**Russia vs USA**  
R. Zentosov vs E. Pele  
A. Semenov vs K. Ucola  
K. Glukhov vs Zulu  
Ledovy Dvorets at Khodynskoe  
Pole  
See Editor's choice for more info

**December 1, Saturday**

**BALLET**



**Cinderella**  
By S. Prokofiev  
Bolshoi Theatre  
19:00  
500-3,500 rub.

**2, Sunday**

**BALLET**  
**American Choreography**  
**Night**  
Bolshoi Theatre  
19:00  
500-3,500 rub.

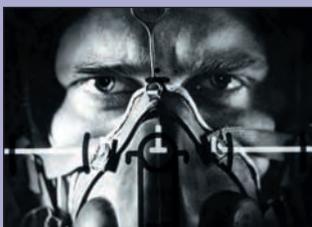
**5, Wednesday**

**OPERA**  
**Queen of Spades**  
By P. Tchaikovsky  
Bolshoi Theatre  
19:00  
3,500-6,000 rub.

**6, Thursday**

**Rakhmaninov and Friends**  
**festival. Wanderer trio**  
**(France)**  
Compositions by C. Saint-Saëns,  
F. Mendelssohn, F. Liszt.  
Moscow International House of  
Music (Chamber Hall)  
19:00  
500-3,000 rub.

**Museums and Galleries**



**Dreaming of the Sky**

Vintage aviation photographs  
by Soviet photo reporters.  
Yakov Khalip, Alexander Ustinov  
and Valentin Khukhlaev's  
pictures of planes in the sky.  
Thanks to them we have a  
chance to learn the history of  
Soviet pursuit planes and U2's  
since the 1930's.

Lumiere Brothers' Gallery  
Central House of Artists  
A-51, 10, Krymsky Val  
11:00-19:00 except Monday

**Ivan Shishkin**  
**175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Today's generation of Russians  
have grown up with the images  
by Shishkin even on boxes  
of chocolates, so popular are  
his landscapes of the Russian  
nature. Yet few people know  
that Shishkin is rather a "com-  
poser" of landscapes which by  
no means prevented him from  
creating beautiful and color-  
ful masterpieces. His drawings  
will also be displayed.

Tretyakov Gallery at  
Krymsky Val  
10, Krymsky Val  
10:00-19:30 except Monday



**Aquarium-Oceanarium**

Recently an Oceanarium has  
appeared in the very center  
of Moscow which attracts chil-  
dren and their parents to have  
a look at the creatures which  
normally live far away from the  
capital of Russia.

Sea Aquarium  
14, Chistoprudny Bulvar.  
10:00-20:00  
www.aquatis.ru

**Emperors' Porcelain**

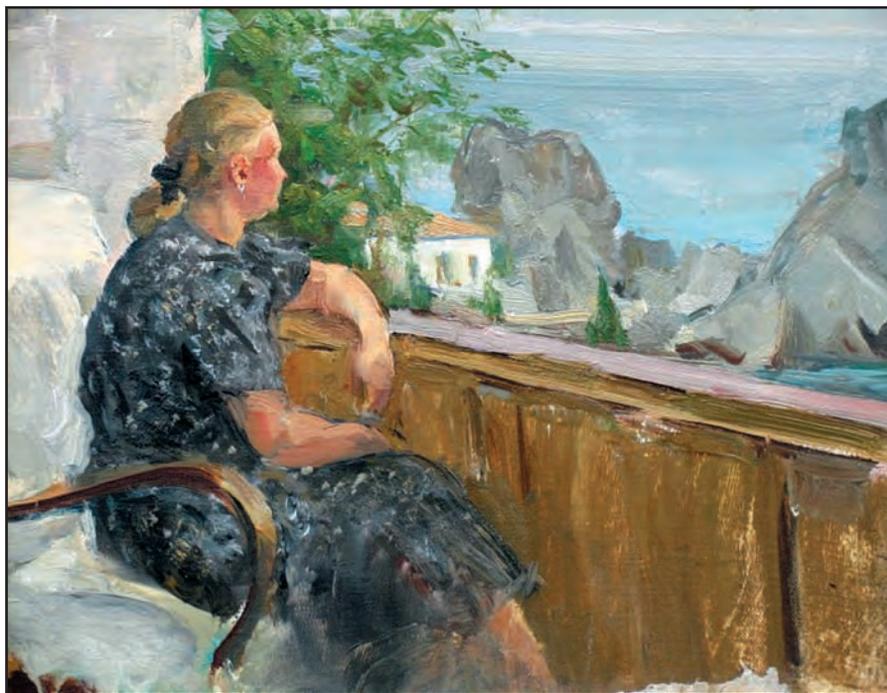
Imperial Porcelain was found-  
ed in 1744 in Saint Petersburg  
by Elizabeth, daughter of Peter  
the Great. At the time the only  
porcelain available was from  
Asia, and sold for more than  
gold because it was believed  
porcelain could remove poi-  
son from food. The time from  
1750 to 1830 showed huge  
innovation in casting tech-  
niques, and design. More than  
300 items with the famous  
stamp are on display now.

The Kremlin.  
Assumption Cathedral.  
until January 13  
10:00-17:00 except Thursday



# Soviet Art From the War Time Up Until Khrushchev's Thaw

by Olga Slobodkina – von Bromssen



Porfiri Krylov "Gurzuf. Govorin's Dacha"

During the Great Patriotic War, the Kukryniksy triumvirate – Mikhail Kuprianov (1903-1991), Porfiri Krylov (1902-1990) and Nikolai Sokolov (1903-2000) fought the enemy with their own weapons of trenchant political caricature and satirical posters. And in 1947-1948 they produced their large painting 'The End' in which they depicted the supposed last hours of Hitler's clique. With the sharp contrasts of light and shadow, the tense color combinations and grotesquely expressive drawing, the artists evoked an atmosphere of the animal fear that may have gripped the Nazis, with the inevitability of the reprisals awaiting them. The moral smallness of the Fuhrer and his henchmen who had aspired to world domination is exposed in all its shoddiness. This picture sounded a stern warning to all maniacs of militarism.

'A Letter from the Front' (1910-1972) enjoyed huge popularity in the post-war period. It is a typical scene in those months of war when the news coming from the front promised that the victory was close at hand. The drawing executed with academic meticulousness is combined with an almost unreal brilliance of the sunlight streaming over the scene.



Alexander Gerasimov "Hymn for October"

Alexander Gerasimov (1881-1963) was another leading master of time. In his group portrait of the oldest Soviet artists, the engraver I. Pavlov and the painters V. Baskeyev, V. Byalynitsky-Burulya and V. Meshkov, he conveyed with his free and vigorous brushwork not just the physical likeness, but also the peculiarities of temperament and manner of each of the men sitting at the table and conversing with each other.

The work of Nikolai Romadin (1903 -1987), for all its variety of landscape motifs, pursues the same lyrical theme and is permeated with his admiration and love for his native land. His cycle, 'Volga, the Russian River' includes a small autumn landscape painted with delicate skill and which he called 'The Village of Khmelevka' (1944). The intimacy and deep-felt sincerity of Romadin's imagery stems from the Russian national landscape genre originated by Savrasov and Levitan.

'Bread' (1949) by the Ukrainian painter Tatyana Yablonskaya (1917-2005) is a radiant picture.

The confident, rhythmical movements of the young farm women and the mountains of wheat they have gathered delight the artist, and she presents this sunlight scene of peaceful toil as a holiday of joy.



Nikolai Romadin "A view at Volga"

In the work of Semyon Chuikov (1902-1980) the beauty of the people and the scenery of Kirghizia are embodied in poetic imagery. The appeal of 'The Daughter of Soviet Kirghizia' (1948) lies in the painting's subtle color harmony, in its mood of happiness and joy of living, and in the beauty of youth with its dreams and its thirst for knowledge. The figure of the girl is painted against a splendidly rendered panorama of the steppe, languishing in the heat, and with the mountains in the distance.

Vladimir Serov (1910-1968) developed the traditions of the *peredvizhniki* and the Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia in his paintings of historical and revolutionary themes. One of his best works is 'The Win-



Tatyana Yablonskaya "Bread"

ter Palace Has Been Taken' (1954). The care with which the composition has been worked out, the attention to expressive details, and the ability to render the most characteristic features in social types and individual mental states of the different personages portrayed, are qualities common to Serov's other paintings on the subject of the revolution.

Soviet sculpture at the end of the 1940's through the 1950's is represented by portraits in general. Nikolai Tomsky (1900-1984), renowned for his numerous monuments and large decorative works was also a prominent portraitist. The bust of Sergei Kirov (1959) reveals the great inner strength, intelligence and personal charm of this outstanding statesman who enjoyed the warm affection and esteem of the people.

The 'Self-Portrait' (1957) of the oldest Soviet sculptor Sergei Konenkov (1874-1971), sculpted in a free, energetic manner, is an impressive image of a proudly confident, inspired personality; a thinker endowed, it seems, with the gift of pre-vision. The thrown-back shoulders and the clearness of the silhouette lend an air of majesty to this man with the physique of a legendary bogatyr.

At the end of the 1950's a new stage began in the development of Soviet art, following after the important changes which took place in the social life of our country after the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party when Nikita Khrushchev openly spoke about Stalin's crimes. After that the so-called Thaw Period began. Artists belonging to different



Georgi Nissky "Flowers on the Balcony"

generations, but largely of the young generation, began to take a deeper interest in modern themes and in the different aspects of contemporary life. The traditions of Soviet art and the experience of Russian and progressive world art were assimilated on a much broader scale than in the preceding period.

The cultural level of the population as a whole had risen considerably, the developed system of art education was yielding good results, and the national school of art of all the Union Republics, including those which had no traditions of easel painting, drawing and sculpture before the Revolution of 1917, were flourishing. Art became richer in new subject matter and imagery and there was a more vigorous exchange of experiences between the artists of different republics who were tackling similar tasks and affirming the ideas of Soviet patriotism and socialist internationalism. In this orderly process of development young artists turned for guidance to the work of their oldest contemporaries: Favorsky, Deineka, Plastov, Saryan, Gerasimov, Korin and other distinguished masters.

The work of Pavel Korin (1892-1967), a master of easel and monumental painting, is comprehensively represented at the Tretyakov Gallery where the collection includes a number of excellent portraits made by Korin; among them 'The Group Portrait of the Kukryniksy Triumvirate'; Kuprianov, Krylov and Sokolov (1957-1958). Pavel Korin portrayed their individual characteristics and manner, and at the same time emphasized that they were a close-knit team, famed throughout the world for their political satire and anti-fascist posters. The three artists are painted against a background of vivid posters which are an integral part of the portrait's imagery. The colors are dramatic and impressive.

The landscapes of Georgi Nissky (1903-1987) have certain features common both to easel painting and monumental-decorative art. Developing out of his own experiences at the end of the 1920's and the beginning of the 1930's, Nissky used generalized, laconic imagery and flashing linear rhythms to convey the pace of modern life and as in 'Moscow Countryside. February' (1957), demonstrated how the natural scenery has been transformed by the efforts of Soviet people.

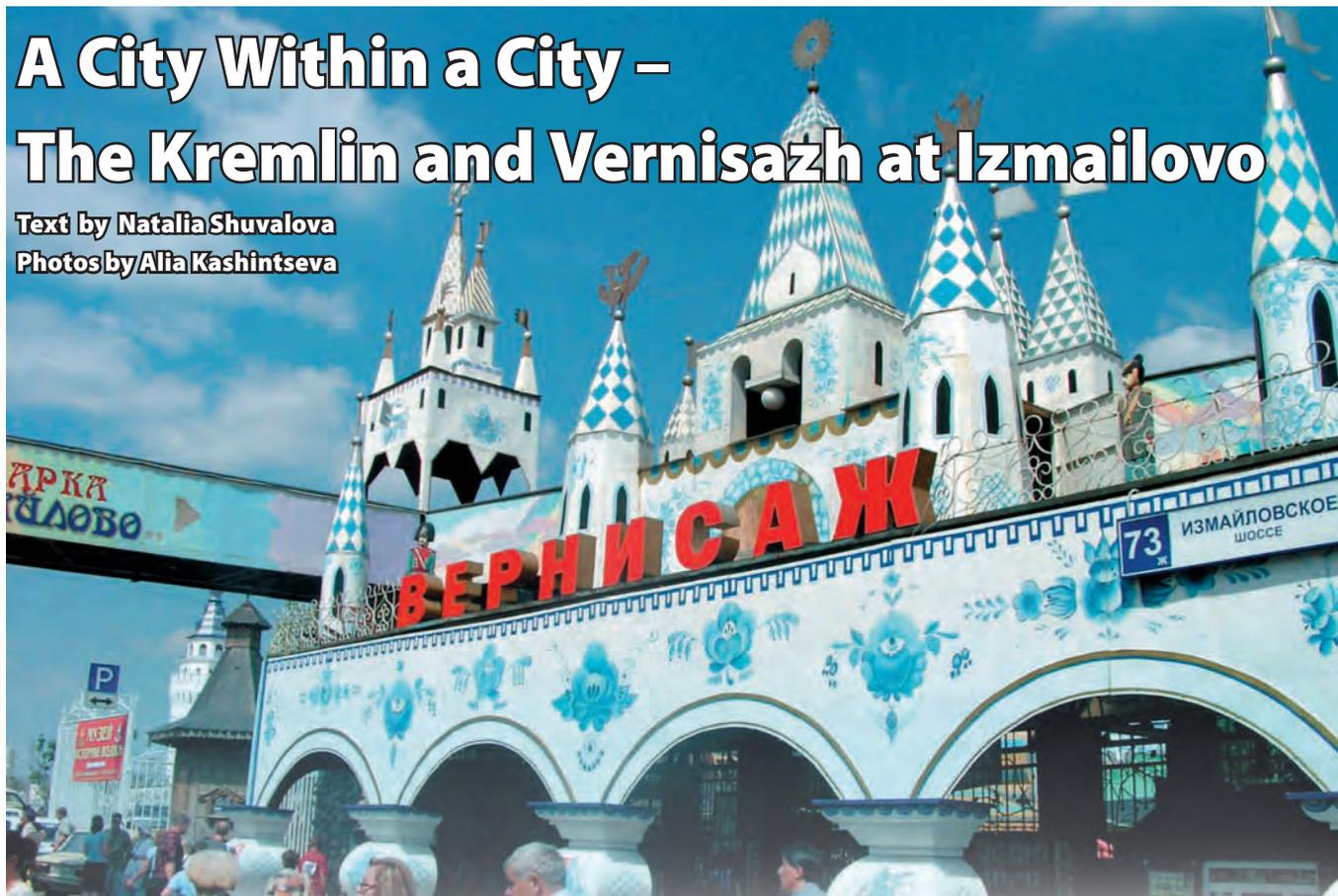


Semen Chuikov "A daughter of Soviet Kirghizia"

# A City Within a City – The Kremlin and Vernisazh at Izmailovo

Text by Natalia Shuvalova

Photos by Alia Kashintseva



Nowadays Izmailovo is a Mecca for the tourists coming to Moscow. You can get everything you can ever think of as a perfect present from Russia and even more. It is also a great place to enjoy a reproduction of ancient Russian architecture – the Izmailovo Kremlin!

If you had come to this part of Moscow just three decades ago you would have found a completely different place.

## The Kremlin

“Every Russian city used to start with a Kremlin; a sort of fortress. It would be built on a hill which made its protection much easier,” explains Alexander Kushakov, the person who launched the Vernisage and Kremlin project. “When we saw this hill at Izmailovo, we thought it would be the best place to create our ‘old city.’ It is the size that Tsar Alexei Michailovich, the father of Peter the Great, would have chosen for building a new Kremlin.”

The interesting fact is that this hill is not natural. In reality it was a garbage dump that was created after the construction of the Izmailovo hotels that were built for the Olympic Games in 1980. Enough years went by for some grass to grow on it. Of course it required some work to make the hill suitable for large constructions, but that was not the only problem.

“It was not that easy. Russian officialdom and the bureaucracy did everything possible to not let it happen,” remembers Mr. Kushakov.

A few years ago one of the wooden Kremlin constructions were destroyed by fire. Some say that it was a deliberate act of arson. Nevertheless, it did not stop the Kremlin from growing and expanding. “Moscow was not built in a day. It used to be constantly on fire. But that misfortune made people think of better constructions, thus

Moscow turned into the white stone city that even Marco Polo mentions in his records. At first we were considering only wooden buildings, as this is a very unique Russian style and it is disappearing. But that fire made us have a larger historical view which included the stone architecture,” Mr. Kushakov added

The Kremlin has seven museums. The museum of bells, fairytales, national costumes, and vodka are popular. Anyone who is interested in learning more about the national crafts can register for a master class. The Kremlin craftsmen from Ismailovo went to St. Petersburg for the G8 summit last year to teach Ludmila Putina and her colleagues national folk arts. “The plate painted by Mrs. Putina is in our funds,”

smiles the PR manager.

The whole territory of the Kremlin is a museum under the open sky. Crossing into its walls, one steps into a 17th century city. There are

various festivals and it is especially festive during the *Maslenitsa*. In winter they create ice-hills, arrange snowball fights and Troika rides with beautifully painted sledges.

The plans for the future are to create an International Craft Center, to build a new hotel and a conference center. This August the annual festival of crafts had not only CIS countries participating but also China. “We want the Kremlin be a place where people can enrich their knowledge about Russia, find something for their soul and, of course, take something back home,” states the founder of this remarkable complex.

### Fake or real? Choosing amber.

**Advice from Elena Varina (Kalinigrad); amber designer and vendor**

*Rub two stones against each other. With real amber you will feel resistance and some noise, while plastic just slides against each other easily.*

*Rub an amber stone with your hand to warm it up; you will sense a slight conifer smell. (They even burned some amber with a lighter for us – but that is not recommended.)*

*Of course, not every vendor would allow these tests (for obvious reasons), but their refusal may already be enough of a sign to avoid their goods.*

## The Vernisazh

The best place to select a Russian present or souvenir is from the nearby Vernisage. This area is also the domain of Mr. Kushakov. He has transformed it into a civilized art and crafts market.

"In the 1980's the artists and craftsmen used to sell their works in Izmailovo Park. The officials did not like it and made them move away. The vendors tried to resist but could do nothing when they were literally washed away by the fire brigade. The place that they were allowed to stay was right next to that garbage hill. In fact, it also was a hill but grew from the ground brought from the Sokolniki metro excavations and some burial grounds. During the repressions in the 1930's, they needed to create some trenches to put the large number of the dead. So they made a trench in the Moscow outskirts and the soil from digging that trench was brought here. This very ground became the hill Vernisazh is on." Again, the main problem was not the hill.

"The place looked oppressive. The vendors had all their items laid out on the ground. The whole place was crowded with the criminals, not only in art and antiques. In a couple hundred meters away from the place, they would shoot at each other," admits Mr. Kushakov.

Prices are lower than at GUM or anywhere near Red Square or Stary Arbat. And you are always welcome to bargain. Some of the vendors are the craftsmen themselves. They all admit that from their point of view, most foreigners look for cheap prices but in the end get fakes and low quality items. "I never sell my matrushkas very cheap. I do them myself. I paint different faces on each, they all have some individuality. Look!" A middle aged woman shows us one of her dolls. She graduated from an art college specializing in crafts about 30 years ago. For a long time she was the head of the craft museums in the region but after perestroika it all fell apart. She continued making her own dolls and was selling them on the streets, was part of a cooperative and finally came to Vernisazh. "I come here only once a week, on Wednesdays. I also sell my items in other shops. The rest of the time I work," she continues. Her expensive mid-size matrushka would cost you 800 rubles. That is more than the average price of 400-500 rubles.

It is really fun to talk to the vendors at Vernisazh. The man who sells poniards, horns and metal cups for the wine will tell you (with a striking Caucasian accent) about his Georgian home from where he



brings his crafts. He will mention when and why he moved to Russia, share his worries about Georgia becoming more closed off from Russia, and that now they have to bring their goods through Dagestan. When asked about the price, first he will proudly admit that the horn is "natural Caucasian goat" and only then say "4,000 rubles!"

It is hard to pass by the amber jewelry. Most of it comes from Kalinigrad together with the people who design and sell. "I come to Moscow for two weeks, then go back home", says Elena Varina. Amber is their family business and she is here with her husband and daughter. The price of their necklaces, rings, bracelets and earrings depends on the weight of the stone. The necklace that has a 74 gram silver mounted amber piece costs 5,900 rubles.

When asking about the prices for the wooden carved Ded Morozes, I was surprised to constantly hear: "800 rubles. But there is a 200 rubles discount so you can have it for 600!" The sales promotion manager for Ismailovo explained that Wednesday is a special day when they have sales. Those who know that, come very early in the morning and buy the best of the goods in bulk. Even if you do not need a whole container of Russian crafts for the coming Christmas holidays, you may still save some cash by arranging to come to Ismailovo on a Wednesday morning.



## Crossing the Border

According to Russian Federation Law, every item which is older than 50 years is considered antique and subject to import restrictions. If you buy anything, even a cheap medal at a flea market, you may be stopped at customs leaving the country and in the worst case even be arrested. To freely take your purchase out of Russia, you need go to the Moscow Service of Cultural Preservation at:

Stary Arbat, 53/6, Department of Expertise (this is in the house-museum of Pushkin)

Tel: 244-76-75

You need to bring 3 photos of the item and a copy of your passport.

It may take a week and possibly even a month to get permission so plan ahead.

# The Lost Tribe

Text and photos by Ray Nayler

Om mane padme hum . . . The chant echoes throughout the Burkhan Bakshin Altan Sume, or “The Golden Abode of the Buddha Shakya-muni.” The Temple is peaceful, gently washed with music. The devout make their way around the room slowly, barefoot, or sit meditatively, facing the enormous golden Buddha whose presence dominates the room. On the walls of the temple, winding murals depict the spiritual world of Tibetan Buddhism. The murals are not yet finished. Scaffolding, splashed with the rich colors of paint being used for the temple’s decoration, partially obscures the image of the Dalai Lama being completed across from the main altar. We bow to three Tibetan monks as they pass by, gently smiling, in their dark red robes. The completed murals depict the Buddha in various states of repose, along with the spirits and gods of a different world, one that seems far away from this one.

That world seems especially far away because we are located in the city of Elista, on the Russian Steppe, in the often forgotten Republic of Kalmykia. The Golden Abode’s interior is still unfinished not because it is being restored, but because it was built in 2004. It was dedicated in a ceremony by the Dalai Lama himself, and its construction is a small triumph – part of the spiritual revival of the Kalmyk people, the only Buddhist nation in Europe. The Kalmyks have recently been undergoing a quiet revolution, reviving traditions that were almost destroyed under communism, and attempting to recover from a strange and tragic history that nearly destroyed them.

As the plane circled to land, the airport is clearly visible: just a single runway and a small building in the middle of seemingly endless golden steppe, under a crystalline blue sky. Once the plane’s engines shut down, the silence of the landscape closes in, the footsteps of the plane’s few passengers echoing on the tarmac as we make our way to the airport’s main building. Our is the only plane at the lonely little airport, and it does

*In Kalmykia, One of the Many Ethnic Republics of the Russian Federation, Ray Nayler explores Europe’s only Buddhist Nation and Finds a People Reconnecting With Their Past.*



not appear that there will be another today.

Elista rises from the steppe, at first seeming much like any other Russian city – rows of blocky apartment buildings along the road, a series of half-abandoned factories. But the apartment buildings are painted in pastel colors. And here and there, under the bright blue sunshine of this September day, is the gleaming lacquered roof of a pagoda – a sight that seems more than out of place among the concrete cubes of the outer city.

The Kalmyks, descendants of the Mongol hordes, arrived in this region under a different name – the Oirat – in 1630, having traveled from the banks of the Irtysh river in Siberia in search of better pasture lands for their animals. They settled along the Volga and Don rivers, in areas formerly held by the Nogai Horde, whom the Oirat drove out. Russia, perhaps exhausted from just having emerged from under the yoke of the Golden Horde, chose to tolerate the Oirat presence on their land. A treaty was signed granting the Oirat autonomy in exchange for its defense of the Russian empire against tribes further to the South. But eventually, as the Russians grew stronger, they put more and more pressure on the nomadic Oirat, settling Russians and Germans on formerly Oirat pastureland and interfering in the succession of their Khans.

In fact, the interference was so intolerable that 200,000 Oirat, in 1771, under the leadership of Uzbashi Khan, decided to return home by traveling directly across the Central Asian deserts. Along the way many were attacked and killed by Kazakhs and Kirghiz, their historical enemies, and many more died of starvation and disease along the way. Eventually, 96,000 of the tribe



reached the safety of Lake Balkhash in Western China, their historical homeland. Those Oirat that remained behind were called the Kalmyk, meaning “remainders.” The Kalmyk Khanate was abolished, and they quickly succumbed to expanding Russian imperial power, becoming vassals of Catherine the Great’s expanding Russian empire. But their troubles were not nearly over.

In the center of modern Elista is a multi-leveled red pagoda, surrounded by fountains. At its center is a metal prayer wheel decorated with Sanskrit writing. People climb the marble steps and walk around the prayer wheel, turning it slowly so that it rings a small bell. This holy wheel has come all the way from Tibet, and contains 75 million written mantras, filling it with energy. Now the wheel constantly turns as a steady stream of Kalmyks mount the stairs. The pagoda stands where Lenin used to be, his statue having been politely moved to the edge of the square. And this movement of Lenin is representative of the Kalmyk way of dealing with history: The square retains the name it had under communism, but new things have been added, including the pagoda and an over-sized chess board, around which several old men are standing, involved in an ongoing game. The Kalmyks seem careful not to forget their past. As our guide, Nadezhda Alekseyevna puts it: “Here in Kalmykia, we do not destroy our history. We respect all things that have happened, good and bad.”

The center of the town is filled with small statues, many of them abstract, lining the leafy boulevards. A small square commemorates Pushkin’s visit to the Kalmyk Steppe. As we walk further, under the golden gates and along the Alley of Heroes, we pass statues commemorating the old gods of the Oirat before their conversion to Tibetan Buddhism. We stop to admire a statue dedicated to the author of the Kalmyk’s main historical epic, The Dhangar, a series of songs celebrating the heroism of a mythical Kalmyk knight, and then a Soviet-era monument to the Kalmyk dead of World War Two and Afghanistan. The total impression is of a history of many combined, unlike elements. But one major event, commemorated by a powerful monument at the edge of the city, looms among all others: in 1943, immediately following the Soviet victory at the battle of Stalingrad, thousands of trucks arrived in Elista and all other cities of the Republic of Kalmykia. In one evening, troops and police rounded up every man, woman, and child, and the entire nation, including many of its men who had fought bravely at the front in the Red Army, was deported to Siberia.



**Where to Stay:** The **Beliy Lotos** (White Lotus) is a pleasant, centrally located hotel with modern facilities. Phone (84722) 5-4070 another option is the **Elista**, which is cheaper, but also less comfortable. It is, however, right across from the main square of Elista.

**Where to Eat:** For a simple meal, try **Leka-Pizza**, with 17 varieties of Pizza to choose from. (Ulitsa Gorkogo, 25). They also deliver, for a price (84722) 5-5519. For traditional cuisine, most restaurants downtown offer Kalmyk standards. The **Beregi** (Kalmyk dumplings) are excellent.

**What to See:** Not to be missed in Elista are the **Pagoda on Lenin Square**, **Chess City** (Just outside of Elista on the Steppe, a small town devoted entirely to Chess) and the **Burkhan Bakshin Altan Sume**, a gorgeous temple complex about 10 minutes’ walk from the center of the city. Also take a walk along the **Alley of Heroes**, stopping to admire various monuments to Kalmyk history along the way.

**Getting There:** Try **Eltur** for guides (84722) 5-2764. For tickets, try **Interpares** (Moscow, Petrovka 27, (495)234-0334)

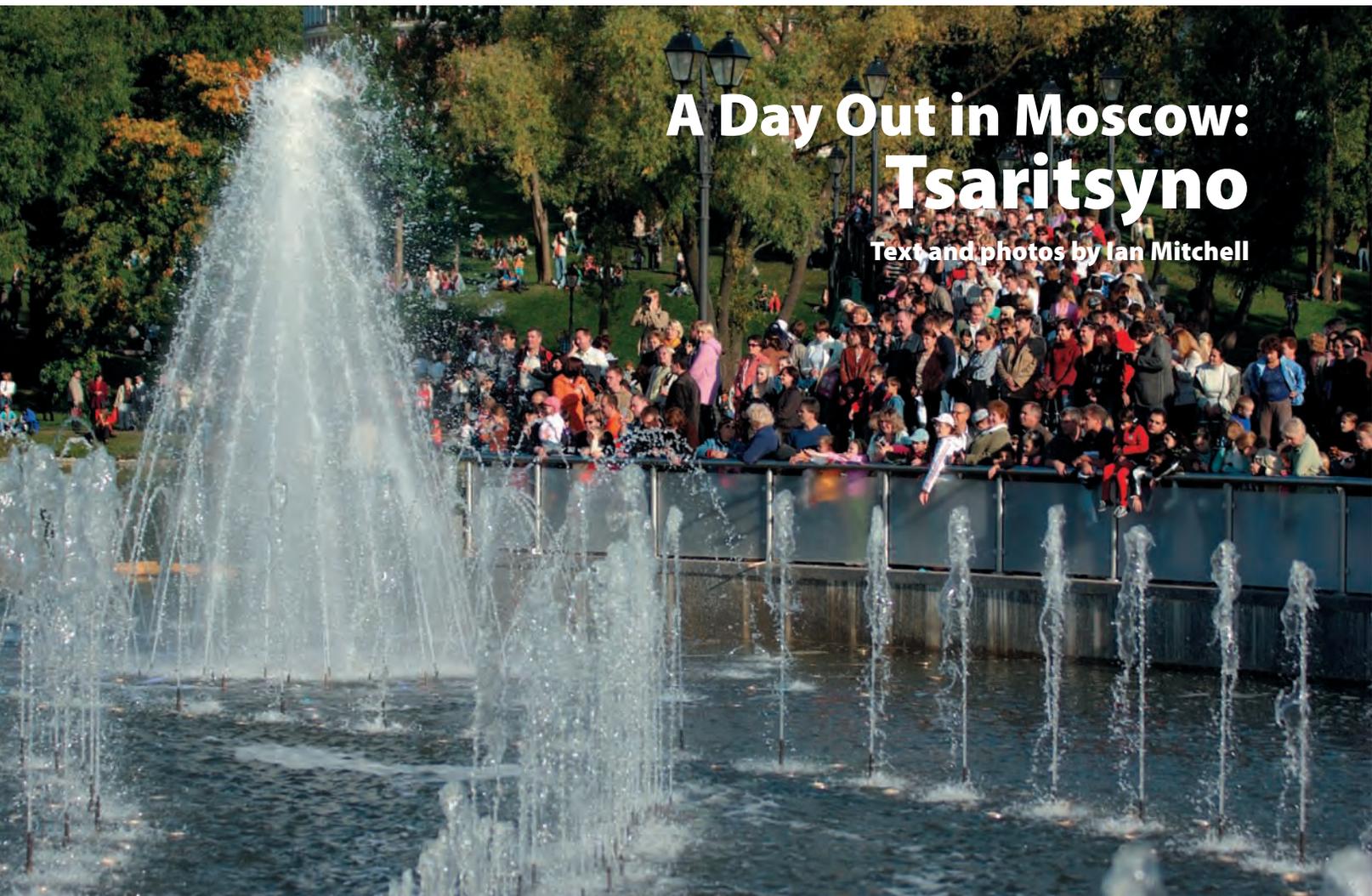
Inside a stupa near the outskirts of Elista, I turn a prayer wheel and listen to a Kalmyk woman’s questions. From the other side of the wheel, she asks me where I am from and what brought me to Kalmykia. What do I know about them? What do I want to know? She tells me about the cultural revival that has happened here, and about the Tibetan monks who live in a monastery on the steppe, and have come to help the Kalmyk people get in touch with their ancient culture; a culture that came so close, so many times, to being destroyed. Like many of the Kalmyks I have met, she is warm and open. But, like many, her own knowledge of the past is shadowy, obscured by a cultural gap that may never be closed.

In 1957, after being “rehabilitated” by Nikita Khrushchev, what remained of the Kalmyk nation was allowed to return home from Siberia. Over one third of them had perished in unheated, freezing cattle cars en route to their exile, and shortly afterwards. Every Kalmyk family lost many of its members, and the damage done to language and culture may be irreparable. However, the impression one gets from modern-day Kalmykia is not one of bitterness, but of remembrance, endurance, and cultural revival.

Later in the day, we sit in a cafeteria downtown eating Beregi (Kalmyk dumplings of pork and mutton) and drinking the traditional salted and buttered Kalmyk tea. I am filled with such a kaleidoscope of impressions. But most of all, I am impressed by the spirit of the people inhabiting this often forgotten corner of Russia. And I find myself eager to return.

# A Day Out in Moscow: Tsaritsyno

Text and photos by Ian Mitchell



Every picture I have seen of the recently reconstructed palace at Tsaritsyno on the southern outskirts of Moscow has shown a massive, pseudo-Gothic building with a few people in the foreground. When I visited the place recently, I found the opposite: a massive crowd with a few pseudo-Gothic towers in the distance. Admittedly it was a Sunday afternoon; admittedly the weather was sunny, warm and pleasantly autumnal, with the feeling that this was probably the last time to get out in shirt-sleeves before the onset of autumn. But really, the crowds! A Russian William Powell Frith could have painted a modern version of "Derby Day" there. So the first point about Tsaritsyno is make sure you visit when it is cold and gloomy, and definitely on a week-day. In fact, that will probably enhance the effect of the extraordinary buildings. Perhaps snowy weather would be the best.

Tsaritsyno has a long and interesting history. It first came to prominence in the seventeenth century when the Streshnev boyar family were recorded as occupying four villages in the area, collectively known as Черная грязь, or Black Dirt/Mud. Later the estate passed into the famous Golitsyn family who built a large manor house there.

But Peter the Great hated and feared the great boyar families, confiscating the lands of this one and passing it on to Prince Dmitri Kantemir, the former ruler of Moldova. The Kantemirs avoided Kremlin intrigue and concentrated instead on beautifying their houses, pavilions, lakes and grounds at Черная грязь to such effect that when Catherine the Great visited

in 1775 she felt she had to own it. Within three weeks of setting eyes on Черная грязь, the estate was hers.

Within three months of acquiring the property, Catherine had commissioned the architect, Vasily Bazhenov, to design and build a completely new ensemble of palaces, pavilions and other buildings, including bridges, gates and stables. She specified the Moorish-Gothic style, which was then in vogue in Western Europe. Bazhenov is known today for having designed the Pashkov House, which became the Old Building of the Lenin Library. It stands, newly restored like Tsaritsyno, on high ground overlooking the Alexandrovsky Gardens and the Kammeny Most.

Catherine renamed her new estate and work started immediately, con-



tinuing until 1786 when Bazhenov was sacked. Some people think that part of the reason was that he was a Freemason. After the Pugachev Revolt in the early 1770s, Catherine had come to regard all secret societies with great mistrust. She had part of Bazhenov's palace demolished and appointed Matvey Kazakov to carry on the work.

Kazakov subsequently became famous as one of the most influential architects of the new Moscow which was built after the great fire of 1812. He designed the old Moscow University building and the Kremlin Senate, as well as the famous Hall of Columns at the bottom of Tverskaya Street. He has been compared to Quarenghi in St Petersburg. But his talent never bore fruit at Tsaritsyno because building stopped again, almost as soon as it had re-started, this time due to lack of money. The lack of money for the project was due to the outbreak of the second Russo-Turkish war in 1787, which followed Catherine's annexation of the Crimea.

At this point, the creative history of Tsaritsyno stopped. The building was never completed, falling slowly into disrepair. Parts of it were used variously as a hospital, rest-home, museum, unofficial nature reserve and home for the drunks of south-west Moscow. Today it is a lavishly appointed pleasure park for Moscow's emerging consumer society. Over \$15 million has been spent on restoration in the last ten years, and it shows.

Even if the crowds are so dense that you cannot get into the palace, it is worth visiting Tsaritsyno simply to see the fountains, which are spectacular. I recommend taking the Metro to Орехово (Orekhovo) on the green line, then walking back through the grounds, past the palace and down to the lakes where the fountains are. It is then a few short steps to Царицино (Tsaritsyno) metro station, on the same line. Apart from the fact that this route is generally downhill, it also means that you will save the fountains for last.

Entry to the park is free, and there is a bar and restaurant in the middle. My next trip will be at night, when I imagine the fountains are illuminated and will probably be even more spectacular than they were on a crowded summer Sunday.



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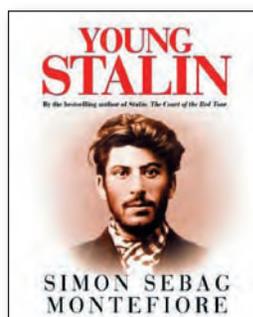


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## Young Stalin

Text by Ian Mitchell

"Young Stalin"  
Simon Sebag Montefiore  
Weidenfeld & Nicolson  
ISBN: 978 0 297 85068 7

Four years ago, Simon Sebag Montefiore published a ground-breaking book, *Stalin: the Court of the Red Tsar*. In it he described Stalin's entourage, his domestic environment and as much of his personality as can be gleaned from looking at the record which still exists. This was very different from the traditional Kremlinological studies which, hitherto, had treated Stalin as a part, if the most important part, of a wider story, namely the attempt to create the world's first socialist state on the ruins of the Russian Empire. Mr. Montefiore's approach was quite different and, frankly, far more illuminating.

Stalin was seen as a person rather than a political phenomenon. Some people think it is wrong to treat murderous individuals as human beings. But to condemn an individual absolutely is to act like Stalin himself. Anti-Stalinism demands that even Stalin be given a fair hearing. This is what Mr. Montefiore did. Each reader must make his or her own assessment of the man and his extraordinary regime. But whatever judgement is arrived at, one overwhelming fact shone through Mr. Montefiore's narrative: the man and the political phenomenon were for all practical purposes the same thing.

By the early 1930's, the Soviet system was a vast extension of the personality of the man at its head. Its methods, its strengths and weaknesses, were Stalin's methods, Stalin's strengths and weaknesses. The longer it endured, the more closely the identification of the USSR with the Red Tsar became.

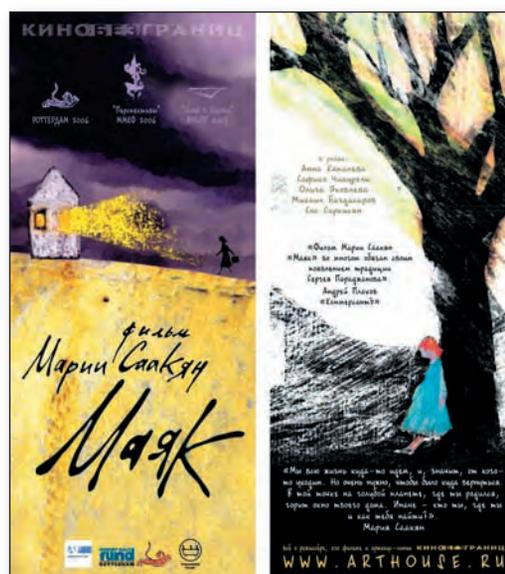
If the story of the USSR was to a large extent the story of Stalin, it is only natural to ask how it was that he came to be as he was. Much of the answer to that question lies in Stalin's childhood and youth. Mr. Montefiore's first book started with the suicide of the Great Leader's beautiful, sensitive and intelligent wife, Nadezhda in 1932, when many people think the iron really entered Stalin's soul. Montefiore then covered Stalin's life up to that point in less than thirty of his seven hundred pages.

With this new book, *Young Stalin*, Mr Montefiore has gone back to Stalin's youth, and has told the story of how the intelligent, poetically-sensitive Georgian boy turned into a fearless thug, and how he worked his way up the revolutionary hierarchy while the Bolsheviks were not only not in power but, as even Lenin conceded as late at 1915, had no hope of ever achieving power in their lifetimes. Stalin was not along for the ride. He really was serious about climbing to the top. *Young Stalin* describes just what it was he meant to achieve and what drove him to do almost anything to achieve it.

Readers who enjoyed Mr Montefiore's earlier should definitely read this one. It is not as good, mainly because the principle virtue of the first, its level of detail, becomes a vice when the events described are so remote and most of the personalities so deservedly forgotten. The other regret is that this book stops with the Revolution in 1917. For myself, therefore, I await a third book, which I hope will complete the series by telling us in as great detail as the first book did, how it was that the idealism which moved so many Russians in 1917 turned to the cynical, mega-political nightmare of the 1930's.

## Mayak (The Lighthouse)

Text by Sophie Larder



Georgian director Maria Saakyan says of her 2006 film *The Lighthouse* "It's a history of the many people of my generation who have been taken from their homes and scattered throughout the world." This art house and beautifully shot film stars a mixture of Georgian, Armenian and Russian actors, some like Sos Sarkisyan instantly recognizable, others relative newcomers. They tell the story, in pictures, expressions and gestures more often than in words, of Lena, a young woman returning to her village from the relative safety of Moscow. Her birthplace is a small, war ravaged Caucasian village evocatively captured by Saakyan's sensitive lens and eye for detail. Pastoral life, centuries old, is portrayed in the headscarved women wringing out washing, cows bellowing in the fields and rustic wooden verandas. The war that has killed Lena's father intrudes in minor details breaking through the ever present atmospheric mist that encircles their village like a boundary. Black helicopters circle menacingly, at nighttime their sleep is disturbed by bombs and machine gun fire, the poignant innocence of children is punctuated by the grim reality of war; dead bodies float down the river. News of war intrudes only in sporadic grainy TV images or through the crackling radio. Only in the scenes of the frantic rushes for the one train that arrives do we catch a glimpse of the true horror of the ordinary person in war. The despair of the refugee, the dreamlike memories of the village and life they've left forever. In this sense Saakyan's film becomes more like a documentary, with grainy images of real people interspersed with the despairing expressions of her actors. The metaphorical and beautifully evocative shots of birds taking flight through the mist contrast with the earth and luggage burdened prosaic despair of the refugee. Saakyan's film is shot in Russian with English subtitles but this should not put you off. Words come second to expressions and images, with the film containing perhaps only half the usual amount of dialogue. The cinematography deservingly fulfills the old adage; 'a picture tells a thousand words' and this is never truer than in Saakyan's film of the truly human costs of war.

## Big Brothers, Big Sisters gains ground in Russia

By Eric Batsie and Ekaterina Dodonova

For over a century, Big Brothers Big Sisters programs have helped children reach their potential through professionally-supported one-on-one mentoring relationships. Established in New York City in 1902, BBBS now operates in every US state and 35 countries.

BBBS matches caring adults with children in need of meaningful mentoring relationships. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Russia (BBBSR) has been successfully serving at-risk youth, mostly from orphanages, for 15 years. The children in the BBBSR program range from 5 to 18 years old and come from a variety of backgrounds. Some are orphans, while others live in single-parent homes and simply need a role model. A Big Brother or Big Sister is someone to talk to, confide in and, above all, a friend and mentor who can help a child find answers to some of the big questions about life.

BBBSR began in 1995 with a regional program in Perm with the local government providing key support for office space and staff positions. Trainers educated local social workers and psychologists regarding the international standards and programs of Big Brothers Big Sisters International. From Perm, the program quickly expanded into the regions of Tyumen, Yoshkar-Ola, Ryazan, Yaroslavl, Kirov and Tambov. BBBSR has matched hundreds of disadvantaged youth with Big Brothers and Big Sisters and has created opportunities for friendships that provide hope, support and care for children who might otherwise have none. In 2006, BBBSR began its Moscow Flagship program.

BBBSR's long-standing mentoring program has shown that by spending a few hours a month with a child in need, an adult can make a world of difference to the child's future. Children in BBBS programs perform better academically, exhibit improvements in self-esteem and confidence and become more involved in sports and other hobbies. They also are less likely to



drink alcohol, smoke, do drugs or become involved in fighting or other unhealthy activities.

Katya, a Big Sister in Yaroslavl, shares the following about her relationship with her Little Sister...

"My Katya plays the Fox... and it has been 365 days now. Things were starting off exactly as in the book, *The Little Prince*. I came in and sat on the edge of her orphanage bed, and Katya was looking at me out of the corner of her eye. We didn't know how to start but have become closer since that time. I came to visit her every Monday, at 4 p.m., sometimes I was late, sometimes ahead of time. Yet it was always Monday. . Who made the first step toward friendship? Who was the first to believe in it and trust the other, the Fox or the Little Prince? And which of us is which? I don't know. But I do know myself, and by now, hopefully, I know Katya, too... She dreams to become a dress designer, and I'm studying to be a journalist. At the same time we both are actresses at an amateur theater. We even share the same name – Katya, Katenka, Katyuna, Katyusha, Katyushka or Kat'ka or Ekaterina. All this is just a small fraction of our simple discoveries about each other. We extended our contract for 365 more days, to become even closer. Remember how *The Little Prince* said that tears follow taming, tears for parting with Fox. Katya and I will rewrite the end of the story and will remain friends. Because Katya and I come from one planet, which means between us there is not such an obstacle between us similar to the one between Fox and Little Prince from the asteroid B-612.



*"You must be very patient," replied the fox. 'First you will sit down at a little distance from me-- like that-- in the grass. I shall look at you out of the corner of my eye, and you will say nothing. Words are the source of misunderstandings. But you will sit a little closer to me, every day...'*

*The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint Exupéry*



# Maturing Russia

## Rule of Law; Transforming Russia Into a More Predictable Place

by James Logan and John Bonar

This is the first of three articles about “Maturing Russia”.

It is well understood that a country without a rule of law is a country that is not investor friendly. In the 90’s there was hardly a rule of law in Russia, but all that is slowly changing. More and more foreign companies are coming into Russia to invest in all aspects of the economy with more predictable results. At the start of Russia’s capitalism, companies were generally nervous to invest and often brought their products in only through agents and distributors; as if hesitant to get any closer than from a safe distance. With more predictable laws and less boardroom violence, the name of the game today is to build local production to sell to Russians and often to export into Europe or other markets, which can be profitable due to relatively cheap labor, as compared to Western Europe. Western investment companies feel more confident that they can purchase

It has been a significant time since the changeover from Communism to Russia’s own interpretation of Capitalism and if one could sum up the changes they clearly have been quite dramatic as they have touched almost every aspect of life, from the Rule of Law to consumerism. For those of us who have lived here for many years the evolution of life in Russia, day by day, has been taken in stride. It sometimes needs someone who was last here five or even ten years ago to wake us up by saying, “Hey, this place is unrecognizable.”

This first article describes some of the positive changes with respect to the Rule of Law, with a special focus on taxation and the working world.

property, develop production facilities and rely on the rule of law to protect their investments and agreements in Russia.

Paul Melling, founding partner of the Moscow and Almaty offices of the leading international law firm Baker & Mackenzie says that the progress in the civil judicial system is marked. “If you were to compare Russian Courts to the High Court in London’s Strand, then Russia would still fall short,” he cautioned. “But the legal system here is speedier, cheaper and becoming more reliable,” he told Passport. Most disputes, according to Melling, who has practiced law here for 20 years, are resolved in 30 days. “Even the most drawn out commercial litigations are finished within 18 months to two years,” he asserts.

“Even five years ago only the incredibly stupid or brave would litigate here. Now commercial courts here are the favored place for dispute resolution.”

In conjunction with various Western experts and the likes of the World Bank, Russia embarked upon a multi-faceted effort to become more independent and less reliant on Western funding from sources like the IMF. According to the mid-90’s strategy, if the government could increase tax revenues and reduce governmental corruption, Russia could change from a dependent (on Western IMF money) country to an independent self-sustaining economy. The first prong of this approach was to provide a user friendly tax



system with low taxes and easy or no-filing requirement (which applies to most taxpayers). In conjunction, by increasing the number of “white” employees, and requiring all employees to acquire bank accounts and have their salaries only paid through these accounts, it decreases the reliance on cash. It was only in President Putin’s first term of 2000-2004 that income and corporation tax were slashed to their present business-friendly levels.

In parallel with these efforts the World Bank and EBRD have been investing in consumer finance companies, credit card companies, transaction technology companies, and retailers and shopping centers to move consumerism from the often gray economy of open-air markets to malls. The cash that was once used by consumers in the markets to feed a completely black, underground and illegal (money laundering) economy is being replaced by recordable and auditable cash transactions and sometimes plastic card transactions. As traceability increases, shop employees and all other staff in the retail system are being paid legally, and the products are being purchased with recorded invoices instead of with cash. This has resulted in an increase in all categories of taxes, from VAT, to Employer and Employee taxes, to corporate and other taxes. Employees who once preferred being paid ‘under the table’ now often prefer their bosses to pay all the necessary taxes so that they can show their ‘white salary’ when applying for consumer credit. According to Luc Jones at Antal Recruitment Company, “we have witnessed a strong tendency towards companies paying salaries in accordance with Russian labor law over the past several years.” Jones has also confirmed the candidate-led trend to insist on white salaries for purposes of applying for consumer credit; i.e. consumers refusing jobs



where payments are not made in accordance with the law. This has been confirmed by Avenir Recruitment President Maxim Stepanov who added that: “Candidates today, now frankly refuse to work for companies that use non-transparent salary schemes, pay salaries late or refuse to pay into state Pension or Social Security Systems.” In the recent past companies would declare only a small percent of real wages as official salary, in order to reduce taxes. Now the trend (even with the most egregious violators) is to declare a higher and higher percent as official salary.

At the heart of the reforms lies the classic liberal tax theory according to which lower taxes translates into increased tax revenues. The best known theorist behind this idea was the late Arthur Laffer, but the person whose name it is most associated with is U.S. President Ronald Reagan. Therefore, it is an interesting historic irony that Russia, a country where the socialist creed reigned strong until very recently, has now been converted into an international showcase of economic liberalism. In America, President Reagan and his sup-

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porters were known for campaigning for such tax policies, but it is Putin's Russia that has actually implemented them. Reagan could never have dreamed of pushing such measures as Putin's 13% flat income tax rate through Congress. It would be fair to say that never before has there been such a dramatic and speedy shift from socialist tax policies to classical liberalism, and the results could hardly have been more impressive.

According to Jon Hellevig, a tax book author and partner at the law firm Hellevig, Klein & Usov: "The tax reform as a model for far-sighted and well-thought out legislation also had the side-effect of helping to improve the overall lawmaking process and stabilizing the task of state administration. It has also improved the judiciary, which is showing encouraging signs of moving towards a system where court precedents are awarded a significant role that would more closely resemble the Anglo-American system than the more rigid Continental European practices. One way to reduce judiciary and other public service corruption is to raise salaries and on that note, the salaries of judges alone have gone from a few hundred dollars a month to over \$4,000."

Hellevig further noted that: "Having consolidated these achievements in tax administration and the judiciary, the government has concentrated its recent efforts on reigning in notorious abuses in

ally, for the year 2006 it was \$6,879 and by the end of 2007 it is expected to reach \$8,350. This is more than 600% growth in 7 years.

The currency and gold reserves of the Russian Central Bank were a mere \$36,6 billion in 2001, but today they have ballooned to a staggering \$315 billion (Source: www.minfin.ru). Russia's cash reserves today are the third largest in the world, trailing only China and Japan. So Russia has transformed itself

from an economically dependent country to an independent one. It cannot be denied that a lot of these reserves are a dividend from high oil prices, but perhaps a lot of these funds under less transparent circumstances would have fallen into private hands instead of into government coffers.

In 2001 the World Bank estimated that 27.3% of Russians or 40 million people lived below the poverty line. By the end of 2005 the number of people living in such dire poverty had been halved down to 15.8% of the population or 22.6 million. According to recent EU statistics this figure corresponds with the EU average which is the same unfortunate 16% (*Business Week*, February 2007).

So by *Passport Magazine* accounts, it looks as if Russia is becoming more and more mature in many respects and looks to continue in that direction.

**Next month:** Infrastructure: Transforming



According to Dr. Frank Schauff, Chief Executive Officer, Association of European Businesses in the Russian Federation: "Over the past eight years or so, we have seen the Russian economy, and indeed Russian society as whole, become more transparent and subject to the Rule of Law. Recent surveys among AEB members have revealed that they consistently judge Russia's economic and political situation to be stable. Bureaucracy and corruption are still quoted as the main barriers to business in Russia, but clear progress on this issue is evident – in the very active customs reforms currently underway and the tightening of the legislative framework.

Certainly on the economic front, there is no shortage of evidence that Russia is here to stay. With WTO membership **now being a realistic possibility firmly on the agenda**, the hosting of the Winter Olympics in 2014, and swelling foreign direct investment, Western companies and investors are lining up to benefit and take part in Russia's seemingly unstoppable growth.

the field of customs as well. The effects of this crack down on customs corruption and gray import schemes began to be felt last year among the foreign suppliers that have relied on such thievery for their profits. Currently many importers are panicking to change their business model to reflect the new realities of importing in a legal and transparent manner."

**The Russian Economic Miracle**

According to statistics provided by the Avenir Group; in dollar terms, Russian GDP has increased fivefold from 2000 to 2006. According to our source, Deutsche Bank, the total growth will be six fold by the end of 2007. At end of 1999, per capita Russian GDP was just \$1,334 (the dollar to ruble exchange rate being 27.0). By the end of 2005 per capita GDP had risen to \$5,346 annu-





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## Celebrating 10 Years of Growth



*Mike Wheller is the founder, principal shareholder and CEO of Officescape which celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Russia this year. He lives in Moscow where he is on the golf committee of the Moscow Country Club. He has two grown daughters in the UK and the eldest, Rebekah, married Aldershot football team goalkeeper Nikki Bull in June. Through the British Business Club, Officescape and Mr Wheller support a number of charities. He answered questions from **James Blake**.*

### **Why you have chosen to open a business in Russia in the first place and how easy or difficult has it been?**

Officescape Projects Limited originally came to Moscow because we were asked by a major office furniture manufacturer that we were dealing with in the UK to help them with one of their clients coming to Russia.

### **What have been the landmark projects/achievements of the past ten years?**

Surviving the '98 crash in Russia was a major achievement and from that year when we carried out the project for KPMG's new offices, we have had a landmark project most years including Deloitte, Shell, TNK-BP and numerous others. Securing a long term client like Mercury (Tsum, Barvikha Shops and restaurants, Polo Ralph Lauren) has been a huge part of our business.

### **What have been the most interesting observations you have made about doing business in Russia in the past ten years?**

That most Western preconceptions about Russia and the Russian people are wrong and that you cannot just arrive from Europe and start doing business as if you are in Paris or Berlin. You have to remember that you are a guest in Russia and that you have to carry out your business within the structure that exists, no matter how frustrating and slow that may be from time to time.

### **What do you think about Russian architecture and office decors?**

As far as I know the best Russian architects are just successful copiers of Western architecture. When it comes to interiors there have been some interesting works from both Western and Russian architects and designers. Western architects tend to introduce a classical approach and state-of-the-art examples; Russian architects introduce super luxury designs for customers without necessarily appreciating the budgets and design principles which achieve the best use of space for the functions and purpose that the client really requires.

Western architects when working with offices even in the most creative way put function first, where Russian architects tend to put form first, sometimes forsaking function entirely.

### **As a design firm, how do you see client demand for top quality design and fit out changing in Russia?**

First of all it must be said that our clients in the main are not looking for top of the range design. The majority of our clients are those who need fast-track installation design and building program that is within their budgets, with just a small amount of design in certain featured areas and this situation hasn't really changed a lot in recent times. Certainly some Russian companies have become much richer over the past five to eight years and want to change their architectural image to meet their new financial strength. Some of them order a very modern western-looking office from either a Western or Russian architectural company; others remain very patriotic and order neo-soviet interiors from an old-fashioned design bureau, looking back to styles reminiscent of the old days. Companies which demand high-quality interior design were always in the market and I don't think anything has changed in their approach, but they were and are ordering design from leading architectural companies. What we're best at is providing turn key services for those companies with no fixed requirements, wanting to move in quickly, minimizing risks to themselves and over the years we get more and more inquires both from returning clients and many new clients who have emerged due to market growth.

### **How do you see this industry developing and what do you think the major changes will be?**

The industry needs to develop more on the supply side - Western manufacturers need to open Russian based operations and Russian manufacturers need to match delivery times and quality with their Western counterparts.

A more major construction companies will develop specialist office fit out divisions as they see that a higher skill level is needed to produce the finish that clients are looking for.

### **What are your aims for the next ten years for Officescape?**

As long as we remain pre-eminent in our field then I think we will continue to do well. We will always be looking to improve our service and delivery for our clients but I don't think we will chase projects just to increase turnover, but provide services and complete projects on time and in budget.

### **Can you give us an estimate of your company turnover and how many employees you have?**

In 2007 we should exceed 625 million roubles and we currently have over five hundred employees, the majority of whom are Russian.

# Expats – preparing for your next job move

By Luc Jones

*Luc Jones is a partner with Antal International - a British executive recruitment company present in Russia since 1993, and employing over 100 staff in throughout the Russian Federation, with offices in Moscow, Ekaterinburg & St Petersburg.*

You've all had the feeling recently, seeing a friend, ex-colleague or perhaps even a rival land a top job with a great company; and despite it being so un-British to discuss how much you earn, making it clear that he's moving to a top-end salary. And to make it worse you don't even rate the guy as good: you're better than him, you could do the job easily; probably better than he so why are you still where you are at the moment when people are moving for piles more cash!? More importantly, given the current economic boom, what are your chances of finding a better job as an expat in Russia?

Expats can be defined broadly into two categories which recruiters term Corp-pats and Russ-pats.

Corp-pats often have little or no previous experience of working in this part of the world and are unlikely to speak much Russian, if any. They have been posted to Moscow with their blue-chip company from either their home country or possibly another location and are valuable to their organization due to their internal knowledge of the firm. Perhaps they possess valuable experience in a particular area where there is a skills shortage in the Moscow office and a local Russian can't be found, or maybe a new line of business is being established and an experienced person with that particular product knowledge is required to drive the business forward. And after three years their contract is up and they are either sent on to a new destination, or back home regardless of how well (or badly) they have settled in here.

Russ-pats most likely studied Russian language and quite possibly Russian literature/culture/history/politics while at University. Or perhaps turned up in the early days and haven't looked back since; they enjoy living in Russia! They are unlikely to move onwards or back home for the foreseeable future unless the economy nose-dives (i.e. as back in the summer of '98), are more often than not settled with a Russian partner and some have even bought an apartment in Moscow. Standards of Russian language vary wildly from survival to fluent as do occupations, although most readily admit that they make more here than they would back home, and are definitely having a lot more fun! A few Russ-pats are in fact Corp-pats who somehow managed to stay on here, sometimes even by default.

Traditionally, an expat trying to join a multinational organization as a local hire has always been very difficult as you are attempting to break into a sector where the local nationals are hired for their local knowledge and the expatriates from abroad bring the know how of the inner-workings of the company following decades with the firm from across the globe. The rule of thumb has generally been that if a large corporation needs a foreigner, they will bring one in from abroad, regardless of whether the new arrival has any clue as to what they can expect once they arrive in Russia. Regardless of whether or not they could find an expat locally who has language skills and cultural experience to do a better job,

blue-chips have traditionally never gone down this path, with very few exceptions, despite the fact that many new-to-town expatriates fail to adapt and consequently, well... fail.

Nevertheless we are finally beginning to see a sign of change due to the chronic skills shortage as the economy expands more quickly than Russian employees themselves are developing.

If you are an expatriate working in Moscow reading this and thinking about a possible move, there are several factors to consider, the main one being "what can I do that a qualified Russian can't," and I hate to say it but in many cases the answer is "not much." Corp-pats are rarely of interest to other companies as their skill sets are often restricted to a specific area, usually relevant to their particular organization. The standard story is that a single guy arrives in Moscow from abroad, and by the time his stint is up, he's met a local girl and wants to stay on in Moscow. He mistakenly believes that his corporate background will mean that he is in strong demand from both international and Russian firms, despite limited local knowledge & experience, and spoken Russian verging on the non-existent. The reality is quite the opposite in many cases; although with the recent growth in the economy we are seeing exceptions. When a senior expat joins a large Russian entity, the reality is often that he has been hired for window dressing purposes and leaves frustrated at having achieved little.

The chance that a recruitment agency can help you to find a job is not high, even during a candidate-led market. Search firms work strictly to client mandates and this is almost always to find the "best fit" Russian national for the job. One popular misconception is that agencies exist in order to find you a better job and that if we don't (and invariably we can't), we are branded as useless. In Antal International, non-Russian or CIS citizens represent around 2% of the placements we make, and these are in very niche areas, such as retail banking, legal, audit and financial services.

What should you do to improve your chances of finding a dream position? Being able to converse fluently in Russian is certainly a good start and will put you above the competition but given that less than 1% of expats can conduct full business negotiations in Russian it's unlikely that you'll be chosen even with your fluent social Russian. Take a look at what you have achieved in your career and be focused not only about what you would like to do, but more importantly where you could be of benefit to a new employer. While the number of expats in Moscow is growing, this is largely due to the growth of the economy as a whole rather than as a trend of companies preferring to employ foreigners over locals (which is certainly not the case). The overwhelming majority of expats find new jobs through personal connections rather than via an employment agency. So get yourself down to the bar, start networking and hand out your business cards like confetti - you never know who might call you and invite you in for an interview!



## Russian Real Estate Market Weathers the Financial Storm

by Sonya Rinkus

*"The crisis won't affect the developers already known in the market, and it will be much easier for them to obtain borrowed funds, than for semi-professional stock market players."*

*Evgeny Semenov, Director of Capital Markets and Investments department of Knight Frank*

In the financial world, no country is an island. A U.S. sub-prime mortgage meltdown, which began at the start of the year, had by summer turned into a global financial crisis. Europe proved itself not to be immune: two German banks and Britain's Barclays required emergency resuscitation in the same fateful week in August. To control a liquidity crunch, central banks have injected hundreds of billions of dollars into banking systems across the world. As the effects of the crisis continue to reverberate throughout financially interdependent countries, the question everyone's asking is "How will it affect us?" At a roundtable hosted by real estate consultancy Knight Frank on September 19 at the Ritz-Charlton Hotel in Moscow, industry specialists discussed the consequences of the US financial crisis for the Russian real estate market. They agreed that so far, the answer to the looming question seems to be "Not much."

The biggest problem for Russia in the wake of the crises is a shortage of free cash assets. Borrowed money is becoming more expensive, leading fewer people to invest in real estate projects, at least in the short-term. "If we consider the worst-case scenario, the possible consequence will be a power supply price fall on the world markets, and as a consequence — growth deceleration in Russia," says Maxim Sterlyagov, Associate Director in the department of Real Estate Investment Management at Morgan Stanley.

In Russia, people are rushing to buy residential real estate, especially high-end residential real estate. And it is precisely because of Russia's supply shortage of this that its market will remain stable. "With relatively stable demand for premium real estate units, there is a shortage of high-quality supply on the market. No significant increase in supply is expected within the next few years," said Ekaterina Tain, Partner and Director of the Residential Real Estate department of Knight Frank. Residential real estate prices peaked in February of 2007, and have started to decline — slowly. Furthermore, according to Tain, Russia will not see the same steep drop in housing prices as the American market following the increase of mortgage crediting rates, simply because the majority of houses here (95%) are not bought on credit.

Decreased investments are slightly worse news for the commercial real estate sector. Ivan Sitnikov, General Director of RosEuro-

Development, commented, "With the increase in the cost of borrowed funds, the developers' margin will shrink, and the market consumption power will lower." As investors pull out of projects, Mr. Sterlyagov admits, "It is possible, that in the short-run there will be less purchase and sale transactions with completed real estate units. A capitalization rates increase is also anticipated." However, he remains confident that Russia's real estate market will sort itself out: "Developers will solve the problem of financing by means of bringing in strategic investors."

Evgeny Semenov, Director of Capital Markets and Investments department of Knight Frank, predicts, "The crisis won't affect the developers already known in the market, and it will be much easier for them to obtain borrowed funds, than for semi-professional stock market players." In the best-case scenario, the crisis cleanses the Russian financial market of its weakest players. Mr. Sitnikov identified "small semi-professional developer's companies" as among the country's most flagrant insolvent borrowers, putting the entire banking sector at risk. "If a small bank has a big number of such clients, it will hardly make it through the coming market crisis," he says. On the real estate market, Alexander Olhovskiy, Vice President of the corporate department of Vneshtorgbank, foresees "further market consolidation through the takeover of marginal players." Real estate projects will be taken over by more able-bodied developers which have survived a Darwinian process of natural selection.

As global turmoil continues and the longest-lasting effects of the crisis are not yet evident, it can be said that the Russian real estate market isn't in the clear — yet. But industry specialists agree that it is probably robust enough to weather the storm with minimal corrections. "Due to its growing potential and high profitability rates, the interest of the Western investors towards this sector will only grow stronger. We are expecting a certain correction of the Russian market, due to temporary instability at the European and American financial markets, but there won't be serious changes in the proportion between demand and supply cost," concludes Jeremy Oates, Managing Director of Knight Frank Russia and the CIS. Riding a wave of positive dynamics over the past few years, the strong Russian real estate market seems poised to prevail.

## David Whitehouse,

Director of Savant, talked to Passport about his real estate company's list of ongoing projects for fall. "We are delighted to have won the tender for the new Volvo truck factory in Kaluga which solidifies our position in the region," he said. Savant's biggest project in the works is the opening of a hotel in Lotte Plaza, a new luxury goods department store in the center of Moscow. Another recent achievement is the beginning of site works in Tula on a papermill factory for SCA. Like the Kaluga factory, the Tula mill is further evidence that "longer term investors see the benefits of switching from distribution to in-country manufacturing," commented Whitehouse.

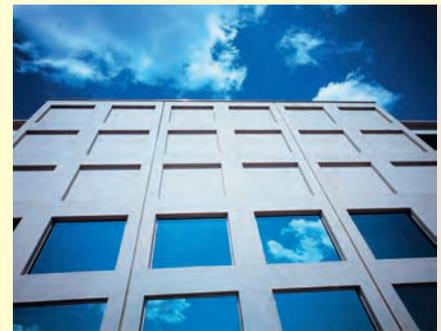


## Island of Russia

At September's International Investment Forum 2007, developer M-Industria unveiled ambitious plans for Federation Island, a 250-hectare artificial island in the shape of Russia. "A consortium of Russian and foreign companies – with a number of years of successfully creating complexes on drained territory in Russia, UAE, Holland, Singapore and other countries – has been set up to complete the project," says M-Industry deputy general director Alexei Topolnitsky. The cost of the project is estimated at 155 billion rubles, part of which will be supplied by foreign investors. Construction of the island, which will be located off the coast of Sochi in the Black Sea, will take place from 2008-2013. Chief architect Erick van Egeraat assured President Putin that the project would be completed according to schedule.

## \$2 Billion Across Russia

Belgravia CEO Duncan Hickman announced his investment group's \$2 billion joint venture to develop business parks across Russia with Belgium's Immo Industry Group and Moscow's Rostik Group. Financial Times cites Hickman as saying that the venture is a response to "increasing demand for industrial space in Russia given the growth of the economy and the arrival of many multinationals." Oleg Barkov, general director of Knight Frank St. Petersburg, commented that the joint venture has a high chance of success, because it circumvents local partners in developing its own projects. The group will invest in over two million sqm of building on 15 sites, which will ultimately house, among things, fast food chains owned by Rostik.



## Russians go to London

Russian private property groups with assets totaling \$50 billion will go to IPO next year, reported Financial Times. Real estate advisors Jones Lang LaSalle JLL and Cushman & Wakefield are currently conducting pre-IPO evaluations of at least eight companies, including Don-Stroi, Stroyinkom-K, ST Group Region, DVI Group, LenSpetsSmu Holding and RosEvroDevelopment, who will list in both Moscow and London. According to Felix Evtushenkov, president of Sistema Hals, which attracted \$432 million on the London Stock Exchange in 2006, some of the IPOs will fail: "These companies are not ready for open book-keeping, the rules and regulations. And conditions have become harder in terms of leverage." However, others believe that emerging markets are attractive to foreign investors, as they have little debt.

## Casinos Moving Out

By law, gambling barons have until 2009 to relocate casinos outside of the city, but few will wait that long. Vedomosti reported that in late August, Asia, one of Moscow's biggest and most posh casinos, located on Olympiisky Prospekt, quietly shut its doors. Real estate analysts estimate that large casinos within the Third Ring occupy 10-20 hectares of prime real estate will soon go up for sale. "Around 20% of the casinos can be converted to commercial area and 30% into cultural and entertainment sites," says analyst Ilya Shershnev. "The fate of the rest is still unclear." Many casinos can be redeveloped as hotels; however, one challenge is that most casinos have dark interiors, which are not easily convertible.



# Have you been in Santa Fe lately?



*The Dream Team*

Yes! A Rosinter Restaurant location with over 14 years in the market located at Mantulinskaya Street, between the World Trade Centre and Moscow's Expo-Centre. One of the legendary places well known by expatriates of the first round of ventures in Moscow business where they used to net-work and relax by the extended bar and a memory for others when remembering their corporate parties, wedding or the famous holidays from Ladies Day, Valentine's Day, Halloween or New Year's Eve.

## What is new?

Everything, the management, the chef, the service, the atmosphere, the menu and "The Experience"

The Russia and CIS Leader in hospitality service Rosinter Restaurant had welcome ones more the specialist in Restaurant, Banquets and Catering service Alexis Kobernik Beresovsky. As Alex says, introducing his names, Kobernik Beresovsky from VENEZUELA!

Alex a well oriented client specialist and manager, a polyglot with more that 10 years experience in the industry in different countries including his native land Venezuela, is bringing to Santa Fe his philosophy of the Dinning experience "Make your Dreams come true"

Certainly Alex describes the plan implemented

in the Santa Fe restaurant as a joy to an artist where his team and he can please the "Dream of his client" by producing the Banquets atmosphere, food and decor that will leave a lasting memory for the host and his guests.

To offer his philosophy to the demanding clientele of Moscow Alex has incorporated a professional team in the different areas needed including, in Sales & Customer Service, Alla Zhulidova, Karina Borovioba and Anastasia Ismialova; a French chef Olivier Zeroual supported by four sub-chefs Kostia, Dima, Evgenii and Hugo, a Bolivian, to keep the Latin flavor when demanded; all of these improvements are supported by his Restaurant Director Tatiana Timakova a legendary employee of Rosinter Restaurant since the time of the El Rincon Espanol,

the Spanish bar on Red Square in 1991/1992. Alex says that there Santa Fe has so much potential in location, space, and range of experiences that the new team are already receiving bookings from clients. Recently they have been the venue for the launch of his latest book by national political figure; receptions by ambassadors promoting their country, culture and products; an artist celebrating his birthday and a joyous wedding celebration.

Alex feels so comfortable and secure because the structure of the business allows him to offer his guest the opportunity to relax and enjoy their "DREAMS" coming true in a secure atmosphere, where the banquet managers and service staff provide quality service with genuine pleasure.

# Banqueting Catering Events

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**5/1, bldg. 6, Mantulinskaya Str.**

## Revised Wine List emphasizes New World wines

The new Santa Fe wine list has dramatic improvement in assortment and quality, thanks to the experience of Alex in the international market, harnessing his wine knowledge first gathered as the Margarita Hilton's Sommelier and Bar Specialist and the cooperation of Russia's major wine importers. The new wine list includes a wider and better selected assortment from the regions of Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Spain, France, Italy, Australia and California. Among them you will be able to satisfy any taste and match all your meals from the Business Lunch to a



Gala Banquet. The Santa Fe managers and sommelier will be delighted to offer their professional advice.

You will find old and new wines on the wine menu including: from Italy, Bardolino, Valpolicella, Chianti, Dolcetto D'Alba, Lacrima Cristi and Pinot Grigio; from France, Medoc, Gevrey Chambertin, a New selection of Beaujolais and Bordeaux and Rose D'Anjou; from Portugal Porto; from Chile, Undurraga and Torres (both new additions) while the Casillero del Diablo is a better selection; from



Alexis with his family

California the restaurant has chosen Zinfandel of Igor Larionov's Sonoma production; from Argentina an Altavista is offered while Spanish favourites Rioja and Penedes are a must, Vega Sicilia is a new inclusion and also a nice Jerez promises to excite your tongue with flavor, aroma and strength.

Not forgetting that for December celebrations, Champagnes and sparkling wines from the best producers will be available, or on request to the Dream Team for any other event.

When asking Alexis if the location will be full dedicated to catering and banquettes and what then is the future of the Restaurant, he answers with good news! "Not only I am



demanding from my team a quality service but we have worked the creativity of a "Awesome" menu and very particular and unique hospitality service as Chef Table for the clients who want exclusivity; different "Cuisine Theme" at the brunch on Saturdays and Sundays from Asia, Latin, American, European and of course Russian or CIS for the clients that like to try the richness of the culinary world and childrens entertainment."

Alex admitted that he can not get away from the trendy market driven by meat lovers and so for them . . .

### Meet glorious meat

While Santa Fe includes New Zealand lamb and Argentinean beef on its menu the restaurant makes a big feature of Uruguayan meat. Uruguay is a small country of three million people, south of the equator in the South American Pampas. The population is almost all of European descent and is vastly outnumbered by the cattle and sheep that roam its fertile lands. Uruguayan meat is universally acknowledged to be safe, healthy and delicious. Naturally lean, high in 'good' (cholesterol reducing) fats and anti-oxidants; grass-fed on the open range and free from growth hormones which are banned by law, the flavor of Uruguayan meat puts it in such demand that it commands a premium on world markets.

Santa Fe's barbecue chefs are experts at handling the cuts of tender meat so that they are cooked to a diner's specifications for rare, medium or well grilled but retaining all the juicy succulence of the natural meat. The restaurant is introducing a new, improved meat menu with a Cut of the Day.

There is always a grill operating to prepare you the best meats from around the world with different marinades, awesome sauces and superb garnishes. Alex recommended you to try "Tenderloin Paillard" with Dauphinoise potatoes and your preferred sauce.

Also Alex remarks that. "Even if clients are not celebrating a special day; Santa Fe Fridays and Saturday can be their special

place with life music, DJ or a show and dancing. A call or review of our web is all you need to know what is on! And make your reservation!"

Looks like Alex has not forgotten a single detail to please his public and says that for the busy working days when lunching comes to be challenge of time and traffic the Chef offers a "HOME TASTE" at reasonable prices "Lunch Menu"

To know more about our talented Restaurateur we ask what he does when not sharing with his clients and suppliers at Santa Fe. Alex manage to have the time for Jazz Concerts, Tea ceremonies and Church Services when planning to visit his family - wife and children - in Belarussia.

Showing his courtesy Alex closes our visit by extending an invitation to old and new clients to live the new experience under his management at Santa Fe and reminding not to leave to the last minute the planning of your corporate New year Party or family gathering.

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**Savant**

# 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Postal Stamp in Russia Celebrated in December

by Linda Lippner



ГОГЕНКРЕЙЦЪ

ИЗЪ ШУМОВКИ МОГИ  
ГУБ. АПРЕЛЬ 1858



"residents to have the opportunity to send letters through the City Post without paying for them in cash upon presentation. No other payment was necessary," announced the Russian Postal Service in 1845. This convenience to the population must have seemed miraculous! Soon, letter collection boxes were installed in other cities and towns throughout Russia, and in rail stations, too. Postal service outside of big cities went from summer-only collection to year-round, and the State All Russian Post was on its way to what it is today.

There was news in October that CEO of Sberbank, Andrei Kazmin is going to work his financial wizardry on the Russian postal service. Kazmin has a challenge ahead of him to reverse the Russian Post deficit of \$112 million last year. The system is huge, serving the largest geographical nation on the planet, with 40,000 offices and tens of thousands of employees, all of whom are sorting and delivering mail without the benefit of computerized sorting equipment or a reliable surface transportation fleet. The Russian Government recently approved a \$2 billion program to revamp the Russian postal service, but no details of the plan have been released. The appointment of the super-successful Kazmin is promising for a system that needs to modernize in order to compete.

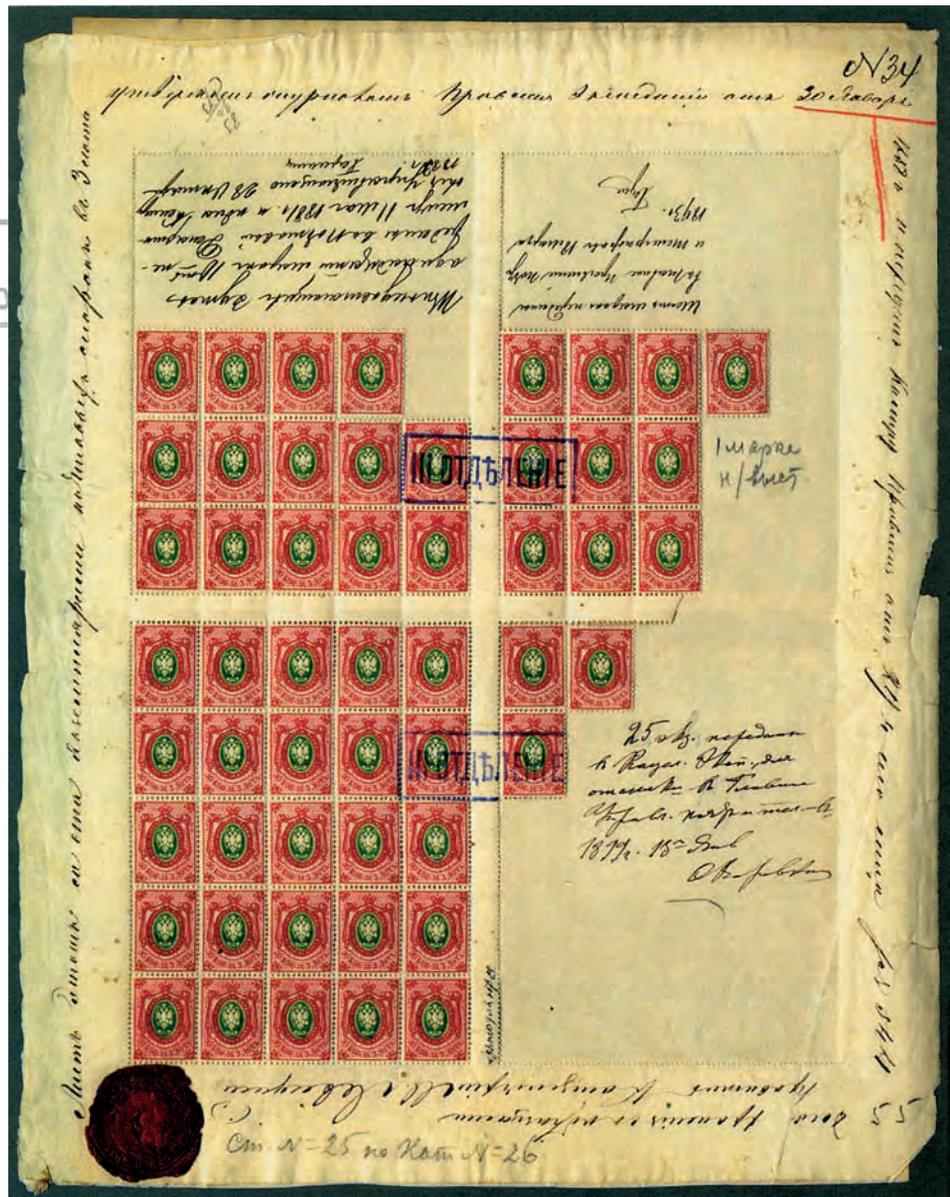
Ironically, all of this change is taking place as the first postal stamps in Russia celebrate their 150th anniversary. In the 1850's the postal system in the Russian empire was very inefficient due to old fashioned methods of sending a letter with cash paid at the time of delivery at the postal office. No mailboxes or stamps existed, and no extended network of collection and delivery points had been established. In Europe, the forerunner of the modern postal system was taken hold in May of 1840 in England, established by Royal Postmaster Roland Hill. Citizens could buy postage stamps and "pre-post" envelopes at a certain set tariff. Russia experimented with this method as well, and set a price of 10 kopeks for a letter of average weight sent anywhere within Russia. Stationery envelopes bearing a stamp of the "Great Kingdom of Finland" soon followed in January of 1845, and St. Petersburg was issuing pre-paid postal envelopes by December of 1845. Special letter boxes were positioned around the city for the collection of these pre-paid envelopes, and large and small stores also installed collection boxes in order for

The anniversary we are celebrating in Russia at the end of 2007, however, has to do with the first Russian postage stamp. By the 1840's stamp collecting had become a profitable and fashionable hobby in Europe. There was much pressure to develop a system of Russian postal stamps, based on different weights of a letter with different charges for those weights. As bureaucracies are timeless and eternal, it became an exercise in meticulous research, bureaucratic deliberation and no full steam ahead to develop the first Russian postage stamp. And it was left up to Czar Alexander II to make the important decision to call them postage stamps rather than the suggested "postmarked stamps."





ШУМОВКИ МОГИ  
АПРЕЛЬ 1858



But let us back up a few years. In 1851 after a proposal by the manager of the Postal Department and Postal Delivery by Railway, Aleksey P. Charukovsky, this enterprising bureaucrat was sent abroad to study the postal delivery systems in Europe. Charukovsky returned to Russia confidently suggesting that issuing Russian postal stamps for the convenience of the population and the ultimate profit of the government was the way to proceed. Charukovsky went on to suggest several designs for the postal stamps which included round and rectangular shapes, using the State Coat of Arms and printed in various colors on water-marked silk threaded paper. Another design included the head of Mercury symbolizing swift-footed delivery. Other designs were suggested, proofed and rejected and as philatelic collectors know, these are rare finds indeed in their world. Ultimately, the final designs devised by the engraver F.M. Kepler were accepted which consisted of a medallion with the Coat of Arms in the center, a "mantle" of the Czar with his crown on the top; ostensibly protecting the symbol of the State, and crossed "post" horns below. Three different color combinations were finally chosen; brown with a blue center for 10 kopeks, blue with an orange center for 20 kopeks and carmine with a yellow-green center for 30 kopeks. The Czar signed off on all three priced versions and production began. On December 10th, 1857, the Postal Department of the Russian Post announced the introduction of postage stamps as payment for private correspondence and by the end of the month, over 10,500 had been sold. Officially, the stamps were not to be used until January 1st 1858 but several stamps were cancelled on letters in the waning days of 1857 and collectors find these rare examples of the postage horse getting out of the gate a little early to be an exceptional find.

The process of choosing stamp adhesives, thickness of stamp paper, perforations, watermarks, the evolution of cancellation stamps is all fodder for another article about stamps in Russia, but these few words will suffice to describe what was in the beginning, 150 years ago, what has become today, a huge service run by the Russian Federal Government, now is in the throes of an overhaul and much hoped-for profitability.



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# Thank You for the Music – Take a Chance on Mamma Mia!

by Natalia Shuvalova



*What does it take to make a good musical? Great music, a touching and funny plot, charismatic actors. But success has many ingredients, and, as in the case with food, the same ingredients can make a delicious meal or a tasteless disaster. A lot depends on the chef and on the country where the food is served, with traditions, and national preferences. We met with Dmitry Bogachev, the general director of Stage Entertainment Russia, who brought the world famous musicals “Cats” and “Mamma Mia!” to Moscow.*

“Mamma Mia!” is based on 22 songs by ABBA. It was first staged in 1999 in London and has been a great success throughout the world. On October 14<sup>th</sup> it opened its second year in Moscow.

“It is easy to make an event successful when it is on a stage once per month, or once a year. Good promotion and advertising can bring many people. People may find it horrible, but they already bought the ticket and brought in the income. With musicals it is different. We can attract by promotion the audience for the first

*“...Russians love Abba! Everyone responds to their songs. At first, I was surprised to see people dancing in the aisles at the end of the performance, now I take it for granted...”*

30, 60 or even 100 performances, but if people do not like it – there is nothing we can do about that. It is sort of a law in show business; if people’s talk is negative, you’d better close the show and not invest a ruble in further promotion as it would not work,” says Dmitry.

He knows what he is talking about. There have been several glaring examples of failures (fortunately, not with the Stage Entertainment). “When Boris Krasnov brought ‘42<sup>nd</sup> Street’ here, he made every possible mistake. First, it was in English; second, the performing group was from New York City. Imagine that you build a space shuttle and then use it to fly from Moscow to Sochi, that’s the best comparison for his expenses. Filipp Kirkorov did a little better when he brought ‘Chicago’, but for some reason, the hall was half empty so they had to close down. The producer can’t think only

about his personal preferences if he wants to make it profitable!”

‘Cats’ was not that popular with Russians. Stage Entertainment Russia did not expect much from that production. ‘Cats’ is more intellectual in terms of music and poetry; it is not for the big masses. Nonetheless, it already had become a tradition to open with ‘Cats’ in many countries. So they thought that Russia should not be an exception. But when choosing Mamma Mia! to be the next production, they didn’t have any doubts about its success.

“Russians love Abba! Everyone responds to their songs. At first, I was surprised to see people dancing in the aisles at the end of the performance, now I take it for granted. Besides, the story itself is so lovely, funny and touching. It speaks to everyone, as it is about love. The producers made a decision to choose the actors who look like common people, of different body shapes, so that the audience can identify with the story. On top of that, the story takes place on a sunny Greek island. It turns out that this is of great importance in our climate which lacks sun so much of the time. The only countries where Mamma Mia! did not get that hot response of the audience are warm and sunny Spain and Italy, which is understandable!”

The licensed production is under “tight control” of the Western producers. No changes are allowed in the foreign productions, not even a slight change in a vocal part or dance movement. However, Russian actors coming through the traditional drama school bring a special flavor into the show. Bjorn Ulvaeus and Anni-Frid Lingsstad from ABBA came personally for the opening, took part in the rehearsals and even in the casting. Anni-Frid called Natalia Bystrova “the best Sophie in the world”. The songs were translated into

Russian by the famous pop-songwriter and singer Alexey Kortnev.

"We had a kind of tender among poets (I will not mention their names) for 'Cats,'" continues Mr. Bogachev, "Alexey won being an excellent poet with the good taste and the feeling of the music. As for Mamma Mia!, we called him straight away, because these are pop-songs that he is so good at. But it does not mean that we won't work with any other poets."

It takes about 1 year to complete the licensed production, including the time for casting. The standards for the actors are very high. Many Hollywood celebrities started with musicals. It gives an actor great training; learning how to sing, dance, act and do it live night after night.

"We have only one day off – Monday," says Natalia Bystrova, who plays one of the main characters (Sophie). "The show lasts 3 hours, and on week-ends we perform twice. Besides, we have constant training sessions, vocal classes, and rehearsals. It really demands lots of stamina but, if you love what you do, it gives back a lot."

Natalia moved to Moscow from Yekaterinburg a year ago, when she was finally OK'd for her role. The previous year she came to Moscow five or six times for the casting. "I would arrive in the morning, spend the whole day at the casting and the very same evening I would take a flight back home and wait for the reply for the another three to six months. Then do it again, until I was given the role."

Since childhood Natalia used to go in for figure-skating, gymnastics, theater studio, musical school, jazz studio. She graduated from drama school and performed in the local theater and was a host of an evening program on the local TV. "I tried all I could in my native town and I wanted to move beyond that so much. I like it in Moscow! Of course, we have to work hard. Many people can-

*"... Maybe, the difference is in our Russian soul, in how we always put too much of ourselves in every role, as if playing for the last time..."*

not bear the stress, they want to go home, cry. For me, it is harder to sit at home and do nothing. I am happy being involved in this project," she smiles.

Today she dreams to study to Europe. "Every time when I go to London to see a new musical, I am amazed by the actors' skills. I



wonder how they can technically bear such intense work. It seems they do not know what it means to get sick, to have some shots to keep the voice in good shape or any other manipulations that we have to go through to keep up. I want to learn how they do it!

Maybe, the difference is in our Russian soul, in how we always put too much of ourselves in every role, as if playing for the last time..."

Though, maybe due to this Russian soul some call the production the best, even better than in London...

"Coming to the show, some say that the music must be a recording. But if they look into the pit they will see 10 musicians. If they peek behind the curtains, they will see two big plasma screens so that the actors can see the conductors. Every singer has a microphone which is not noticeable because it is skin color. The fact that

people think that it is recorded only proves the high quality of the job that the group does", says Stage Entertainment Russia promotion manager, Andrey Orlov.

Hollywood is producing a screen version of the musical with Meryl Streep and Pierce Brosnan. The release is planned for next summer. That means that it might make Mamma Mia! stay in Russia for another or 3rd year. Bogachev has another, professional, opinion.

"It is hard to tell how the screen version will influence the live show. When 'Chicago' was screened, the musical lost its audience; with 'Hairspray' it is the opposite."

Anyway, this year the show goes on. By the way, one of the next musicals to come to Moscow might be 'Lion King'.



# Puttin' on the Ritz

Text by Charles W. Borden

Photos by Alexey Zhukov



Grant Dodd was back in town, this time with a crew, packing Parker Ninety Pluses, some of the best wines that Australia has to offer. Grant is our friend, our buddy, our savior – he supplies some of the best wines to be found in Moscow, direct from Australia's distant shores. Fresh off a flight from Sydney, Grant and his boys met us in the Alma Ata room at Moscow's new, glitzy Ritz-Carlton, the replacement for the Soviet icon, the Intourist Hotel.



Alexander Ilyin (editor, *Gastronom*),  
Vladimir Kostenko (editor-in-chief, *Elite Life and Travel*)

If there is any sign that Russia has come to the Capitalist God, it is this hotel, with an opening room price of a mere \$750 per night and headed up.

Grant Dodd is one of the few importers who bring wines to Moscow because they are good or great, who love wine and want others to enjoy them. Grant is a PGA golf pro turned wine expert with a monthly newsletter, the *Wining Pro* – [www.thewiningpro.com](http://www.thewiningpro.com). A year back, Grant led one of *Passport's* best wine tastings at Corra's, an over-the-top-event that, given the 14% plus alcohol of Australian Shiraz wines and the 42 bottles we had for the event, left me with little memory from somewhere near the end of the tasting and waking up in the morning with an armful of Corra's pastries. This time Grant came back with two of Australia's top winemakers – Wayne Dutschke of Dutschke Wines and Reid Bosward from Kaesler Wines.

John Ortega negotiated a deal with the PR director at the Ritz. We got the Alma Ata room, and jointly, with the Ritz, invited a distinguished group of wine connoisseurs. The Ritz invited some wine journalists. Our honored guest was Preston Haskell, Grant's partner and chairman of *Colliers* in Moscow. Grant is working closely with Preston to develop his own South African wine venture, Haskell Vineyards.

Other *Passport* guests included Andre Kobouloff, founder of European Medical Centers, who joined our Knights of the Vine for

the first time. Veteran Moscow investor Bob Brown returned for this event. Shiraz Mamedov – yes, that is his first name, apropos for the evening's wines – one of Russia's leading chicken and meat importers, joined in. Ruslana Tsyuplyak, Sommelier at Bellezza, subject of last month's Passport restaurant review, added her expert opinions.

The evening was catered by the Ritz Carlton's Jeroboam Restaurant, which is under the tutelage of Chef Heinz Winkler, whose restaurant south of Munich has held three Michelin stars for eighteen years. Winkler's cuisine has been dubbed "cuisine vitale," uniting gastronomic pleasure with physical well-being. Passport is sure to soon return to render its judgment on Winkler's Moscow venture.

*Jeroboam provided us with a luxurious, elegant, and light repast as we ran through our wine selections:*

*Beef Tartar, Red Beet Root, Wasabi Mousse, Caviar  
Turbot, Red Butter, Lobster Spinach  
Pigeon "en Croute" and Parsley Mousseline  
Venison Souffle, Celery, Red Cabbage  
Variation of Chocolate, Red Wine Sorbet*

Grant, Reid, and Wayne provided a lucid commentary on our slate of wines as we ran through them. Grant introduced the crew. Kaesler's Reid Bosward is one of the most innovative and forward thinking winemakers in Australia. He worked at a number of well-known Australian producers, including Tyrrells and McGuigans, and later worked in countries as far a field as Moldova, France, Spain and South Africa. The Kaesler name is now one of the first on people's lips when the discussion of wine turns to the Barossa Valley.

Wayne Dutschke has wine in his blood. The Dutschke name has long been associated with the Barossa Valley, and Wayne's grandfather, Oscar Semmler, was a legendary figure in the South Australian wine industry. For many years, Wayne has been one of Australia's leading "flying" winemakers, working vintages in Australia's off-season in Spain, Napa Valley and Bordeaux before finally returning to start Dutschke Wines in the Barossa Valley in 1998.

As for the wines, we at Passport certainly cannot improve on Dodd's words:

#### **Tower Estate Hunter Valley Semillon 2006**

*A classic and unique style of Semillon from the Hunter Valley, which is generally regarded as the finest Semillon region in Australia. Picked early to retain acidity, it is only 10.5% alcohol but the high levels of natural acid allow the wine a great capacity to age. As it ages it will pick up palate weight and develop honeyed, nutty aromas, the hallmark of the very best Hunter Valley Semillons.*



#### **Dalwhinnie Chardonnay 2005**

*From the Pyrenees region of Central Victoria, the Dalwhinnie vineyards are located in a natural, frost free valley, 600 meters above sea level. The phrase, "Burgundian style," is one of the most misappropriated terms in the world of wine. Many like to claim the imprimatur, yet few Chardonnays actually embody the fineness and complexity that typifies the best White Burgundies. However, it is entirely justifiable to use such a description in relation to this wine. Elegant, with magnificent restraint and power, it is tight and youthful now but will develop beautifully with time in bottle. This may well be the finest Dalwhinnie Chardonnay ever made.*

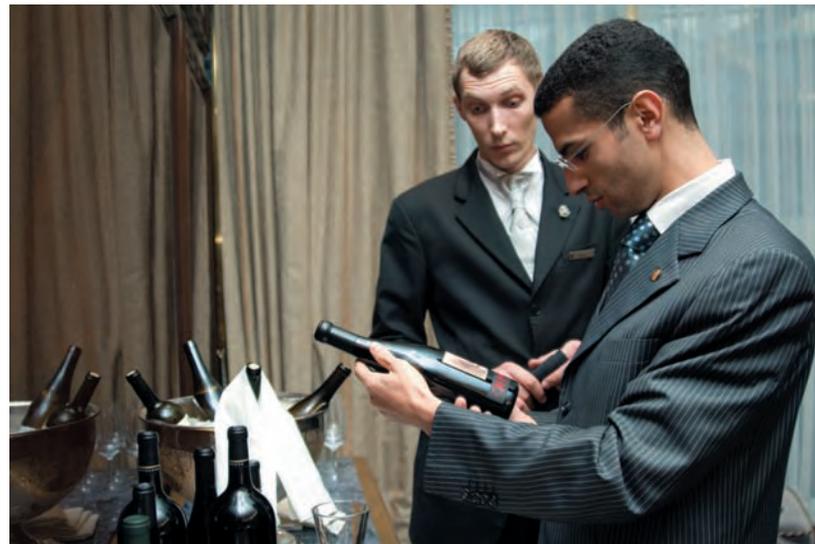


#### **Tower Estate Yarra Valley Pinot Noir 2004**

*From one of Australia's best Pinot Noir regions (Yarra*



*John Ortega Publisher Passport magazine,  
Grant Dodd D&H Fine Wines Guest Speaker*



*Hichem Benamor Manager Ritz Carlton*

*Valley), this cool climate wine is impressive for drinking right now. Showing some complex, forest floor characters underneath highly aromatic strawberry and raspberry fruit, it was a fine food match at the night.*

#### **Dalwhinnie Cabernet Sauvignon 2001**

*A new World wine in an Old World body. Very elegant, lovely focus and purity of blackcurrant fruit flavor. Definitive, stylish Cabernet Sauvignon.*



#### **Dutschke St Jakobi Shiraz 2004 (Magnum)**

*From the Lyndoch sub-region of the Barossa Valley, and from a 30-year old single vineyard. Effulgent, sexy aromas of black cherry fruit, spice and balanced oak. Powerful cherry and plum flavors of great persistence. Quite delicious in the time honored Barossa Valley style.*

#### **Kaesler Old Bastard Shiraz 2005**

*One of the iconic Shiraz wines of the world. Made from a single vineyard, planted in 1893. Concentrated, powerful and yet still composed, despite the opulent, rich fruit flavors. A wine of incredible length and precision that will develop greater complexity as it ages over the next 20 years.*





Lubov Makhova Goldwell Russia,  
Shiraz Mamedov SJS Poultry Imports

Wayne told the story of his Sun Dried Shiraz. A neighbor had machine harvested his Shiraz crop, which left grapes hanging at the end of every row. After a couple of weeks, when these grapes had dried down, Wayne had the idea, from his fortified wine experience, to see what kind of wine could be produced from them. The result was this deep, intense, sweet wine.

There is nothing to add and I am not ashamed to admit to being partial to Australia's wines, and particularly these. I bow down to Grant for bringing us these delights.

**Guest Speakers:**

Grant Dodd, PGA Golf Pro and Wine Expert ([www.thewin-ingpro.com](http://www.thewin-ingpro.com))

Reid Bosward, Kaesler Wines

Wayne Dutschke, Dutschke Wines

**Passport Magazine Guests:**

John Ortega, Publisher, Passport Magazine

Charles Borden, Director, Meridian Capital

Elena Serebryakova, Vice President, International Moscow Bank

Shiraz Mamedov, Owner, SJS Poultry Imports

Ruslana Tsyuplyak, Sommelier, Bellezza Restaurant

Bob Brown, Chairman, Rambler and Lensmaster

Preston Haskell, Colliers International and Steelcase Furniture

Andre Kobouloff, Founder, European Medical and Dental



Charles Borden Wine Editor Passport Magazine,  
Andrei Koboloff Founder European Medical Center



Bob Brown Chairman Rambler

**Centers**

Alexis Kobernyk, Vice President, Rosinter Group

**Guests of Ritz Carlton Moscow:**

Egor Apollonov, Editor-in-Chief, Cigar Gourmet

Vladimir Kostenko, Editor-in-Chief, Elite Life and Travel

Alexander Ilyin, Editor, Gastronom

Sergey Logvinov, Director of PR, The Ritz-Carlton, Moscow

**Ortega Easy Rating System**

I love this wine!	5 pts.
I really like this wine!	4 pts.
This wine is good!	3 pts.
This wine is not that good!	2 pts.
I don't really care for this wine!	1 pt.



Elena Serbryakova International Moscow Bank



Ruslana Petrovna Sommilier Bellazza  
Restaurant

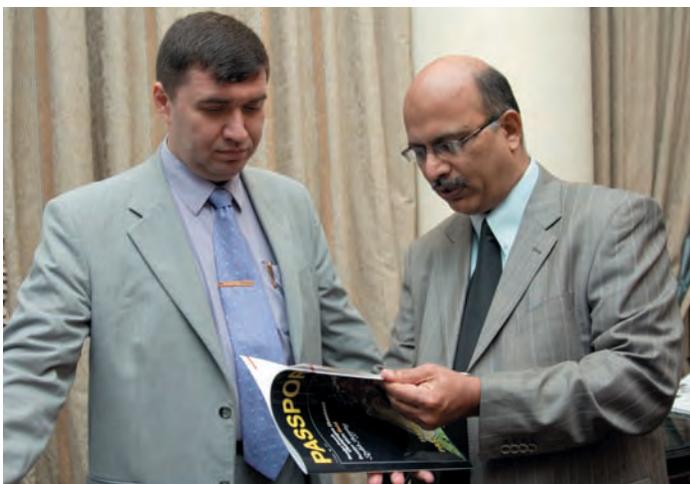


Reid Bosward- Kaesler Wines Guest Speaker,  
Sergey Logvinov Director of PR, The Ritz-Carlton

Wine	Rating	Ranking
Kaesler Old Bastard Shiraz 2005	4.42	1
Dalwhinnie Chardonnay 2005	4.19	2
Kaesler Old Bastard Shiraz 2005	4.17	2
Wild Duck Creek Estate Spring Flat 2004	3.91	4
Dalwhinnie Cabernet Sauvignon 2001	3.81	5
Tower Estate Yarra Valley Pinot Noir 2004	3.71	6
Tower Estate Hunter Valley Semillon 2006	3.48	7
Dutschke Sun Dried Shiraz (20% alcohol)	3.30	8



Egor Apollonov (editor-in-chief, Cigar Gourmet)



Alexis Kobernyk Rosinter Group,  
Ram Kumar Marketing Passport magazine



Preston Haskell Colliers International



## Tandoor – Come for the Food

By John Bonar

There's no gold flock on red velvet wall paper; no gold-fish swimming in tanks, no Russian girls pretending to be belly dancers and nothing that's not Indian on the menu. You don't come to Tandoor for pretentious ostentation, you come for the food. This stalwart of Indian cuisine since 1994, when it was located on Tverskaya Street just south of Mayakovsky, moved across the street to its present location, the basement of the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in 2004.

The location has changed and its sumptuous, round, colonnaded hall with its muted background music and attentive staff is a tribute to Indian cuisine.

Nothing detracts from the food.

There is a range of salads, soups and hot and cold starters to get one going. And the trio of Passport staffers who descended on Tandoor in October to sample the new menu certainly got going!

The Chili Prawns (670 r) were a delight – tiger prawns succulently marinated in the chef's own marinade and spicy enough to kick our taste buds awake. The vegetable Samosas (220 r) were substantial pyramids of crisp pastry, fried, but free of excess oil and filled with moist potato mashed with green peas liberally laced with aromatic spices and herbs.

The only slight disappointment among the starters was the Paneer Tikka (410 r), paneer cheese marinated in yoghurt with tomato, onion and bell pepper which none of us felt was anything special. On reflection, that merely served to underline how special the other dishes were!

Having ordered the starters we relaxed with churned yoghurt Lassi drinks (120 r plain and 200 r for Mango Lassi) and nibbled at complimentary papads (deep fried lentil chips) liberally spread with sauces.

The General Manager, Rajiv Agarwal, dropped by our table to make sure everything was in order. When he saw Ram, he said "I know you will have ordered the right dishes."

Our multilingual south Indian waiter, advised us to stay clear of fish on the day we were there but heartily recommended the chicken and lamb dishes. After much debate we settled on Chicken Tikka Masala (520 r), Chicken Tikka (510 r) and Bhaingan Ka Bharta, (480 r). The last is aubergine, grilled and mashed with Indian spices, and is Ram's favourite dish. Tandoor's version outshone his home cooking and passed muster with me and Anna. Tikka is the signature dish of the restaurant being marinated in the chef's own sauce and baked in the clay tandoor oven from which the restaurant takes its name. Chicken tikka, can be dry and not too appetizing if bad-

ly prepared. Tandoor's version is succulent all the way, largely due to the marinade, has the right touch of spice and deserves to be eaten to the last skewer. The Chicken Tikka Masala came in a bright red sauce tartly spiced and redolent of ginger and coriander.

Our array of main courses were augmented with portions of lemon flavored basmati rice (260 r) and saffron flavored basmati rice (240 r) and a selection of naan, fried Indian breads (range in price from 50 r to 170 r). Ram eagerly quizzed the staff on where the Basmati rice came from because a recent ban on its import has only just been lifted. Reassured that the restaurant itself had had sufficient stock to carry them through the shortage we tucked in.

Feeling thoroughly sated we were unable to face desserts which include traditional Indian honey laden sweets and ice cream and instead shared a pot of Masala Chai (160 r).

For a Monday evening the restaurant was busy. Our informative and helpful waiter told us that they would have on average three tables of Indians a night but served more expats with Brits, perhaps due to the influences of the Raj outnumbering Americans by two to one plus a growing number of Russians. Its central location and proximity to the metro makes it a haven. The spice factor in most of the dishes is muted to appeal to Russian and American tastes. But Indians, British and others in search of a more fiery culinary experience have only to ask and the chefs will oblige.

#### Tandoor

31/1 Tverskaya Ul. (inside Tchaikovsky Concert Hall)  
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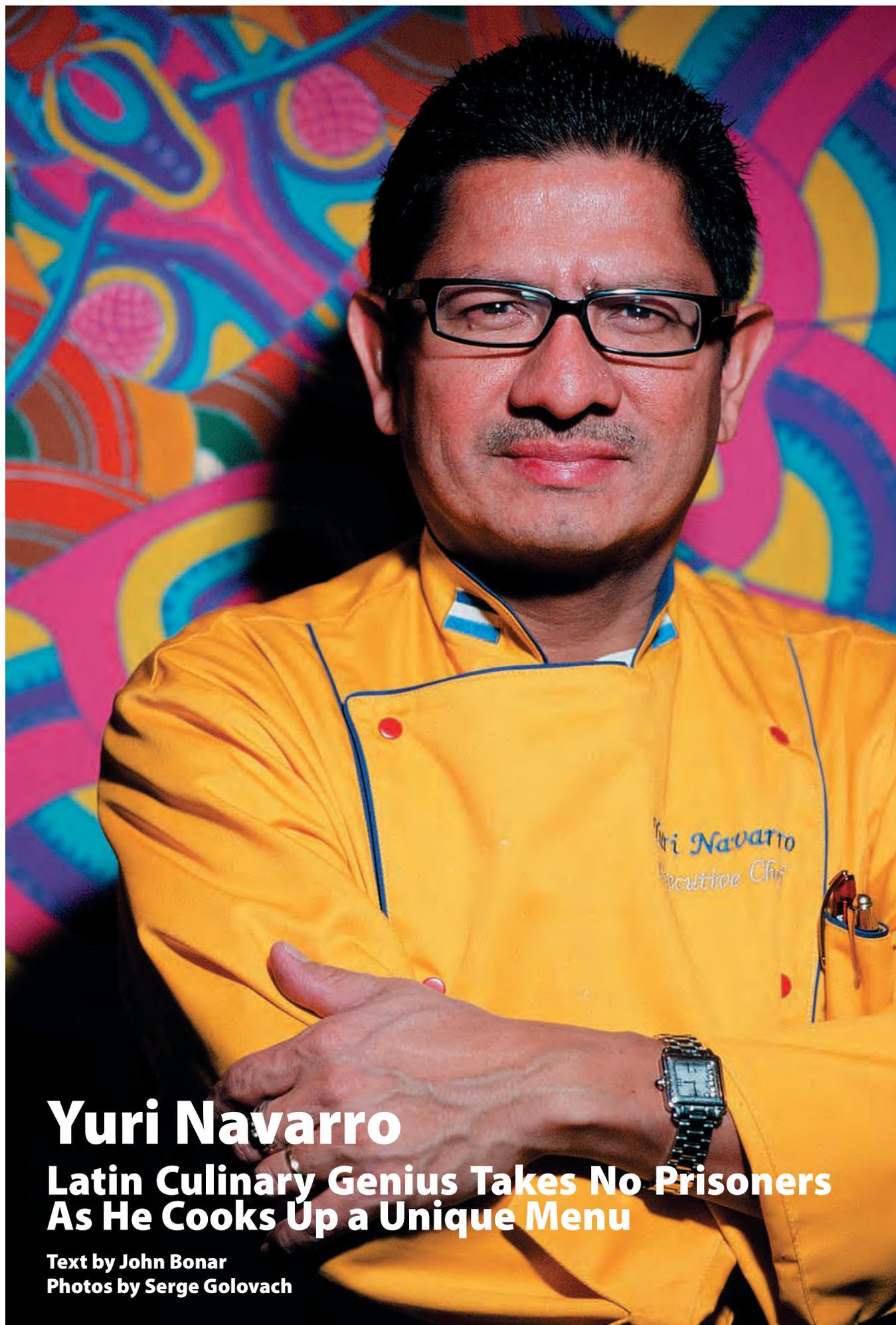
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# Yuri Navarro

## Latin Culinary Genius Takes No Prisoners As He Cooks Up a Unique Menu

Text by John Bonar  
Photos by Serge Golovach

Soft spoken and bespectacled Yuri Navarro, who does amazing things with a wok and barbecue at his eponymous restaurant on Schmitovskyy proezd, does not look like someone who swapped a Kalshnikov for a wooden spoon. But that's exactly what Yuri did in 1980. At 18, as a communist guerrilla in his native El Salvador, he was on the wanted list in his native country in Central America. As he tells the tale, rather matter of fact, he and his father were walking along the road in 1979 when they came upon four dead bodies in the road. Beheaded. His father decided enough was enough and while Yuri went into hiding with a friend who was a Colonel in the country's army, his father obtained visas for Venezuela, across South America on the Atlantic coast, for the whole family and they fled.

"I remember one night my brother and I were home watching a film about Las Vegas on TV, when I heard an army truck on the road outside after curfew," he told me. "I wonder who's the lucky one tonight," I cracked to my brother as I looked through the window. When I saw the truck backing up towards our house, I yelled 'Get up, it's time to go!'"

The pair of youths dived out the back door and started jumping over fences. A few houses away they knocked on a door. "The woman, she knew what was going on and let us in. We didn't have time to shut the door behind us when we heard soldiers approaching. I lay on the floor with my .357 Magnum in both hands in front of me pointing at the door. Someone looked through the window. He was in uniform, but I recognized him. We had been to school together. His leader shouted, "is anyone there?' He knew if he said yes, I would have to shoot him, and he called back 'No, it's empty!' I was so relieved!"

After finding the beheaded corpses Yuri went into hiding for three and a half months before the visas came through. In Venezuela, Yuri began to put his guerrilla past behind him. When the Venezuelan currency collapsed he accepted an invitation from his Mom to move to New York where she lived and he enrolled in the Culinary Institute of America. Upon graduation in 1983, and finding New York cold and inhospitable, he and his Mom moved to Los Angeles and Yuri began his climb up the culinary ladder of success



in the United States. He started at the five star Beverly Hills BelAir hotel as a banquet sou chef. He moved to the Le Beluga as banquet chef and its Russian owner, opened L'Hermitage restaurant and he moved there as executive sou chef. His next move was to be the opening executive sou chef for the St James' Club on Sunset Boulevard in Beverly Hills, a grand old building which housed a private club, hotel and restaurant, with members that included Liza Minnelli, Elizabeth Taylor, and David Bowie. In 1986, after six





months he became executive chef of the restaurant and some time later he was sent to the affiliated Club hotels in London, Paris and Antigua to train their chefs on Californian cuisine.

"This was the era of the sun dried tomato and I had to teach them how to cook dishes such as soft shell crab and how to use lots of light greens and herbs in their cooking and presentation," he recalls.

Returning from Antigua, Yuri decided the time was right for him to open his own restaurant. With a friend he opened the appropriately named "Sun Dried Tomato" on Rodeo Drive and proceeded to cook up a storm. After a year or so a particular customer started coming in day after day and asking for unusual dishes that were not on the menu. Yuri, even then, was anxious to please every customer and kept running to the store to buy ingredients and cooking them up for the demanding client.

"One day he asked to speak to the chef. The waiter told him the chef was the owner and we met. He straight away asked me if I was interested in becoming his partner. He had been testing me to see if I could cook a whole range of dishes he liked, including pelmeni."

The business was 13 restaurants. And the location? Russia.

"I nearly said no, right then. I had gone to Los Angeles because New York was too cold, never mind Russia," Yuri recalled.

"I said I would take a look and arrived at Sheremetyevo in October of 1994. Everyone was wearing fur hats and big coats. They looked like gangsters. The weather was getting cold. The restaurants this man owned were all in Sheremetyevo over all five floors. Everything from a stolovaya (Russian staff canteen) to upscale restaurants. My first sight, when I walked into the kitchen was a chef cooking over a stove, cigarette in his mouth and swigging from a bottle of wine. It was really disgusting."

Despite the cold, despite the army of Babushkas seemingly determined to trip up this strange Latin man and despite the language difficulties Yuri stayed. In three months he had built a "monster machine" as he calls it.

"We were getting lots of repeat customers and I even did a New Years Party in 1995 that was overbooked," he remembers. But in June 1996, "the Mafia took us out. We were just thrown out."

Yuri sent his resume to a number of Moscow restaurants and hotels including RosInter group's Santa Fe where he ended up.



"It was close to where I lived, and I liked the ambience. It reminded me of home," he says fondly. His grandmother, who christened him Yuri after Gagarin, the first Cosmonaut whose space flight enthralled the world in the year of Yuri's birth, must have had a premonition.

Yuri stayed at Santa Fe on Matulinskaya ulitsa between the World Trade Center and ExpoCenter for 12 years, making it virtually his own. He became not only chef but friend; first to Moscow's wheeling and dealing expat community and then the rapidly emerging middle and upper middle class of Russia.

"I am really grateful to Rostislav (Ordovsky-Tanaevsky Blanco) for giving me the opportunity to run Santa Fe for 12 years," Yuri says. "It was a happy time in my life."

But this year it was finally time to move on. Yuri wanted his own restaurant and with the support of a Russian friend they started construction of Navarro's a stone's throw from Santa Fe, close to the third ring road and the Moscow City development.

On the 17th of April Yuri opened his doors without fanfare.

"I want to get it right first," he told me back then. "I want to get the table staff trained; I want the team to be perfect."

Six months later and we are there. The cozy relaxed lounge bar seats 30, to the left of the entrance is the main 80-seat restaurant and upstairs, together with the large kitchen there is a mezzanine accommodating 40 to 50 people.

The idea is a fusion of Yuri's native Latin American cuisine with Mediterranean. The emphasis is on seafood and Argentinean beef. Of course, this being Russia, there's pork and chicken and Yuri has an appetizing array of game on the menu from partridge and duck to venison and wild boar.

Navarro's serves breakfast, lunch and dinner and their Navarro's Breakfast plate has tempted Passport Publisher, John Ortega, to forsake his former breakfast haunts for the convenience of Navarro's.

Yuri has devised a menu that encompasses Tapas, Sushi, Maki, Ceviche and Seafood, a grill featuring Bream, Sea Bass and Dorado, Tenderloin, Rib Eye and Rump Steaks rounded off with a mouth watering list of deserts. He even has a "History" selection with chicken wings and chips and salsa for those who eschew fusion and want to stay with the tried and tested dishes of yore.

Yuri declined to offer a recipe for Passport Readers. "Everything on our menu needs a professional kitchen and we use special ingredients which you can't find in supermarkets," he said apologetically.

Yuri remains remarkably unscathed by the years in Russia but his face lights up when you mention his wife, Natalia Antonova whom he met while he worked at Sheremetyeva. "We have two beautiful kids now," he reminds me. "Anthony is seven and Agatha Maria is two." Natalia continues to work with Yuri designing the décor of the restaurant and choosing the furniture which has contributed to creating a special sort of home away from home for visitors along with stressed Moscow executives looking for a place to unwind, relax and enjoy tasty well-prepared food.



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29, Kutuzovskiy Prospekt, (495) 249-9040  
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14 Ul. Navy Arbat, Bldg.1, 291-1318

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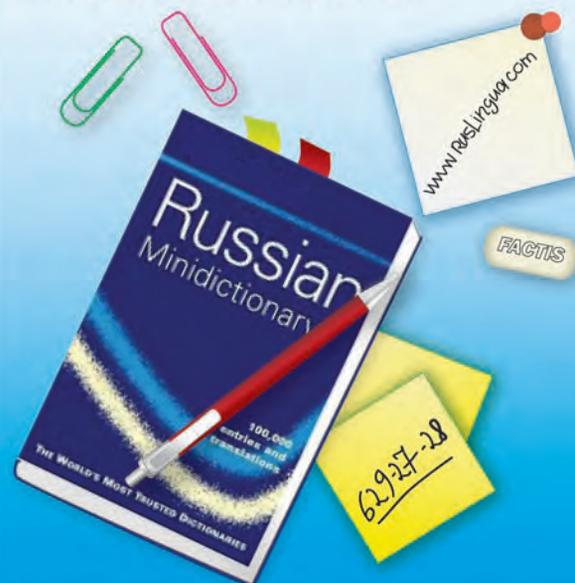
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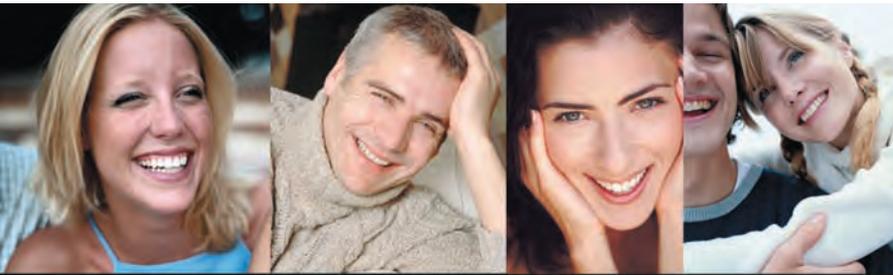
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# Magical Ruchnik

by Anne Coombes

Belarus is well known for its amazing ruchnik cloths – narrow pieces of white fabric charmingly embroidered with delicate red thread. Red was used to represent earthly life and joy. White, naturally, symbolizes purity and goodness. So ‘magical’ were the designs that, less than a century ago, most Belarusians would have relied on ruchnik to protect them. Some were folded and worn as belts. In fact, it was said that the devil was afraid of these belts and not to wear one was an indication that you belonged to the underworld of demons. In Belarusian folk tales, if a magician wants to communicate with those in the spirit world, he always removes his embroidered belt to allow them to come near. Likewise, demons and rusalki (river mermaids) are always described as being beltless. The embroidered designs were also commonly seen on headscarves and other articles of clothing; when the sleeves of a shirt were embroidered this offered protection against accidents while working. In fact, today’s Belarusian flag bears ruchnik patterns along one side.

Other ruchnik were given pride of place in the ‘red corner’ of the home alongside the family icons. This is where ancestral spirits were thought to linger. The bread and salt ever present on a Belarusian peasant’s table were always covered with a protective ruchnik cloth. Guests would be offered these symbols of welcome on a ruchnik as they arrived. Traditionally, the first sheaf of a family’s harvest would also be tied in a ruchnik. It was then placed in the red corner to appease the spirits and enlist their help in bringing in the rest of the crop safely. Ruchnik cloths could also be used to ward off disease. They would be laid across the road so that animals could be driven over them for protection. Similarly, people could ceremonially pass under them to find extra protection. During a mourning period, such as a death in the family, the loved one’s ruchnik would be hung at the window to help the soul find its path out of the house and into the other world. If someone was suspected of being a witch or in league with the underworld, a piece of rope would be used instead - leading them to a quite different place.

At birth, each Belarusian baby would be given its own ruchnik - which would be kept for an entire lifetime, later to be buried with the person. These were usually embroidered by the baby’s mother and, as she worked, some of her soul was thought to enter the cloth, imbuing it with powerful protective qualities. Even after her own death, a woman’s love would live on in the cloth – guarding the child with special energy. During the Great Patriotic



War, women ensured that their husbands, brothers and sons wore their ruchnik close to their hearts – hoping it would guard them and return them safely home. In some rural communities, this tradition is still preserved. Additionally, special ruchnik were given throughout life – acting as talismans in times of need. During labour, mothers-to-be would always strap on a red girdle. Although this particular use of the ruchnik has fallen out of fashion in today’s maternity clinics, the old traditions survive at modern day weddings. The couple’s hands are symbolically ‘tied’ together with a cloth by their parents, joining them in never-ending love, and during the ceremony, couples are given a ruchnik to step upon. The one whose foot first touches the cloth will rule the roost in years to come. In days gone by, brides walked around the altar, dragging the ruchnik behind with the bridesmaids following in her footsteps, to ensure they too found a husband. Afterwards, the cloth was revered as a good-luck charm – radiating virtue and fortune.

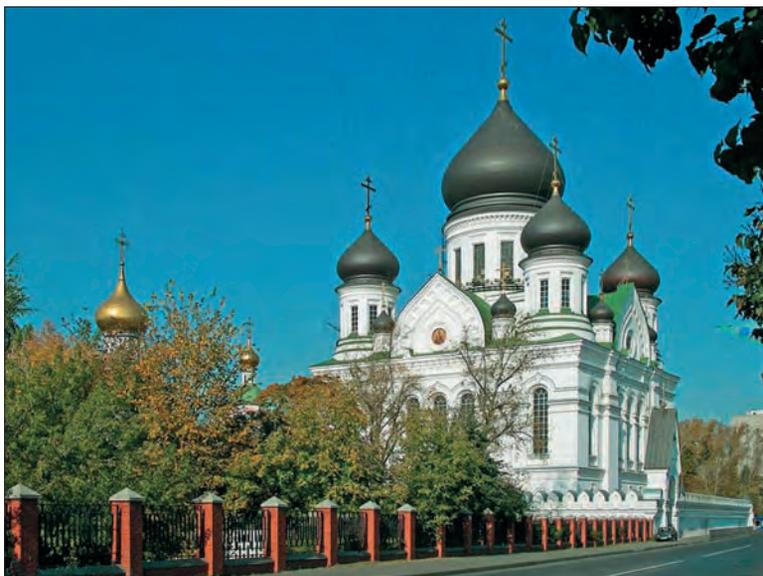
The custom of each woman learning to sew ruchnik from an early age is dying out in our modern times, yet these cloths are still commonly seen in most homes – even if they are only perceived as pretty ornaments. They have far greater significance than this though; they embody the joyous spirit of Belarus.



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## Pechatniki

Text by Fred Flintstone

Photo by Evgeny Kollsov

The poor soul who has his car towed in Moscow has likely earned the opportunity to meet new friends in the remote Moscow district of Pechatniki, the home of the *evacuated* (towed) car police service. Fred didn't listen to his inner voice when he parked along the embankment near the Radisson Slavyanskaya Hotel, just short of the new glass enclosed pedestrian bridge. He didn't see any prohibition signs, but there were a lot of taxi drivers hanging about in their cars, a sign that they might consider this stretch of pavement to be their territory. He now thinks he got turned in.

Two hours later the search started, and then ended with a comment from a taxi driver that the *evakuatoriy* (tow trucks) had not long ago departed. Fred and Barney were already late for a meeting, so they crossed the street to grab a taxi to Kurskaya on the other side of the Garden Ring. The taxi driver filled us in – first call the police dispatcher at “02” and they will tell you what's next, “Most likely its at Novobotyuninskaya; if so it'll take you 5-6 hours minimum. You've got 24 hours free storage.”

A call to “02” got us referred further on to 740-3705, and this determined that the Silver Streak was at Ulitsa Ryabinovaya 71a *spetzstoyanka* (special parking lot) and the paper work in fact was at Novobotyuninskaya in the Pechatniki district. The documents needed to clear the vehicle were the *techpassport* (vehicle registration), driver's license, *dovernnost* (power of attorney for driver) and proof of insurance. Since I am a foreigner, the driver's license would have to be accompanied by a notarized translation. Fortunately, I carry the *techpassport* and driver's license in my wallet, but, unfortunately, the *dovernnost*, insurance and notarized translation were, as usual, in the car.

Back home I found a copy of the insurance policy and an extra notarized translation. A search on the Internet got me a *dovernnost* form, which Wilma filled out and signed. But by this time in the evening I was not going to remote Pechatniki, alone, for what was likely to be an all night affair.

The next morning I prepared myself: rucksack, magazines, umbrella, snacks, water, cap, sunglasses, and downloaded the latest NPR Fresh Air podcasts to my iPod. I decided to use public transport like a local: first a bus to the metro, a change to the Green Line heading south, and then out at one of the last stations, Pechatniki. I had thought that it would be easy to find such a well-known landmark, but it took four inquiries to find the right bus, Number 292 or 161, which I rode practically to the end of the line, through

an industrial and dismal residential area broken only by a brightly painted monastery. At the stop it took another search to find a large sign pointing towards the GAI building, and then about a mile hike.

It was not difficult to find the entrance with the crowd milling in the lot in front, fully occupying the few benches and smoking up a storm. At the door I asked the usual question, “*kto posledniy?*” (who's last). With those few words everyone in the vicinity knew that Fred was not a local, but it would still be several hours before we knew each other well enough to exchange personal histories. A thirty-something woman identified herself and pointed out the few *malchiki* (boys) who were in line in front of her, and they were preceded by that woman in red. One boy explained that another had gone off to buy cigarettes but would be back. With that everyone in my section of the *ocherad* (line) knew his or her place. Out came a jubilant woman waving documents. “Three hours,” she said.

A queue like this in Bedrock is an amazing thing, a self-managing, living being that in this case, since the GAI post operates 24/7, has a long lifetime. The queue has defensive mechanisms; the cells of its body guard against intruders who try to sneak to the front, and the more sophisticated lines like this even develop emotions. A woman with a baby was let to the front, and later the collective bit its lip and yielded when a middle aged woman, by the look of her well-to-do, showed up claiming “she just couldn't wait,” and waved a bandaged hand claiming an injury.

After finding your place, it's now your job, a few minutes later, to answer to “*kto posledniy?*” Once you've established who's in front by several positions and who's behind, you're relatively free. And this brings the first steps toward intimacy as you closely examine the clothing and features of each person, because this memory ensures your place. As the minutes and then hours tick off, you start to learn more about each: how they interact with each other, who smokes, what are their moods, and then even later who are the bright ones, the leaders, the complainers, the smart asses.

I scouted inside the door. There were about 20 people milling around a small room, about 20 square meters, with five small windows along one wall. Two windows were operating. Thankfully there's no smoking inside, but it still had a locker room atmosphere, so it was back outside for Fred. There's a kiosk and grill a few meters to the right of the door that sells essentials: cigarettes, sunflower seeds, sodas, beer, Pringles. Thus began a long adventure that will be continued next month.

# Looking For Bulgakov

by Linda Lippner

I have to confess that I arrived in Moscow with very little knowledge of Russian literature beyond the usual and somewhat obligatory familiarity with Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and Gogol, or the Big Three of literature along with the Big One of poetry and short stories, Pushkin.

I was only familiar with 20th century Russian literature through a movie (Pasternak with his Lara and Dr. Zhivago), and the painful history of the gulag through literary fiction and fact by Solzhenitsyn.

I had to live in Moscow to learn about Mikhail Bulgakov. Just like the devil that arrived in Moscow to meet the Master and his Margarita, I discovered my (now!) absolutely favorite Russian writer in his favorite city of Moscow. After devouring all of Bulgakov's books that I could find in English, I set out to locate all the spots in Moscow that are described in his books. Patriarshy Dom Tours and their wonderfully erudite guide, Felix, gave me my first taste of walking the Bulgakov trail. The tour included Patriarshy Pond, Ostozhenka Street, and other great locations described in Bulgakov's stories, novels and plays. The mystery of why there are no trolley tracks along Patriarshy Pond Park; who cares when you can sit on a bench in the park and imagine you hear the trolley rumbling down the street; ready to chop off a literary critic's head when he mysteriously falls onto the non-existent tracks. Or walk along a street and look up at the windows of the apartment where Bulgakov's doctor conducted his infamous experiments in *The Heart of the Dog* to produce the ideal socialist/communist comrade out of a street mutt. And the greatest treat; visit Spaso House, the U.S. Ambassador's residence where a Ball was held in the '30's that inspired Bulgakov to write about the craziest gathering of "spirits" ever.

But my goal was to try to find the muse that inspired Bulgakov to write. What four walls had hosted his wonderfully fantastical writing? One night this summer I wanted to re-acquaint myself with the apartment where Bulgakov wrote many of his works. I had been there before but it had been a few years back. Being sum-

mer, I was out late and I got there after closing to visit the actual apartment Bulgakov had lived in. For years his apartment has been the focal point for his literary fans and anyone who has been to the apartment building has seen the entertaining fan club graffiti in the hallways outside. But lo and behold! There is now a café open for business on a lower floor. Red velvet drapes, lots of mirrors for spirits to slip in and out of, and lots of memorabilia housed in the café-in-an-apartment. Not wanting a drink, I wandered about pausing to watch the videos of Bulgakov's works and examined the many photos and impossibly "authentic" personal items on display. His typewriter? His piano? Probably not, but imagination is not hurt by the right ambience and mood.

After hanging out in the "Bulgakov" café for a bit longer, I went down to the courtyard that is enclosed by the quietly eerie apartment building where Bulgakov once lived. A final touch got me laughing. Could the café or the apartment museum really have provided a black cat to hang out in the courtyard? Perhaps he is on union double wages because there he was; a very large black cat on late night duty as I stood in the courtyard looking up at the darkened windows of Bulgakov's apartment. I checked later with a friend who has offices in the building and his experience with the black cat was finding it perched on the open window of his high-floor office. No shy spirit, Bulgakov's Begemot that I saw that night was cat-sized, not man-sized, and he let me stroke his back, although he had a decidedly man-sized purr. Perhaps better not to try too hard to find the real Bulgakov as much of the truth of his life was very painful. But a café and a black cat on a summer night – great literary entertainment!



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## Latin American dancing in Kremlin Palace

By Annet Kulyagina

At the end of September Moscow's Kremlin Palace was lit up by the International Latin Dancing Contest, with world class stars from Austria, Australia, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Finland, Poland, Ukraine, the USA, Russia and other countries. This year the Latin Dance Cup was fascinating and intriguing according to professional observers. Last year's champions from Germany withdrew from the contest to give a chance to the other dancers show their best and win the World Cup. A Polish couple, Michael Malitovski and Johna Lenis were the most beautiful and passionate. They came in first. Together with all the other winners they danced for the spectators at the Star Ball the following day.



## PUMA Shoes on Catwalk

Text by Natalia Shuvalova

Photo courtesy of Publica Project

The PUMA sponsored the prestigious central Saint Martina MA graduate fashion show in London. The Saint Martin's is famous for the excellent education in Art, Design and Fashion. So PUMA announced a design competition (for Autumn Winter 2007) for their menswear MA fashion students. PUMA gave three prizes. The 1st prize, by the way, was given to Georgy Baratashvili, a 17 year old Russian, studying in London. Each of the three young winners received cash prizes.



In addition, each will have a limited edition of their footwear styles produced and sold in the PUMA concept stores worldwide. The significant contributions from the sales would go to the CSM PUMA bursary fund, which helps finance the education of future fashion talent.

## Pericles Celebrates 10 years in Russia

Text by Daniel Klein

In September the Pericles LL.M law school 10th Anniversary celebrations were led by its founders, husband and wife team Marian Dent; the school's Dean, who is a U.S. attorney and her husband, Russian attorney Victor Lissniak.

Through strategic alliances with American law schools, such as the University of San Diego's Institute on International & Comparative Law, Pericles has been able to offer students short term summer scholarships abroad and other international opportunities. Pericles students and alumni are employed in all the major Western law firms located in Moscow, and several have gone on to study or work in cities like Washington D.C. and Los Angeles. Pericles law graduates have also been very successful in being awarded Fullbright and Muskie fellowships.

Pericles also helps potential MBA students prepare for graduate education in the West. Students prepare for GMAT and TOEFL at Pericles and are advised on schools and the application process. Pericles business alumni are studying at Wharton, University of Chicago, Columbia, London Business School, INSEAD and other top institutions around the world.



### Fiesta Mejicana

Text by Natalia Shuvalova

On September 13<sup>th</sup>, the Mexican Embassy in Moscow celebrated the 197<sup>th</sup> year of independence from the Spanish Crown. The special ceremony honoring the flag of Mexico "Grito Independencia" was followed by the national anthem. The newly accredited Ambassador, Alfredo Perez Bravo, welcomed all guests not to a social gathering but to a real "Fiesta Mejicana". Right after the official ceremony, he gave an award to Fedor Kritsky acknowledging his work for the Embassy for 28 years! The number of guests exceeded 400 people. Among them were those from the Mexican and Latin Community, as well as friends from other embassies, businessmen and people famous in culture, like Pierre-Christian Brochet. They were offered national traditional dishes (including nachos and salsa), different brands of the best "tequilas" and Mexican beers. All enjoyed the performance of a Mexican harp player, who played songs from Veracruz, an eastern province in the Gulf of Mexico, and two Mexican singers, currently studying cinema and theater in Moscow universities.

## Irish Trade Mission Builds on Record Russian Sales

Text by John Bonar

John McGuinness T.D., Ireland's Minister for International Trade, led a trade mission organised by Enterprise Ireland to Russia at the end of September. Irish exports to Russia are growing year-on-year with recent figures showing an increase of 25% in the first five months of 2007. Ireland's sales to Russia are currently running at an annual level of around €600 million, with traded services exceeding merchandise.

Minister McGuinness said that ICT (information and communication technologies) accounted for 40% of Irish exports, and Irish-owned software providers were planning to make serious in-roads into the Russian market. Half the participants on the Trade Mission were from the ICT sector and he was confident that more Irish software companies would be entering the market, either by themselves or with Russian and international systems integrators. In particular, Ireland's world-class cluster of wireless technology companies were attracted to Russia, which is one of the largest mobile phone markets in the world.

Enterprise Ireland in Russia works with approximately 250 Irish companies active in CIS markets.



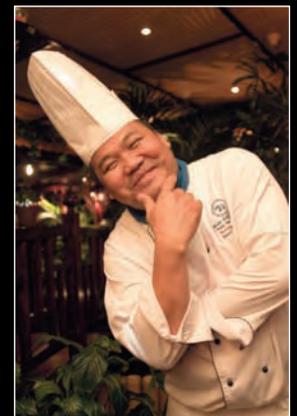
## "Visit London" theme of networking event

Text by John Bonar

Photos by Alex Zhukov

Persuading Russians to visit London was the theme of the September joint networking meeting of the Russo British Chamber of Commerce and the British Business Club. Barbara Jamison, Sales Manager Europe for Visit London gave a presentation and although a key part of the audience, being British, were sufficiently frequent travelers to the capital she found lots of enthusiastic supporters among the Russians in attendance at the Blue Elephant Restaurant.

Top London attractions for Russians include historical sites such as the Tower of London, Big Ben and the palaces, as well as the world's tallest observation Ferris wheel, the London Eye.





## Most Club opening

Text by Natalia Shuvalova  
Photos courtesy of Zeppelin Pro

On October 14th invited guests got a chance to see "The Other Side of the Moon." Not only to see it but enjoy exquisite food, drinks and enjoy special musical stars. Of course, nobody traveled in space but instead they visited the opening party at the elite club "The Most." The street was blocked so that there was no way to disturb the arriving celebrities (Marat Saphin, Ivan Demidov, Ruslan Nigmatulin, Ekaterian Vitebskaya were a few of the celebrities attending). The concept of the club is to be an elite hideaway for those who get tired of the constant photo camera flashes. The special invitees were entertained by special guests Jay J and Luciana Caporaso – celebrities from the dance music world. Jay J is known as "the producer whose touch turns everything into gold." His music combines funk, soul, disco and vocals. In 2006 he was a Grammy nominee for Jill Scott's "He Loves Me". remix.



## Opening Day of Pleasure for Pokrovka Suite Hotel

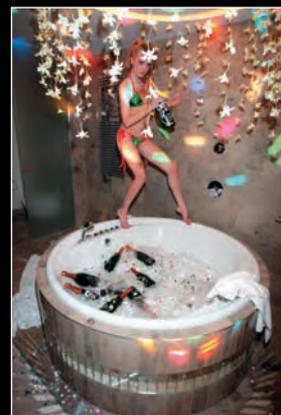
Text by John Bonar  
Photos courtesy of Mamaismom

At the end of September the Pokrovka Suite Hotel threw an official opening party for the first all-suite hotel in Moscow and the honor of becoming the first Moscow member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World. Over a thousand guests including Nikos Safronov, Dmitry Dibrov, Leonid Agutin, Tatyana Arno, Izolda Iskhanishvili, and Andrey Fomin were attended by eager journalists and business executives who mingled in the halls of the hotel and were particularly intrigued by the unusual bright sculpture, Pianophant, by French artist Guillaume Pesho.

When guests visited the exclusive suites that comprise the hotel's accommodation they were surprised to find a tableaux in each with actors playing a chairman, reading a newspaper while his lady and her girlfriends were drinking tea and gossiping in another room. In another a black goddess reclined on a bed smoking a long cigarette, surrounded by flickering candles. In one of the presidential suites cigar smoking businessmen sipped cognac and discussed the hottest topics while in another models dressed for the beach played volleyball and in another, a bath located directly in the bedroom was filled with champagne. Whether it was for drinking or bathing was left to the imagination of the voyeuristic visitors!

The developers, the Orco Property Company which stands behind the Prague-based MaMaison exclusive hotel chain, were determined that the new

hotel should stand out and ignore any conservatism or traditional expectations of a hotel.



## Russian Hokey

Text by Natalia Shuvalova

Photos by Liza Azrova

On Wednesday, October 10th over one hundred senior businesspeople gathered in Bosco Bar to celebrate the DVD premier of Igor Larionov's testimonial hockey

match. Hosted by Deloitte, the highlight of the event was the first Russian showing of the match, which featured many of the world's greatest hockey stars, several of whom were in attendance. Larionov's career was one of the longest and most successful in the sport, and he has successfully made the transition to business, being the owner of a thriving winery in California's Napa Valley. His wines, which are labeled "Triple Overtime", were also showcased and met with great approval from the guests. Alongside Deloitte, many of the largest companies operating in Russia attended including Gazprom, GM, TNK-BP, PetroCanada and Wimm-Bill-Dann.



## Elite chooses a new Russian face

Text by Annet Kulyagina

Photos by Alexey Zhukov

The world's most prestigious modeling network, Elite Model Management, concluded its regular search for a new Russian face in a competition in Moscow in September. The contest has gained popularity in Russia with the success of Nizhny Novgorod model, Natalya Vodyanova, who was the idol for 25 girls from across Russia who strutted their stuff in defense of Russia's renown as the land of the world's most beautiful and alluring women.

Sponsored by home appliances manufacturer Rowenta, the beauty competition at the Manezh was judged by a jury including the president of Elite World, Bernard Ene, the President of Elite Model Look

Russia, Anton Alfer, the General Director of Rowenta, Reno de Butler under the watchful gaze of an audience of celebrities. The choice of Nika Kushe as the winner and recipient of a \$150,000 modeling contract as an invitation to compete in the international Elite Model Contest.





## Digby, Lord Jones of Birmingham

was appointed Minister of State for Trade and Investment in the new British government at the end of June. He paid an inaugural visit to Russia in October. This charismatic, some might say larger than life, government minister talked to **John Bonar** for the Last Word.

**You qualified as a lawyer, practiced law in Birmingham; ran the Confederation of British Industry, which is the British voice of business for six years and now you are a Cabinet Minister. What hat are you most comfortable wearing – lawyer, businessman or politician?**

The hat I've always worn – that of my country. I don't consider myself a politician. I've never been and have no intention of becoming a member of any political party. I'm a front bench member of the British government. My captain is Gordon Brown and I happily take the Labour whip in the House of Lords (Editor's note: British Upper House).

**Are you the right man for the job?**

I think so. Successive British governments have never had the right man in this job. They have had career politicians who have to worry about their constituency, running back to the House of Commons for a three-line whip (Editor's note: important vote). We have a history as a great trading nation. I want to make us great again. I understand business, I know a lot of people and I am not distracted by party politics.

**Could you be considered a poacher turned gamekeeper?**

When I led the CBI, you could say I globalized the CBI. We opened offices in places like Beijing and Brussels and beefed up our presence in Washington. I had access to the government and lobbied very hard. But you have to walk a very narrow line in pushing government. You cannot always be negative, you cannot always be criticizing. In Britain we have a very pro-business government. My job is exactly the same as it was at CBI. The one difference is that I owe loyalty to Her Majesty's government. I am inside the tent and I believe I can make a big difference. Patently the government has to consider the welfare of the whole nation.

**How's the job the same?**

I want to take the UKTI (UK Trade and Investment body), which is in great shape, and sell it round the world. Business is the greatest agent of change in this world today. If business gets it right then even in the poorest countries you get better water, better healthcare, better education... you even get a road or two. Business generates the wealth and pays the taxes. If it were not for the wealth business creates you would have no tax revenue. At UKTI we fight for British companies. If you are in Britain, employ people in Britain, and pay your taxes we'll go to bat for you.

**What about business with Russia?**

It's no secret the political relationship is not as good as it might be but business relations are excellent. British Russian business today is not just business as usual, it is better than ever. Britain is the biggest foreign investor in Russia. Trade is growing at a phenomenal pace without any sign of slowing. Our trade surplus is two billion pounds sterling. Bilateral trade in 2006 increased twofold. Already in 2007 it is up a further 40%. Russia is so important for Britain. That's why I'm here. This is the second country I've visited since joining the government. I'm glad I came.

**But this is not your first visit to Moscow?**

I came here five years ago when I was with the CBI. The changes are astonishing. When you live and work in a city it is hard to gauge changes but Moscow is unrecognizable from when I was here five years ago.