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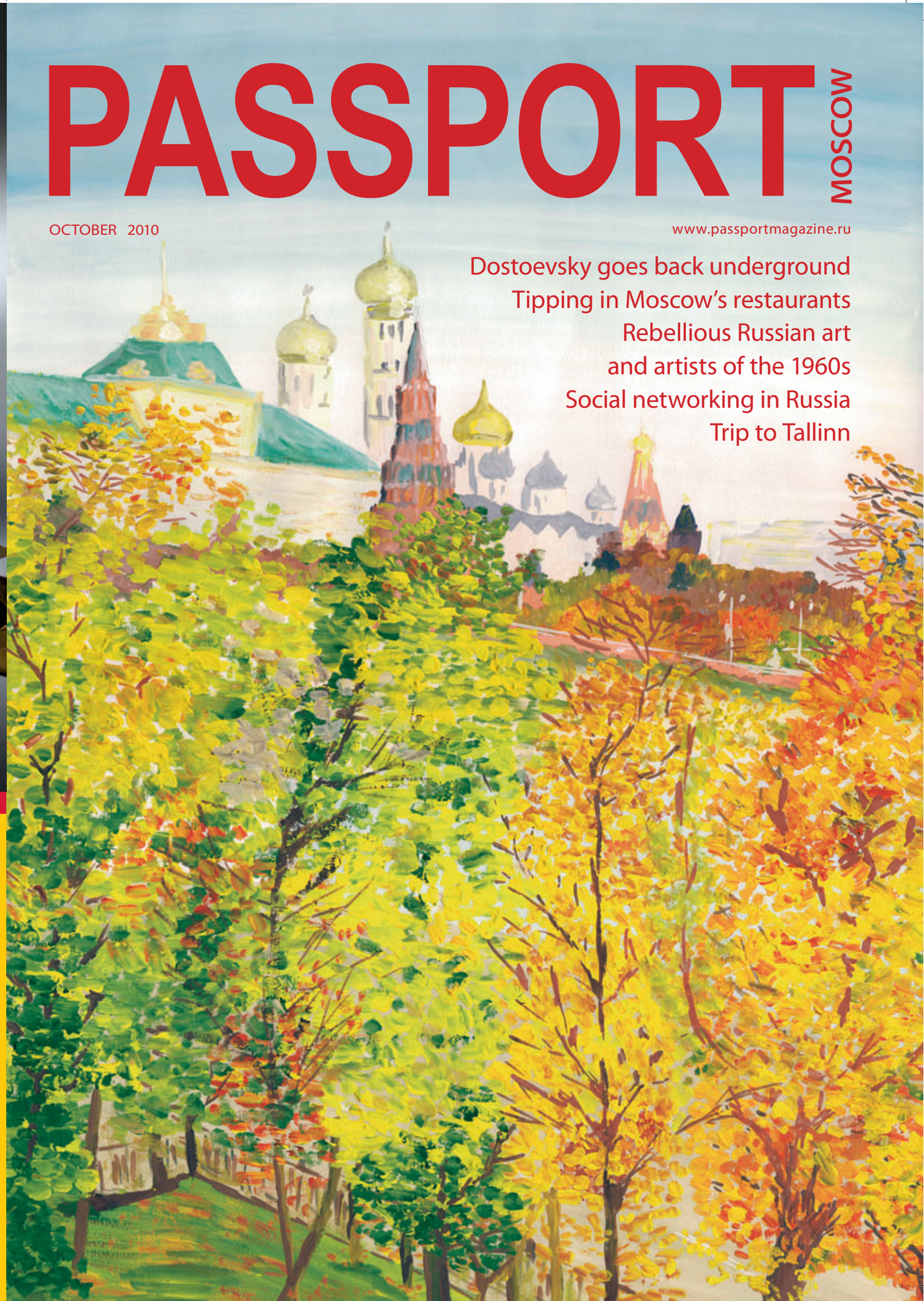
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OCTOBER 2010

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Tipping in Moscow's restaurants  
Rebellious Russian art  
and artists of the 1960s  
Social networking in Russia  
Trip to Tallinn







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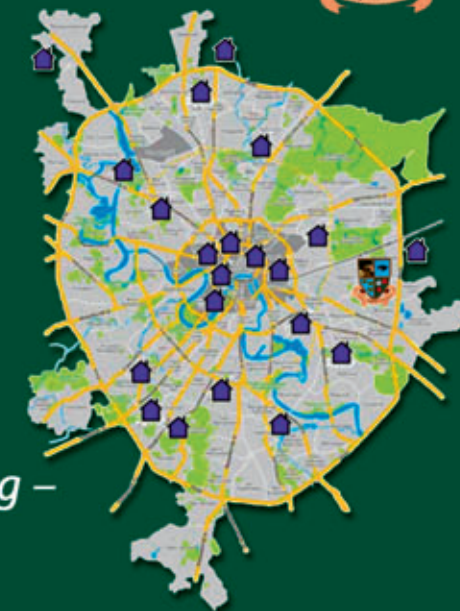
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## The English International School Moscow

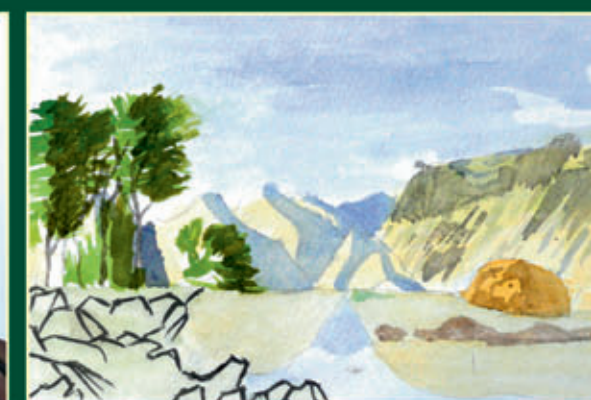


October 2010

### A Quick Quiz



1. What's this? —————→
2. How many buses does EIS have?
3. Which is the odd one out and why?  
*Football – cricket – swimming – scuba diving – athletics – basketball – hockey – tennis – volleyball – touch rugby – chess*
4. How many flags are on the wall?
5. Who painted these pictures?



Good luck!

ANSWERS  
1. Map, where EIS parents live  
2. 10 serving families door-to-door  
3. We don't have scuba diving yet. All the others are in sports programme!  
4. Our children are from 43 countries  
5. IGCSE, Y12 & Y8 students

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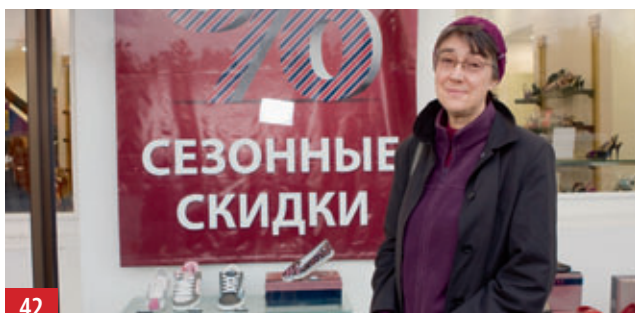
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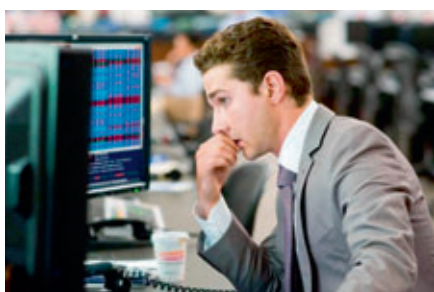


**John Ortega**  
Owner and Publisher

What's new this month? Well, the headline issue for me at least is the situation with the Mayor of Moscow Mr Yuri Luzhkov. Suddenly the Mayor and his business-lady wife Elena Baturina were denounced on just about every channel, something that the remnants of the Russian liberal press, such as Ekho Moskva have been doing for years. Revelations about links between the Mayor and Inteko, Baturina's hugely successful real estate business, and direct criticism of some of the Mayor's bizarre management practices, such as keeping the lists of buildings which he intends to demolish secret, and disastrous, profit-orientated urban planning, has filled state TV channels news and prime-time spots. Although it seems to me that the criticism is mostly justified, it has been levelled below the belt and there seems no opportunity for the Mayor to fight back on prime time TV.

Elena Baturina quite rightly pointed out, that all this is part "of the presidential election race". It seems that Putin supports the Mayor; Medvedev does not, but us peasants will never know the whole story.

If the Kremlin had not authorised such an attack on Mr and Mrs Mayor, viewers would never have been treated to such a display of critical programming. This is the frightening aspect of what is happening now. TV is a tool, a weapon to be used in the hands of whoever holds power, and opinions can still be swayed in Russia by using moving pictures and words shown on boxes in people's flats throughout the land. The fact that the Mayor, along with all the governors in the country, is no longer elected is something that nobody has mentioned. The 2012 election battle will be fought, as before, in the media. But this time, the state media is fully controlled. So the key question is: who is now in control of the media? The President or the Prime Minister, or both?



## Wall Street - Money Never Sleeps

This is the highly anticipated sequel to the 1987 film Wall Street.

An intense thriller starring Michael Douglas in a reprisal in his iconic role as the king of greed Gordon Gekko, directed by Oliver Stone. Wall Street - Money Never Sleeps premieres October 1st at the First English movie theatre in Moscow:

*Dome Cinema, 19  
Olympiysky Prospekt,  
Renaissance Hotel  
931-9873  
[www.domecinema.ru](http://www.domecinema.ru)*



## Sunday on the Lawn at MGU

Babye Leto (grandmother's summer), a spell of mild, beautiful and fresh weather under clear skies visits Moscow in September. One of the city's favorite gathering places is the city overlook at Vorobyovy Gory (Sparrow Hills) with the ski jump and embankment down to the Moscow River and Luzhniki below and the magnificent main building of Moscow State University behind.

This Sunday, amid the residents and tourists, wedding parties and tour buses, Russian Director Alexander Guz turned the lawn in front of MGU into a film set with television starlet Miraslava Karpovich (Papa's Daughters). Sixteen young dancers from Moscow's Kudrinka Dance Ensemble joined her for the scene: It's summer and very hot. The kids are lounging on the lawn enjoying a boom box. They call a radio station to request a tune, and also ask for a cooling rain. Then the Surprise – a city water truck rolls up and sprays the group. They run through the spray and finish with a rock dance number on the lawn.

The Catch – it's not hot. Today it's under 15 degrees, the water is cold and, as usual in the film business, there were many takes. A stray mother dog shows up. A kite salesman resents that his usual spot has been commandeered and continues to fly kites over the set. The Sunday crowd, bundled in jackets, wander into the background giving the continuity crew fits – it is summer after all.



Cover painting by Julia Nozdracheva

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The calendar has now moved on-line: [www.passportmagazine.ru](http://www.passportmagazine.ru)

## Tribute to Andrei Tarkovsky

It is strange, but in Russia an exhibition dedicated to Andrei Tarkovsky has never been held. Tarkovsky was one of the most influential Russian film directors. "He invented a new language, true to the nature of film as a mirror of life, life as a dream," said Ingmar Bergman. In fact, he was also a painter who influenced his generation. In New York's Guggenheim Museum and London's Barbican Gallery, both his paintings and tableaux vivantes films, *Sacrifice* and *Stalker*, are regularly on display. The current exhibition held at the Solyanka Gallery in Moscow is a tribute to this multi-talented man, and is a forerunner to 2011 which is the year of his 80th anniversary. The curators of the Solyanka exhibition have gathered not only the artist's paintings and illustrations, but personal belongings from collections of Tarkovsky's family, photographs by Layla Alexander-Garrett taken on the island of Gotland, Sweden, where Tarkovsky's last film, *Sacrifice*, was shot.



**Till October 17**

[www.solgallery.ru](http://www.solgallery.ru)

Open: 12:00-20:00 except Monday

Building 2, 1/2 Solyanka street



**September 22 – November 14**

Tretyakov gallery

Open: 10:00-19:30 except Monday

[www.tretyakovgallery.ru](http://www.tretyakovgallery.ru)

12, Lavrushinsky Lane

## French draftsman from the Louvre and d'Orsay

Before photography was invented in the 19th century, drawings and engravings were the only medium of visual communication in every-day life. Images of Eastern beauties, spices, landscapes or peculiar animals from the south were recorded using paper, ink and pencil, and transported to satisfy the curiosity of people in France or Flanders. No surprise that those pieces of art have now become extremely fragile and are rarely displayed in major museums. Each time they are exhibited for two months they need to be restored for six months. The Louvre and d'Orsay museums are surely among the best in the world, and Muscovites and visitors have the chance of viewing valuable parts of their exhibitions, at a special show in the Moscow Tretyakov gallery marking the year of France in Russia. Artists include: Nicolas Poussin, Gustave Doré, Paul Gauguin, Paul Signac, Claude Monet, Camille Pissaro, Jan Brueghel, Peter Paul Rubens and Rembrandt.

## Polnopolunie

Slava Polunin is a Russian performance artist and clown, author of numerous artistic productions including the Snow Show. He is a busy man and not easy to approach. He does not like media exposure and prefers a quiet life. The everyday life of this artist was of interest to photographer Vladimir Mishukov, who started his photographic career when studying to be an actor. Initially he took backstage photographs at Polunin's Snow Show but suggested the idea of an album of photographs about the show which the latter did not accept right away. Yet Mishukov's works made an impression on Polunin and soon he sent a card saying, "Come more often". Gradually, the album of photographs and an exhibition at Manezh emerged. Olga Sviblova, director of



the Moscow House of Photography, decided to mount an exhibition of Mishukov's photographs, and regularly awarded him the Silver Camera contest prizes with comments like "Mishukov is our everything in modern photography".

**Till October 13**

Manezh

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## Best of the Balkans

The Best of Goran Bregovic is the name of his jubilee tour programme, which the Serbian composer brings to Moscow this autumn. Both journalists, fans and random visitors at Bregovic's concerts use one common word—charismatic. People who come to his performances usually fall in love with his music, style and mood. Goran Bregovic is a Balkan rock star who in his youth became an opera and film composer, as well as a concert performer. Together with his ensemble, the Wedding and Funeral Band, Bregovic performs a repertoire of Balkan

folk arrangements infused with his own musical ingredients, finding inspiration in the raw energy of brass-based Gypsy bands. To describe what you see in his show is impossible: musicians come out one after another and fill the whole stage, and when they begin to sing, play and dance together, it is difficult for the audience to sit still.

**October 15**

19:00

*Crocus City Hall*

[www.crocus-hall.com](http://www.crocus-hall.com)

## Moscow Design Week 2010

This autumn we are witnessing the second programme of events dedicated to placing Moscow among the world capitals as a centre of design. What Alexander Rodchenko started ninety years ago would have become a proper school of design but for certain political events. Yet President of the Moscow Design Week, Alexander Fedotov, believes that today's younger generation of Russian

designers is open-minded, and that consumers are more receptive to new ideas than before. Moscow Design Week, which is supported by the Moscow Museum of Modern Art, and the embassies of France and Italy, is promising to become a major event with exhibitions, Art de vivre à la française, at the Manezh and the Italian, I Saloni World Wide Moscow, at Crocus Expo. There will also be numerous master classes and designers' parties at Red October, and the Moscow Architecture Institute. A special treat will be a



premiere by circus art and street entertainment group Cirque du Soleil.

**October 5-9**

*For schedule see*

[www.moscowdesignweek.ru](http://www.moscowdesignweek.ru)



## Bach, Beethoven and Vivaldi

The Moscow House of Music opens a new season with two concerts worthy of classical music fans' attention. The first is dedicated to Ludwig van Beethoven, when the Russian National Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Vladimir Spivakov with the piano soloist Alexander Gavriluk, will present their interpretation of Beethoven's controversial Seventh Symphony composed in 1812.

Alexander Gavriluk, a 26-year old soloist from Ukraine, is a past winner of several contests held in Israel and Japan.

**October 15 and October 30**

*Moscow House of Music*

*Svetlanovsky hall*

19:00

## Leonid Shishkin Gallery

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[info@shishkin-gallery.ru](mailto:info@shishkin-gallery.ru)

+7 495 694 35 10, +7 495 229 83 21





### The sound of paintings

Australian violinist Dian Booth will give an unusual performance in the Rerikh Museum on 2 October, when she will “play” the paintings on the walls of the gallery, drawing out the hidden sounds she hears in the various colours.

Dian, from Alice Springs in the red-hot centre of Australia, calls this kind

of performance “spontaneous composition”.

Dian was influenced by the Frenchman Fabien Maman, who founded Tama-Do, the Academy of Sound, Colour and Movement. Maman says that in all art forms, there is sound, colour and movement.

The idea of finding sound in paintings and sculptures came to Dian in 1989 when she was contemplating Musso-rsky's piece, *Pictures at an Exhibition*. She thought, “Why don't I take my violin to a gallery and play the paintings?”

Together with cellist John Sharp, Dian put the idea into practice when they “played” the sculptures of David Nash at an exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery in Kensington Gardens, London.

Dian regards the opportunity to play the sounds of Nikolai Rerikh's vibrant,

spiritual paintings as one of the most exciting events of her life. Ten years ago, on a visit to America, she was shown photographs of some of his pictures. “I was told that one day I would play the sounds of his paintings. I have been looking forward to this moment ever since.”

Dian spent the first half of her life as a classical violinist, playing in famous orchestras, including at Covent Garden. She now works as a sound-colour healer, a kind of art and music therapist.

*Spontaneous Compositions*  
by Dian Booth

**Saturday 2 October at 18:30**

*Rerikh Museum, Maly Znamensky Per. 3/5,  
Metro Kropotkinskaya*

*Tickets 250 roubles (150 for students and pensioners)*

### Konstantin Khudyakov: High-Resolution Art



This exhibition of the artist Konstantin Khudyakov is presented by the Moscow City Government, the Department of Culture of the City of Moscow, the Russian Academy of Arts and the Moscow Museum of Modern Art. It could, on the one hand, be called a retrospective, since full tribute is paid to his previous well-known projects. On the other hand, there is enough new content for it to be called a new project. Those same terms can be applied to Khudyakov's art in general.

The artist's method is uncompromisingly modern: over a period of fifteen years, Khudyakov has been concentrating on mastering digital technologies and means of communication, consider-

ing it the most suitable for solving current artistic tasks. What are those tasks? Generally they can be described as the attempt to create a new mythology. The mythology of the decay of a former civilization and of the birth of a new one, of the synthesis of biological and technological beginnings, of the juxtaposition of the scales of the macrocosm and microcosm, of the metaphysical interpretation of space.

One of Khudyakov's largest projects on display, *Deisis*, has been exhibited in the Tretyakov Gallery. Also on show is one of the artist's recent projects: *Apocalypse. An Angel Appeared*. In parallel with religious art, the viewer will see work from the series, *Basic Instinct*, in which the erotic aspect of human existence is studied. Also presented in the exhibition are Khudyakov's large-format digital landscapes, the first interactive pictures in the world, created jointly with programmers from Perm (“multi-touch art”, as the author calls it), 3-D experiments with stereo-light-panels, a few video installations, including the multi-screen video installation, *Red Square*, and also some fragments of the perpetual project, *Hotel Russia*.

The main sponsor of the exhibition is Alpha-Capital MFO (Multi-family Office).

**04 October – 07 November 2010**

*The State Museum of Modern Art of the  
Russian Academy of Arts,  
10 Gogolevsky Boulevard*





## MILLIONAIRE FAIR

On October 22-24 the Manezh central exhibition hall, will be taken over by the unique atmosphere of luxury and unsurpassable style which is Millionaire Fair Moscow 2010. Since the first event in 2005, the Millionaire Fair has tried to anticipate the market and keep one step ahead.

The fair serves as a platform to display the latest luxury goods from around the world. Here you can find legendary automobiles, "retro" cars, yachts and luxurious interiors.

Novero jewellery will make its first appearance on the Russian market at the Fair. These pieces of jewelry have USB ports and innovative hands-free devices built right in them with prices starting from US\$120,000 per item!

The new Benarrow supercar will make its first appearance anywhere at the Millionaire Fair 2010. The German manufacturers have kept all technical specifications of the car under wraps so far. These cars are produced in limited series, to individual order. There are less than 50 cars currently all over the world. This will be a unique event for the international automotive industry.



Throughout the exhibition, there will be spectacular shows, sensational premieres and presentations of limited edition series by world-renowned brands. You will be able to enjoy haute cuisine from the best Moscow chefs, be dazzled by the radiance of diamonds and will be invited to private parties at the best Moscow fashion clubs.

On October 22 the legendary gala-opening ceremony of the Millionaire Fair will take place. Step into the new age of the world of luxury with Millionaire Fair 2010.

## Roger Ballin's work in Moscow



The art of American photographer Roger Ballin is familiar to many of us for

his work documenting small *dorps*, or villages, in rural South Africa in the 1970s, and more conceptual work in the 1980s and 1990s, all of which has attained considerable international acclaim. Now it has come to Moscow. An exhibition of his work, called Documentary Fiction, opened on the 15th September at the Photographer.ru gallery at Winzavod and will run till the 28th of November. The exhibition has been generously sponsored by Fujifilm and is supported by the American Embassy in Russia.

At the opening night, Ballin described the exhibition as being about the relationships between objects in space, not just about two dimensional objects hung on walls called photographs. Ballin works for hours, days, even weeks

over one setting, for example the torn-off head of a doll. An additional component or two might be added: a piece of barbed wire, or a picture of a half-naked man. The images are not designed to shock the public, although they are often labelled as being beyond the comfort zone. They serve as ways to make us more aware of the "normal" environment which we no longer question, because we have grown familiar to it.

"Ballin's work encourages the viewer to break out from the usual frame of observing the surrounding world, and change the subjective criteria of valuing reality," commented Anthony Bannon, director of the International Museum of Photography and Film in Rochester, New York.





## The heat goes on, in Moscow's nightclubs

Miguel Francis

The hot summer was pretty short-lived. But looking on the bright side, clubs are opening up one after another, the cozy warmth of Moscow's nightlife is slowly lurking up, ex-pats are coming back from their summer vacations to the busy town and I couldn't be happier in bringing you another update on the new happenings within the rambunctious nightlife of Moscow.

Before we start, I'd like to quickly give you an update on one of the best expat parties in town. No, its not just because I'm involved in its organization but because its definitely one of the best ex-pat parties in Moscow. Honey Bunny ex-pat Thursdays at Imperia Lounge have become very successful, definitely a fiesta for a foreigner not just this summer but well into the fall. I can safely say that our publisher, John Ortega, has witnessed one, which gives this event the ultimate seal of approval. Giorgio Paolucci and Pavel Rudanovsky have master-minded this perfect virtual club. Honey Bunny is a brand that moves from place to place creating its most original ex-pat Thursdays and Saturdays in town. Girls eating burgers and spraying themselves with whip cream while they perform an elaborate dance number to live house vocal songs performed by me are just some of the things you'll witness at Honey Bunny. Every Thursday at the glamor-

ous Imperia Lounge its time for some toasts with honey along with DJ Llyod Antuan, live vocals and MC by Miguel Santiago, Verdi Cabaret and the Honey Bunny girls with your favourite hosts Pavel Rudanovsky and Giorgio Paolucci. Located near Metro Ulitsa 1905 Goda, Mantulinskaya 5.

Another place worth checking out is Giorgio's Paradise Rock Tuesday at Garage Club (near Metro Polyanka, Brotnikov Per. 8). This is for all you rock lovers out there, sometimes there is just too much house music in my foreign ears and when I need to vent with some good ol' rock'n'roll, this is the place to be! Last but not least, we might be doing a PASSPORT Magazine Club Night at Imperia Lounge in late October to November. Join PASSPORT Magazine Moscow on Facebook to stay in tune!

Hope you're OK with some bad news before we continue on with the good ones. We Are Family, a club that has been created and successfully operational for almost a year thanks to the creative acolytes behind DyagileV Club, Sinisha Lazarevich and Misha Kozlov, has unexpectedly closed its doors. A pretty typical Moscow situation with some bills not paid on time (or something like that) led to a Moscow police order that initiated a complete lockdown and seal on the whole premises. It's quite unfortunate for everyone who made some unforget-

table memories at this beautiful place. This club had an amazing atmosphere and was probably one of the strongest clubs over the whole 2009-2010 period in bringing foreign DJ talent into Moscow. But not to worry, a new super club came crashing right into its place and on we go with the good news!

Behold, the infamous Hollywood super-club Playhouse has gotten a small sister in Moscow. Ladies and gentlemen! Playhouse Moscow has just opened its doors on the 17th of September! This is a place that deserves your presence, or perhaps the other way around. The club has no ties to Playhouse Hollywood, and is fully operated by the same team that created Royal Bar. The idea behind this giant club was to create something unique within Moscow's nightlife, using a big venue, ironically the same venue We Are Family have used for their club, the Playhouse team have created an entertainment extravaganza hive. Their grand opening weekend was a blast, nothing but grand! First a Ministry of Sound DJ, Mouse T, ripping off the roof with his solid international house tunes, then an Italian progressive circus called Circo Nero, performing some insanity while hanging from the ceiling. Some serious Ibiza-type club entertainment, ladies and gents! Their plan is to bring over Cirque du Soleil next month along with other great Circus acts from around the world Stay tuned for more updates in the next issue. Playhouse is located near Metro Kitai-Gorod, Lubyanskii Proezd 15/2. Oh, and not to brag or anything, but I was chosen as the official voice for the club, so you will definitely see me there on the weekends.

We Are Infashion, another new addition to the scene. This is a bar that





simply screams chic, upscale-relax and let yourself go. Probably the only bar in Moscow where labels, clothing and all that superficial glam doesn't matter but yet the place is filled with these ex-glamorous people just letting themselves go and getting pretty intoxicated, and that's the idea. If you need to visit a cozy place with some open-minded clubbers then We Are Infashion is the place for you. Hip, fun and adventurous. You can have dinner, smoke a delicious hookah, dance, and then, well, get plastered! The place is located near Metro Smolenskaya, 1st Smolenskii Pereulok 7, and its available for you on the weekdays.

Speaking of these let-yourself-loose places, Rolling Stone, located on Bolotnaya Naberzhnaya within the super club Rai district that I covered in the July issue, is another one of those hip, progressive bars with DJs that play all kinds of fashionable and unfashionable tunes, catering to a wide array of tastes. I went there a few times, not sure why I haven't mentioned this place before, but let me tell you: this is a great spot to come right after your main club adventures are over. A place where you will see women dance on the bar, a place where you will see the rest of the people dance on the bar as the morning sun starts to rise—and I'll let your imagination make up the rest. You get the idea, a really fun place to be at! Rolling Stone is located right next door to Rai, so if you're catching a cab just tell the driver the word "Rai" and he will know where to take you.

No matter what kind of leisure time, wild or luxurious, you prefer there is a small get-that-phone-number Russian girl behavior guide that I wanted to provide you with. Another good name for it is the rules of "Moscow's Natural Night-

life Selection". Being a single guy myself, I've had my share of experiences in this little game here in Moscow. Now this is definitely for ex-pats like me who do not have a family and are single but please note that the activities suggested above are a great way to spend a late evening with your beloved ones in Moscow (for example, take your kids to the Rock Tuesday and enjoy some rock and roll, or why not take your girl-friend to Imperia Thursdays and meet other expats?) and well, the ones below are for single guys only! Furthermore, I want to point out that I hope single males and females find this useful, this is not intended in anyway to offend the Russian or foreign women living in Moscow. I'd love to invite out all the lovely PASSPORT Magazine female readers out there to join these parties (we need some rock girls for Giorgio's Rock Tuesdays). Once you indulge into Moscow's nightlife you will see that it's not as bad as it may seem.

Tip #1: Do not be afraid. Most of the girls sitting at the bar or dancing on the dance floor would love for you, the mysterious foreigner, to come up and say hello in broken Russian or simplified English. The majority of Russians study English from grade one and for the most part they will understand you, and be able to reply. Unlike the West, here in the fine-graded mid-line between Western and Eastern ideologies and cultures, the women are responsive and eager to get acquainted with fun, interesting people, especially if you're a foreigner on top of that.

Tip #2: The idea here is not to scare the girl off in anyway but make her interested. Without applying any pressure, find out what she does and where she's from. Make sure she is Moscow born. The majority of the "gold-diggers" that will instantly ask you for a drink in a situation like this most likely come from other parts of Russia. Usually Muscovites are very sincere and polite. Afterwards give a little intro about yourself and your doings over here in Moscow.

Tip #3: Here is a tested, guaranteed way of getting in touch with that girl you just met out in the night. Once you rambled about yourself a bit and found out a little bit about her, hand over your business card. Works like a charm. You instantly witness how your card gets treated with care and studied like a long awaited prize. After the warm heaviness of the situation has passed, you can proceed with full confidence, pull out your

mobile, move it in her direction and ask her for the phone number. At this point it is up to you either to continue the conversation, perhaps do that drink and do some dancing or play the "I'll call you in a couple of days" game.

I've personally experienced both scenarios. At one point some random girls came up to me and my brother while we were standing by the bar, gave us their numbers and asked us to come over for dinner. Seriously. Shocking, intriguing, and it turned out safe and fun! Other times, we simply roamed the clubs, searching for single and curious people like us, using the tips provided above.

What not to do: If you're dancing at the club or lounging by the bar, don't just simply approach the girl and straight off offer her a dinner or a drink. First start off by offering her a dance, if she feels she is too good for you then you shouldn't waste your time. Dancing, the international body language, only this activity has proved to work in the process of "Moscow's Natural Nightlife Selection". If the girl sees that you are willing to buy her things before you've even had the change to get to know her, she will instantly take advantage of that and then sooner or later disappear, leaving you with a decent tab to close. Hopefully I did some good here and gave you single gentlemen out there a few good pointers for some fun out on the nightly clubbing run. Enjoy! **P**



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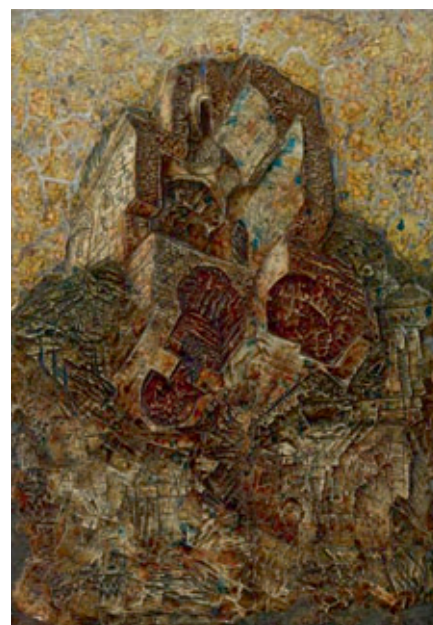




Anatoly Zverev



Mikhail Kulakov



Dmitry Plavinsky

# Russian art of the 1960s Part III

by Olga Slobodkina-von Bromssen

Film director Alexander Rumnev and art critic Ilya Tsirlin started to display works of the younger generation of artists—Anatoly Zverev, Mikhail Kulakov, Dmitry Plavinsky and Alexander Kharitonov—in their work spaces. This was a big step forward because no official gallery would condescend to look at their work.

These were the artists who introduced the atmosphere of Parisian attics into Moscow art scene of that period. The basements and gateways of Arbat Street were “infected”, so to speak, with the spirit of Montparnasse and Moulin Rouge. These three artists’ God-given talents, plus their passion for alcohol, challenged the ubiquitous, grave Soviet constraint on art and created a carnival atmosphere.

The three were completely different stylistically. Anatoly Zverev used a free style which utilised fetching minimalism from Chinese painting and the vital energy of French art. Dmitry Plavinsky worked in a meticulous, almost “Общая лексика” jewellery-like way on detail. He also used a special approach to struc-

ture, which was quite outrageous at the time. Then there was the romantic primitivism of Kharitonov, which fitted into the group’s bohemian existence very well.

Zverev and Plavinsky amazed not only the Moscow elite, but Western connoisseurs of art, for example, José David Alfaro Siqueiros and Jean Paul Sartre. This duet created many Moscow legends about how they created their masterpieces, and there many love affairs. Somewhat different from the stylistically, but also wholly in the spirit of the Russian carnival tradition was the artist Vasily Sitnikov. He looked like a Holy Fool, or a pilgrim, or simply a madman wearing his bast shoes and fetters, and carrying a string bag over his shoulder. That was his way to shock post-Stalin Moscow and visiting foreigners.

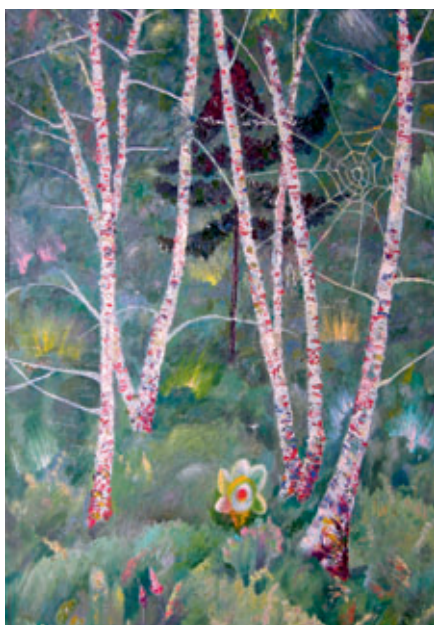
That carnival clan attracted the attention of a group of artists, poets and literateurs who gravitated around Vladimir Yakovlev, a semi-blind person suffering from deep depressions, but possessing unusual insight. Being almost totally without a visual relationship with the outer world, Yakovlev created his own world, tragically expressive, charged and self-sufficient. Portraits, landscapes,

abstract compositions and flowers seen only by him reflected his inner world. His works witnessed his vulnerability, childish openness and the sufferings of his soul. The unusual energy of his works, the colourist richness of his images and his non-communicative existence attracted extraordinary people. Among them were poet Gennady Aigi, film critic V. Sveshnikov who became a priest later and N. Kotlyerev, a well-known specialist in Russian symbolism today. It also attracted the artists who saw madness as a form of exposed suffering and a cure-all: I. Voroshilov, A. Babichenko and V. Pyatnitsky.

The young artist Vladimir Pyatnitsky created a grotesque world of physical deformity. However, unlike Yakovlev, his world, no matter how conditional it might be, was always concrete and socially defined. His art reflected the lives of the generation whose fathers perished during the war or in Stalin’s camps. That was a horrible world of tramps, hunch-backs and other ugly creatures. The artist was not remote from that world, but part of it.

Pyatnitsky’s images would be transcribed later in the creativity of Vyacheslav Kalinin, another strong rep-



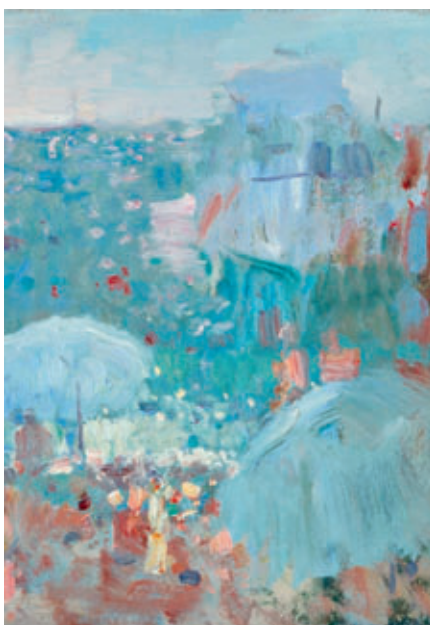


**Alexander Kharitonov**

representative of that circle of Moscow Bohemian artists.

A group of survivors from Stalin's camps settled in the small town of Tarusa on the Oka river, 130km from Moscow. They were not allowed to live in Moscow. Among them were artists Arkady Steinberg and Boris Sveshnikov whose formative years were spent in the same camp zone. Next to Steinberg lived writer Konstantin Paustovsky with his family. Tarusa turned into a centre of cultural life. Those creative people published the *Taruskiye Stranitsy* magazine ("Tarusa Pages"). Many well-known writers came to Tarusa, for example, poet Nikolai Zabolotsky, Nadezhda Mandelshtam (Osip Mandelshtam's wife), A. Tsvetayeva-Efron (the daughter of Marina Tsvetayeva) and the nucleus of the writers of the 1960s: Yuri Kazakov, Vladimir Maksimov and Bulat Okudzhava. In 1962 Plavinsky also settled in Tarusa. He was often visited by Zverev and Kharitonov.

Steinberg's house became a unique exotic happening, filled with books,



**Konstantin Paustovsky**

wooden carved sculpture and his own and Sveshnikov's paintings. He was attracted by romantic landscape painting in the spirit of Claude Lorrain and Max Voloshin and was familiar with the painting technologies of the old masters. His general cultural background, his experiences in the camps and his non-pragmatic attitude towards art made him the spiritual leader of the young.

While Steinberg was an ideologist and an enlightener, Sveshnikov was a living incarnation of the myth of an artist fervently devoted to his art. Sveshnikov's constant activity, as well as his series of drawings from the camps that had survived by pure chance added to the artistic atmosphere in Tarusa. His series of drawings, *The White Epos* (as A.D. Sinyavsky called them), were reminiscent of the old masters in their serene contemplations of the world, and the natural acceptance of death. The influence of Sveshnikov on young artists was enormous at that time. It is evident in the works of Kharitonov, Plavinsky and Kalinin.



**Vladimir Maksimov**

The creativity of artist Eduard Steinberg, Arkady's son, was also formed in Tarusa. Together with some other young artists he later organized the first free exhibition in the House of Culture in Tarusa. Eduard Steinberg had no knowledge of academic drawing. His attention was concentrated in the expressive manner of Van Gogh and Vlaminck. Later he became interested in religious and philosophic issues. By 1970, that metaphysical thinking had taken the form of geometric compositions verging on the mysticism of Russian symbolism and the figurative manner of Kazimir Malevich.

Although Sveshnikov and Steinberg moved to Moscow at the beginning of the 1960s, the ideas they conceived in Tarusa stoked their further creativity. The "общая лексика" of the concrete and the eternal, of existence and culture, of nature on Earth and in outer space, which was so characteristic of the Tarusa School, became part of Moscow art life in the 1960s and early 1970s. **P**

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## Opening of the Moscow Theatre Season

Marina Lukanina

For any passionate theatre-goer, fall is definitely associated with the opening of a new theater season in Moscow. By October most theatres are back from their regional tours and are ready to impress the Moscow audience with their latest performances.

It is often challenging to orient yourself in a wide selection of the theatre repertoires as most of the information is available in Russian only. You often feel bewildered by the number of performances happening every evening. So this new series of articles is meant to assist the readers spoilt for choice and to give an idea of what some of the highlight performances are and, most importantly, where the theatres are located.

### The Bolshoi Theater

Theater Square 1, [www.bolshoi.ru](http://www.bolshoi.ru)

The Bolshoi Theater will open its 235th season with the world premiere of the ballet, *And Then a Century of Peace: Creation 2010*. The ballet is staged by the famous French choreographer Angelin Preljocaj. This production is part of the Year of France in Russia and the Year of Russian in France.

The ballet theme is Biblical, based on the Book of Revelation. The choreographer is eager to explore what is hidden in the human soul. The composer of the ballet is the well-known "father of the French electronic music", Laurent Garnier. The set design is done by the Indian artist, Subodh Gupta. The costume design is provided by Igor Chapurin. This is his 5th time working at the Bolshoi Theatre.



### The Maly Theater

Teatralnyi proezd 1 bld.1 (Main Stage); Bolshaya Ordynka, 69 (Additional Stage) [www.maly.ru](http://www.maly.ru)

If you have lived in Moscow for some time, you will probably know that next to the Bolshoi Theater (which literally means "Big Theatre") is the Maly Theater (which means "Small Theatre"). This is the oldest theatre in Russia, having been founded in the 18th century. It is now opening its 255th season.

On October 10th it presents two famous productions, *Woe from Wit* by Alexander Griboedov and *The Mysteries of the Madrid Court* by Eugene Scrib. The first opening night of the season will be on October 11th with the comedy of Carlo Goldonni *Lovers* (Innamorati). This production is staged by the Italian director Stefano de Luca. It might be worth seeing an Italian comedy by the Italian director at the oldest Russian theatre.

### The Chekhov

### Moscow Art Theater

Kamergerski Per, 3 [www.mxat.ru](http://www.mxat.ru)

This theatre was an "early bird", opening its 113th season on August 30th. The Artistic Director, the actor Oleg Tabakov, celebrated his 75th birthday a couple of weeks before the new season began.

The Italian comedy, *Ghosts*, by Eduardo de Fillipo, was the first to open on the main stage. It seems that the Italians are in fashion in Moscow's theatres these days. The story in brief is the following: Pasquale and his wife move into a house that everyone considers to be haunted. Pasquale, however, is eager to experience some of the magic that is bound to happen. The cast is a reasonable mix of famous and less famous actors from three different theatres.





## The Malaya Bronnaya Theater

Malaya Bronnaya Str., 4 [www.mbronnaya.theatre.ru](http://www.mbronnaya.theatre.ru)

This theatre opened its 65th season on August 1st with the hit of last season, *Arcadia*, by Tom Stoppard.

The play consists of two different scenarios being acted out in the same country, but with a time difference of 200 years. Stoppard offers a conceptualisation of history that challenges the idea of the linearity of time, with Byron as the central character. The play can be interpreted in many ways, such as supporting the optimistic image of history as an endless march in which nothing is lost, as compared to the manifestation of "chaos theory" where everything is lost.

The first opening night of the current season will be on October 15th with Graham Greene's cold-war story, *Our*

*Man in Havana*. The director of this production, Aleksey Frolenkov, defines the genre as "spy detective parody".

In November another opening night will introduce a new interpretation of Gogol's famous play, *The Government Inspector*.

An interesting production already running, called *Late Love*, is worth mentioning. This is a joint international theatre project by the Malaya Bronnaya Theatre, the Israeli production company, Ametist, and the Gesher Theatre, also from Israel. The director, Evgeny Arbie, from the Gesher Theatre, offers a tragi-comedy based on Valery Mukharyamov's play, inspired by the story of the Nobel Prize winner, Isaak Bashevis Singer, called *In*



*the Shadow of a Vineyard*. This is a story of an old lonely man, Harry Bedinger, who lived a hard life. A sudden encounter with an extraordinary woman makes Harry completely reconsider his life and reflect on his past, present and future.

This production stands out by the fact that the leading actress here is Clara Novikova, who is a well-known comic of the "language genre" rather than a theatre actress as such. It is a little bit odd to see her in that capacity. However, for the most part she does a splendid job. Leonid Kanevsky plays the role of Harry in a very sincere and moving way. He manages to find the right words and intonation to touch the hearts of people in the audience.

## Moscow Theatre of Young Audiences

Mamonovsky per., 10 [www.moscowtyz.ru](http://www.moscowtyz.ru)

One should not be confused by the name of this theatre. Even though there are several productions targeted at children and youth, the majority of the theatre's repertoire is for adults. The director, Genrietta Yanovskaya, strongly believes that it is unacceptable for adults to be bored during performances for children. Her opin-

ion is echoed by the words of the world famous actor and director and one of the founders of the Moscow Art Theatre, Konstantin Stanislavsky, who used to say that it is necessary to act in front of children in the same way as for adults, but only better.

One item in the repertoire, the children's story *The Wolf and Seven Little*

*Goats*, could be enjoyed by children and adults alike. It is a musical production with beautiful set designs and lively acting. The composer Aleksey Rybnikov and the poet Yuri Entin in tandem make an impressive contribution to a production team headed by Henrietta Yanovskaya. This age-old fairy-tale story is presented in an original and humorous way. Children from the age of five are welcome. There is no upper age limit.

## Moscow Palace of Youth

Komsomolsky prospect, 28 Zorro Musical [www.zorromusical.ru](http://www.zorromusical.ru)

Moscow is becoming a centre of musical culture. After the huge success of *Beauty and the Beast*, another musical is coming to Moscow: *Zorro*. It has already conquered London audiences at the Garrick Theatre, and impressed Parisian theatre-goers at the Folies

Bergere. Now it is Moscow's turn to enjoy this passionate story with a Spanish flavour.

The cast includes people from five nationalities, who speak four different languages. One of the most popular music and opera theatre directors, Christopher

Renshaw, is working on this production. Renshaw staged *Eugene Onegin* together with Mstislav Rostropovich during the Olboro Festival, and *Luiza Miller* with Luciano Pavarotti in Philadelphia.

This is a love story with an infectious plot, beautiful flamenco dancing and the magical music of Gypsy Kings. It started on September 25th and will be running every day thereafter.



# 1990

John Harrison

1990 was the year that Gorbachev's honeymoon with the Russian people finally ended. The economy worsened and the people turned on the man who had promised a better life, but only brought queues. After the collapse of the Soviet satellite states in Eastern Europe, Boris Yeltsin saw his opportunity to play the Russian card, and his struggle against Gorbachev went public, at times to the detriment of the wider aim of improving ordinary people's lives.

This struggle was predominantly political rather than economic. Gorbachev was interested in preserving the cause of socialism and his own personal power. He saw the future in a reformed communist power structure alongside a market economy. He wanted the Soviet Union to have a form of centrally-controlled social democracy. Yeltsin saw that it would be difficult to sell anything remotely socialist to a people who had suffered Brezhnevite economic stagnation and, before that, Stalin's excesses. People wanted to go all the way, to "freedom" and sweep away any remaining social and economic control, and Yeltsin saw himself as the champion of people's rights. Independence was the zeitgeist of 1990; not only for the Soviet republics, but for the gigantic Russian Soviet Republic (RSFSR) itself.

Yeltsin's big chance came in March, when he was elected as a Deputy in the RSFSR with 84% of the vote of the Sverdlovsk district against 11 "no-name" candidates. As he travelled the country, he advocated turning the RSFSR into a "Presidential Republic with an elected president, a full-time parliament, a constitutional court, a state bank, an academy of sciences, a territorial militia and multiple political parties". The Soviet State, *de jure* federal and *de facto* unitary, ought to be decentralised, Yeltsin said, "because monopoly and the over-centralisation of political and economic power have led our country to its present state."

Yeltsin could certainly never have been able to even say such things if Gorbachev hadn't beaten a path through the jungle with a machete before him. However it wasn't the big man's style to admit this. On May the 29th, Yeltsin became chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, narrowly defeating his conservative rival, Ivan Polozkhov, a regional secretary from Krasnodar in the North Caucasus who was similar in mentality to Egor Ligachev. Yeltsin by that time had become the champion of the pro-democracy "left-wing" Russian intelligentsia, which had long ago become disillusioned with Gorbachev.



The communist-conservative enemies of perestroika rightly predicted that if Yeltsin were allowed to continue, the Soviet Union itself would break-up. The party was indeed over. The method they choose to revenge themselves was to create a Russian communist party (there had only been one communist party previously, which held all the power, covering the whole of the Soviet Union), with the goal of overthrowing Yeltsin and putting pressure on Gorbachev. Yet the whole motive of communism had already lost its appeal in the minds of Soviet people, and the new party, although initially supported by Gorbachev, quickly lost relevance, and never achieved power.

Meanwhile, Gorbachev had been busy trying, unsuccessfully, to re-brand the Soviet Communist Party into a democratic, humane organisation. On February 27th, he addressed the USSR Supreme Soviet and obtained its sanction for



multi-party politics. This was ratified by the 3rd convocation of the Congress of People's Deputies on the 14th of April. On March 14 (surprise, surprise!), the USSR Supreme Soviet introduced a Soviet presidency, to which it elected Gorbachev on March 19. The new President would be the President regardless of the majority party in the Congress of People's Deputies. Anatoly Lukyanov, who was elected to succeed Gorbachev as USSR parliamentary Chairman predicted, accurately, that the republics would counter-react with presidencies of their own. He also brought up the question of legitimacy. Why should Gorbachev be made president by the legislature, and not by the people?

Gorbachev could have won a popular vote at that time. His popularity ratings were well ahead of Yeltsin's until June 1990. Not going to the people was, according to Timothy Colton in *Yeltsin, A Life*, a mistake of biblical proportions. But Gorbachev was also a proud man, and could not bring himself to accept Yeltsin as being a credible rival to himself. As he said in meeting of the Politburo on April 20: "What Yeltsin is doing is incomprehensible... Every Monday his face doubles in size [due to his self-importance]. He speaks inarticulately, he often comes up with the devil knows what; he is like a worn-out record. But the people repeat over and over, 'He is our man!'"

On April 26, under Gorbachev's presidency, the Congress of People's Deputies voted to award the thirty-odd "autonomous" Soviet republics, which were ethnic homelands implanted within the union republics (most of them were part of Russia), the same status as the fifteen "union" republics of the USSR. Yeltsin was non-plussed by this as it would make Russian independence far harder to achieve.

The next day, Yeltsin was received by Margaret Thatcher in London. He tried to persuade her to deal with the "new free Russia" directly, rather than by going through the Soviet government. Thatcher replied suavely that Russia would need to be new and free in more than words. The Iron Lady noted that "Yeltsin had thought through some of the fundamental problems much more clearly than had Mr Gorbachev" and, "unlike Mr Gorbachev, he has broken out of the communist mind-set and language".

In June 1990, the house of cards that was the Soviet Union began to tumble. Uzbekistan declared its sovereignty. On Yeltsin's initiative, so did the RSFSR as did Tatarstan and even Karelia. The USSR was entering its final, self-destruct mode. In September, even obedient Turkmenistan declared its sovereignty. Declaring independence had become the thing to do.

The republican leaderships were calling for democracy and national self-determination. As Robert Service points out in *A*

*History of Modern Russia*, in most cases, local Communist Party elites were struggling to hold on to power. They had levered a certain amount of autonomy during the Brezhnev period and, having seen off the anti-corruption campaigns instigated by Andropov in 1982-4 and Gorbachev the mid-1980s, they settled down to enjoy their privileges. They hated perestroika, and only used democratisation as a means of reinforcing their position and increasing their affluence. By announcing their independence, they aimed to seal off each republic from Moscow's day-to-day interference.

The best Gorbachev could do meanwhile was to press on with his plans to modernise the Party. The 28th Party Congress met from June 2 1990 and discussed the de-Leninized Party platform approved by the Central Committee in February. Gorbachev achieved most of his goals but not without sacrificing Alexander Yakovlev from the Central Committee. Gorbachev was retained as General Secretary by a huge majority and his programme was ratified by the Congress. Crucially, the Congress decided that the Politburo should no longer intervene in day-to-day politics and that the USSR Presidency ought to become the fulcrum of decision-making.

Yeltsin's answer was to demand that Gorbachev and other leaders leave the Communist Party altogether. When, on 12 June, they refused, Yeltsin demonstratively stormed out of the proceedings and resigned his party membership. Gorbachev had achieved what he wanted, now he was President—but President of what?

On paper at least, the USSR still existed and Gorbachev was in charge. It was around this time that Yeltsin perceived that he could destroy Gorbachev and ascend the presidency. After all, he now enjoyed considerably stronger public support than the President. He went on a gruelling 22-day marathon tour of the Russian Republic and met on numerous occasions with miners. On August 21, 1990, when meeting with workers' committees in the mining centre of Novokuznetsk, Yeltsin called for state enterprises to become fully independent from the Gorbachev "centre," for de-politization of the KGB, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the army and the courts, and for a "government of popular trust".

Ordinary people rallied behind Yeltsin. At the same time, he got the support of the intelligentsia. In December, he announced the formation of an RSFSR Supreme Consultative and Coordinating Council, chaired by himself, the blue-ribbon members of which read like a "who's who" of the liberal intelligentsia.

On the economic front, Gorbachev refused to allow any factory or kolkhoz to go to the wall, and there were no bankruptcies al-

photos by John Harrison





# The Way It Was

photos by John Harrison



*doorway to a semi-legal private business in a perekhod at Pushkin metro*

though most of the state enterprises were bleeding money badly. Tough decisions on the economic front were postponed, so living standards continued to fall. Retail trade was reduced to pitiful proportions and supplies of basic foodstuffs to shops did not improve. Massive state loans were taken out with western banks. Imports of grain and consumer goods increased.

Gorbachev became the fall guy. Even if people weren't fully aware of the huge flaws in the Law on the State Enterprise, they knew from direct experience that Gorbachev's attempt at reform had not worked. Prime-minister Ryzhkov only introduced half-hearted reforms. He refused to let the full cost of production of basic foodstuffs be passed on to the consumer.

Trying to regain the initiative, Gorbachev's answer was to back the radical "500 Days Plan." This plan which is ridiculed by many today, was composed chiefly by a group of economists headed by Stanislav Shatalin and Yevgeny Yasin of Gorbachev's camp and Grigory Yavlinsky of Yeltsin's. In the space of a year and a half it would have abolished most price controls, permitted the privatization of state property, done away with the USSR's industrial ministries and devolved Soviet economic coordination to an "inter-republic economic committee," after agreement on a "treaty of economic union".

The Russian Supreme Soviet passed the proposals on September 11th, at which point Gorbachev got cold feet. On October 16th he abandoned the program, angering Yeltsin who vowed never again to "play the fool" and join forces with Gorbachev's people again. In September, the President ordered a re-working by Abel Aganbegyan, hoping to produce a compromise plan, which in October the Soviet Supreme Soviet finally approved.

At the time, Gorbachev's most serious threat came not from Yeltsin, but from conservatives in the Congress of People's Deputies who formed their own 'Soyuz' (Union) in October. Most Soyuz members were Russians, the others being a diverse group, from

Christians and ecologists to Russian functionaries who lived outside the RSFSR and were terrified about their personal prospects if the Soviet Union were to fall apart. Soyuz's unifying belief was that the Soviet Union was the legitimate successor state to the Russian Empire. Its members were proud of the USSR's industrial and cultural achievements. They gloried in the USSR's defeat of Nazi Germany. For them, Gorbachev was the arch-destroyer of a great state, economy and society.

Gorbachev realised that if was going to preserve the Soviet Union, he needed to act fast. He surrounded himself with people who were representative of the old conservative regime. The atmosphere on the street in Moscow changed from a gung-ho attitude of anything goes to one of concern when the realisation came that all the reforms could actually be derailed quite easily. Having backed down over the "500 Days Plan," Gorbachev was sufficiently worried to give ground also in politics. One by one, he did away with prominent reformers in his entourage.

Alexander Yakovlev ceased to be one of Gorbachev's regular consultants after his bruising treatment at the 28th Party Congress. In November, Vadim Bakatin was asked to step down as Minister of Internal Affairs. Gorbachev also dismissed Vadim Medvedev. Then Eduard Shevardnadze resigned. After doing so, he gave an emotional speech to the Congress of Peoples' deputies, on the 20th of December, warning of a new dictatorship. Ryzhkov left the political stage, suffering from a heart condition. His job as Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers was taken by Valentin Pavlov, the Minister of Finance. The new Minister of Internal Affairs was Boris Pugo, who was known as an advocate of repressive measures. Gorbachev's choice of Gennady Yanaev as Vice-President of the USSR was another indication that Shevardnadze's fears were not entirely misplaced. 1990 finished with an air of impending doom. **P**



## Nathan Stowell

I first arrived in Russia (and the USSR) in 1990. I was fortunate enough to have been selected for a month-long exchange program to Moscow during my last year of high-school in the US. It was one of the first programs where foreign students were allowed to stay in their host family's apartment. I stayed with the family of Misha, a friend who had stayed with me a few months earlier in my dormitory room at boarding school.

My Russian teacher of two years (who is, coincidentally here in Moscow some 20 years later) had prepared us for some of the cultural differences we might expect. One of his warnings was that we would most likely not experience too many restaurants as dining out was frequently not a pleasant experience. As my teacher explained, waiters didn't work on a tip-based compensation plan, and so they weren't usually interested if you came back a second time; they probably would have preferred it if you hadn't come the first time.

This, combined with some of the other stories I had heard when growing up about the Soviet Union, made me think that Misha, despite having to stay in my dormitory room and not at home for a "family experience" was nevertheless, still getting the better end of the stick.

Upon arrival in Moscow at an advertisement-free and stern Sheremetevo 2 airport, my fellow classmates and I were met by our Russian counterparts and their parents, and several teachers from the school we would be studying at in Moscow (a school that still exists today, to the best of my knowledge, behind the Moskovskii Univermag on Leninsky Prospekt). I saw Misha approach me accompanied by several adults in what looked rather severe and important military uniforms. Visions of airport strip-searches and Russian jail-time began to fill my head, until Misha introduced me to his father, the Soviet Minister of Civil Aviation.

I lived in Misha's enormous six-room flat for a month and had a chauffeur-driven limousine take me to school every day. Misha's father took various trips around the country to inspect regional airports and from each of them returned with a gift bottle of that region's best alcohol (Armenian Cognac, Georgian Wine, Siberian Vodka, etc.).

On top of the luxury of living with a government Minister, the price dif-



*Nathan, second from left in back row*



ferences were shocking. I went to the Pushkin Square McDonalds a month or two after it had opened (waiting for over an hour in a line that stretched around Pushkin Square twice) and ordered what probably would've been enough for three people all for the price of 9 roubles (with a street exchange rate of 15 or 20 roubles to one dollar) or 60 cents. A litre of milk was 33 kopecks (2 cents). Misha and I laughed when we calculated that the few hundred dollars in spending money I'd brought over was more than Misha's father earned in a year.

I think that had I not experienced those times and lived with the family I'd lived with, my desire to return to Russia later on would never have been so strong. And, after living here for 16 years, I'm still quite confident now that Misha got the short-end of the stick. **P**



# Social networking in Russia

Polina Strandstrem

The Russian social networking audience has the highest engagement among forty of the world's most prominent economies, reported by comScore, Inc., a leader in measuring the digital world. Russia was followed by Brazil, Canada and Puerto Rico, with the United Kingdom seventh and the United States in ninth place.

This is not that surprising considering the fact that Russia is the largest country in the world and for many people, social networking is the only opportunity they have to connect and communicate with others in distant corners of the country. Another reason is that Russians take full advantage of this superb tool of mass communication in order to be able to express a non-official point of view, and to be aware of facts or events that are not covered at all in the State media. New controversial themes and topics of discussion often arise on blogs and are then transferred to the mass media. Whether social media will become a powerful instrument in politics in Russia is unclear but another study by the agency Rous Creative Strategies, together with HeadHunter, shows that 66% of all internet users read blogs weekly.

What is more certain is that businesses will tap into opportunities with this highly internet-engaged audience. In the West, businesses have recognized that networks produce a powerful viral marketing effect because friends use them to tell each other about things and events. Most articles on social media marketing in Russia focus on ways to calculate the return on investment using social media as a research and marketing tool.

In order to examine myths and collect cases from Russian business practice, a unique project on social media marketing was initiated by Artur Velf, the correspondent of the weekly magazine *Dengi*. Volunteers from both small and medium-sized business all over Russia, as well as corporations such as Panasonic, joined the social media marketing experiment. All participants agreed to share their experiences in promoting services and products in the social media, and in return they received coverage in the prominent business magazine. Analysis of rare but successful practices in Russia as well as results of the most interesting cases was published in a series of articles under the title: "The nation-wide experiment".

For instance, Victor Fidosuk, the famous Twitter/taxi driver in Kiev, Ukraine, registered under the name ukrtaxist, uses Twitter to promote his service among locals. He started from twittering on traffic jams and clients he met, then began posting interesting pictures. One of his followers suggested letting his community know his current location, and providing discounts for them. Although it did not provoke the hailstorm of calls he expected, people preferred to use his taxi service when





they either know, or at least “e-meet” the person. Thanks to Twitter, Victor is one of the most popular taxi drivers in Ukraine and will never be short of clients.

Of course the Russian-speaking community on Twitter is much smaller than that on blogs. For instance LifeJournal is one of the most popular blog-hosting platforms, and a quarter of its 26 million users speak Russian. The leader of the social network sites in use in Russia is VKontakte, the Russian alternative to Facebook. VKontakte boasts over 60 million users out of which 14 million are active. For those not addicted to social networking, it is unclear what all these people are doing apart from exchanging messages and listening to music, writes Artur Velf. Nevertheless he also finds in VKontakte a business success story that provides information on how social network marketing can be used in Russia, a country which still has an immature and developing internet market.

The story started in autumn 2007 in Kirov when Pavel (Pasha) Samoylov, a hip-hop and club dancer, decided to open his own dance studio called The Laboratory of Dance Pasha 2309. The challenge was to recruit clients. He created a page in VKontakte and started regularly filling it with interesting content and invited everyone who lived in Kirov and was interested in club dancing to join the group. The members had an opportunity to exchange videos from the latest classes and invite friends to join. This a classic example of viral marketing. Now the group has over 40,000 members which is about 10% of the whole population of this central-Russian city. Not bad for a local business!

Despite the fact that facebook is at present not the leader in Russian social networks, a lively discussion whether facebook will overtake VKontakte has already started. Maksim Kuderov from *Chastny Correspondent* calculated that if facebook continues growing in Russia at the rate it is now, it will catch up with VKontakte in two years.

At the moment the Russian audience for facebook is varied. They are mostly people who are frequent travelers, have friends abroad, speak fluent English, represent the mass media, internet gurus, and business people dealing with companies from overseas. Sergey Kuznetsov from SKCG, the agency that specializes in social media marketing, says that many facebook users in Russia are trend-setters, and businesses which focus on a premium audience. For them, using social networking is crucial to success. For instance, the facebook page of PASSPORT Magazine is regularly updated with special events that the affluent ex-pat and English-speaking Russian community visit.

There are some other social networks that are very popular in Russia. Odnoklassniki.ru and My World are two of them. The first used to be the leader but has now been overtaken by VKontakte. The second is basically an addition to an e-mail service, but it has over 5 million active users a day. On average in Russia, people tend to register in three social network at a time.

Nobody can predict what the future of social media in Russia will look like, which social networks will develop and which die out. It is also difficult to say exactly what are the cultural differences that need to be addressed in social media. Will social media campaigns by one company that was successful in one country be replicated in another? It seems that the rules are pretty much universal, but should the networks become localized? This has been happening to a certain extent in the professional network LinkedIn where there are lots of groups with their focus on Russia and doing business in Russia, and from time to time discussions about language barriers, perceptions and attitudes sparkle.

Russia differs from other countries in its level of web maturity, local infrastructure and internet penetration. Social media is growing but it is growing differently in different countries. Hopefully, social marketers will manage to unravel the secret of the Russian soul and businesses will start to use social media to market to the most engaged audience in the world. **P**





# Difficult, yet possible. Russian to English literary translation

Elena Rubinova

*For the first time in the 23 years that the Moscow International Book Fair has been running, literary translators were not left alone with their problems and aspirations. International publishers and contemporary Russian writers joined over 150 translators from 25 countries, and even government officials, in searching for new ways to promote Russian literature. One of the panel discussions, chaired by Ekaterina Genieva, the Director of the Russian State Library of Foreign Literature for 17 years, focused specifically on the English-language market for Russian literature in translation.*

How far does the English-language market for Russian literature in translation reach beyond the great masters of the past? You do not have to have a PhD to answer that question. Not very far. True, classical Russian fiction and drama have long ago been adopted by the western world and adopted as part of the cultural canons of their own literature, through translation, by all reading nations across the globe. Russian literature of the 20th century for the majority of English-speaking audience is reduced to the names of Bulgakov, Pasternak (primarily due to *Doctor Zhivago*) and Solzhenitsyn, though classical Russian authors continue to be published.

This causes debates whether it's worth retranslating classics, but publishers go for it: new translations are often published in cheaper formats and are most popular among younger audiences. Only last year, two new English translations of Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*, and Gogol's *Dead Souls* translated by Donald Rayfield with original drawings by Mark Shagal, came out in the UK. New translations of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* have been published in the past few years in Great Britain and the United States (one translated by a duet of Richard Pevear / Larissa Volokhonsky and Andrew Bromfield). Robert Chandler released his translation of Andrei Platonov, a Russian writer of the 20th century who is traditionally considered "untranslatable".

Modern Russian authors are not too popular abroad. Why? The reasons are complex. Books written in English dominate world literature. Between 50% and 60% of all translations of books originate from English. However there is no major conspiracy in the publishing industry.

"The English-speaking book market is self-sufficient and 'hermetic' for literatures in other languages," says Alexander Livrgant, Editor-in-Chief of *Foreign Literature* magazine and Chairman of the Masters of Literary Translation Union. "While for the Russian market, the tendency is just the opposite—only last year out of 15 thousand translated books, 12 thousand were translated from English."

Translated literature makes up only 1.8% of the UK book market, while in France this figure is 30%, and in Germany 35%. It goes without saying that the percentage of modern Russian literature in this 1.8% is minimal. There are other factors which prevent modern Russian literature, no matter how good or bad, from emerging into the literary arena.

"Modern Russian literature in the West is perceived in the light of stereotypes that have been piling up for decades,"

says Professor Oliver Ready, an Oxford scholar and translator of modern Russian authors. "Because of the great literature of the past anything coming from Russia is expected to be prophetic and somewhat world-scale."

Professor Ready adds that British publishers often complain that reality depicted in modern Russian prose is too specific and insular; Russian authors prefer novel-size books that are hard to digest for an average English speaking reader and need to be shortened in translation. Only few Russian authors, like Boris Akunin and Victor Pelevin, fit into existing niches without much adaptation.

Until recently, poor state support for any cultural expansion deeply affected all spheres of intercultural dialogue. Only in the past few years has Russian officialdom started making use of Russian literature as a tool of cultural influence and reading as a means of national self-identification. Several years ago Academia Rossica, a UK-based foundation that pioneered cultural projects between Russia and the English-speaking world, and the Yeltsin Foundation set themselves the goal of raising a new generation of Russian-English translators. Their efforts are already yielding their first crop. Last year's translations brought Vladimir Sorokin, Viktor Pelevin, Alexander Terekhov and Maria Galina, among others, to English-speaking audiences.

"We often hear from publishers here that they are searching for new Russian authors, but until recently, a lack of information and lack of good translations hindered even existing possibilities," says Svetlana Adjoubei, Director of Academia Rossica. In the near future, the Institute of Translation will become state-supported, and will start awarding translation grants, as Vladimir Grigoriev, Deputy Head of the Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications assured the audience of the First Congress of Translators.

This all becomes crucially important given the fact that Russia will be a special guest market focus at the London Book Fair in 2011 and later in BookExpo America. It is clear to everybody that it will take years if not decades until Russian literature revives in the English-speaking world. But now the initial, yet necessary, steps are being taken.

"It is high time for Russian publishers to get off their rostrums and start speaking to English-language publishers, while Western publishers need to loosen up a bit towards Russian literature. We need to bridge this gap, and the London Book Fair will be a breakthrough in this direction", says Amy Webster, London Book Fair representative. **P**



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# Notes from Dostoevsky's Underground

Text and photos by Katrina Marie

Slick, grey, ominous. Though the author of *Notes from the Underground* likely never imagined it, the newly opened Dostoevskaya Metro station pays apt if not eerie homage to this poignant force on the Russian heart and soul.

The new station is located on the northern section of the light-green Lublinsko-Dmitrovskaya line and provides a

much-needed jumping off point for the Dostoevsky House Museum, the Central Armed Forces Museum and the Red Army Theatre.

Like the celebrated writer, the unveiling of the new Metro station in June came not without controversy, having been delayed due to protests that station's adorning murals were too violent. Some psychologists suggested that the station's "negative energy" would at best discourage people from riding the Metro, or at worst, induce suicides.

It must be admitted that mural's creator Ivan Nikolayev's work (nearly 20 years in the design and production) does capture some of the darkest scenes of Fyodor Dostoevsky's greatest works, such as *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, and *The Possessed*.

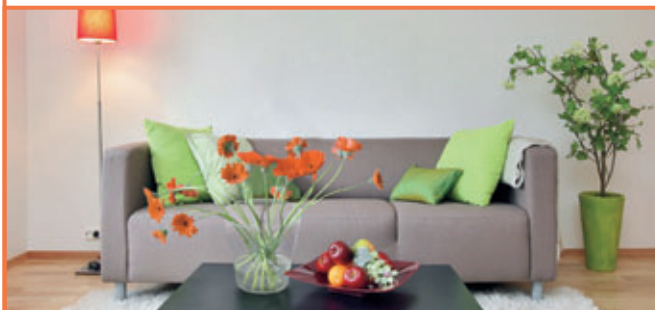
One of Dostoevsky's most famous characters, Rodion Raskolnikov, is observed, hatchet in hand, about to strike down the miserly pawnbroker and her sister. Another mural shows *The Possessed* character Kirilov with a gun pointed to his temple, as the large, looming face of Dostoevsky stoically looks on.

But the station's effect is more stimulating than gloomy. Gleaming grey and black marble combine with radiant white lighting and clean lines. Soft white marble is used for some of the more angelic characters, offering a symbolic contrast between good and evil.

Construction of the station began in the 1990s, but halted due to lack of funding, before resuming in 2007. Nearly 60 meters underground, the escalator ride up to the surface is easy-to-miss brilliance. At the bottom is a silvery sky hovering overhead. Further up it changes seamlessly into a forbidding metal wall ready to crush all who approach. Just as panic presumes an air of urgency, it becomes obvious that this is all just a visual effect of a very low ceiling made up of long metal slats. Simple but effective.

The station accomplishes its task: to capture this ever-complex, ever-provoking literary genius. Dostoevsky dealt nakedly and deeply with uncomfortable themes not at all fashionable, yet universally questioned. Depression, class differences, mental disorders, redemption, as well as prostitution, murder, and suicide—all were explored.

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As a child, raised quite literally at a social crossroads where wealth and nobility were juxtaposed with poverty, the young Dostoevsky spent sixteen formative years in a small corner of the (former) Moscow Marinsky Hospital, located on what is now called Dostoevskaya Ulitsa, near the station. He was born here in 1821 and lived in the hospital until the tragic death of his mother in 1837. Dostoevsky's father was a surgeon at the hospital and poor enough that he had to house this family of eight in three small rooms in the hospital. Yet his father sought to keep up the appearance of an aristocrat, creating a family "parlour" by day that was actually the family's primary living quarters.

The Dostoevsky House Museum has carefully reconstructed these rooms. Opened in the early 1900s, the museum still contains original furniture, donated by Dostoevsky's widow and brother. Personal items, such as Dostoevsky's quill pen and the ledger recording his birth, are proudly displayed.

Though the miniscule room he shared with his brother offered no hope of privacy, the small bedroom window overlooking the courtyard was Dostoevsky's window to every extreme of the human experience. The courtyard now displays a sombre statue of Dostoevsky wringing his hands, as if wringing his soul.

Dostoevsky's compassion for the poor and the destitute took root here. He regularly wandered the hospital and yard, observing and interacting with the sick, suffering, and ridiculed. To such a sensitive child, his compassion became overwhelming. The influence of this period of Dostoevsky's life on his literary exploration into human psychology is profound.

Contributing to this, of course, were his later years spent in a Siberian prison camp. No doubt the "mock" execution, in which Dostoevsky stood before a firing squad just before his sentence was commuted to hard labour, intensely impacted on him. Dostoevsky also suffered from epilepsy and inherited his father's addictive gene, though to gambling, not alcohol.

Upon his mother's death from tuberculosis in 1837 in the family home, Dostoevsky and his brother were packed off to a military academy in St. Petersburg. Two years later, his father died, allegedly murdered by the serfs on his small estate whose daughters he was said to have abused on a regular basis while drunk. One morning, while he was out riding, he was ambushed by a group of enraged fathers who knocked him off his horse, pulled down his trousers and crushed his testicles with their bare hands. Then, as he gasped convulsively in agony, they poured vodka down his throat until he drowned.

Dostoevsky's post-prison writings made a clear break from his contemporaries, as he explored the psychological hell of the tortured soul. He manages that very rare gift of wholly understanding that hell, while having the presence of mind to create, to envelope, his reader inside the torment. In *Crime and Punishment*, one not only reads Raskolnikov, one becomes Raskolnikov. Dostoevsky's most profound contributions to the world literature contain a deep expression of human pain, tragedy, and eventually, hope in redemption. **P**

**The Dostoevsky Museum is located at Dostoevskaya Ulitsa, 2. Tel: 7 495 281 1085**

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*Izmailova kremlin from the island*

## Green Parks: Eastern Delights

Text and photos by  
Ross Hunter

Moscow lies slightly nearer to the Arctic circle than the Med, so the summer nights are endless. For the last six months we have been touring the city's green spaces, clockwise. It was easy to start at Kolomenskaya, a glorious place for a leisurely cultural and alfresco day off, and then go wilder and wilder (in the botanical sense). But we have saved the best for last. The eastern parks are close, varied and attractive. Wildscape, culture, adventure and bargains await. Let's go.

### Ismailova and Terlestskey Parks

Ismailova! One of the first words the newcomer to Moscow learns—or ought to. What does the word mean to you?

The wonderfully eclectic, exotic, kaleidoscopic flea market, I am sure. If you haven't been there, clear the diary for this weekend, and either go, or read PASSPORT's back numbers where it is immortalized in ink. Bargain, tat, bric-a-brac, wow, grot, buzzing, Christmas-souvenirs-sorted ... choose your word. But there is much more than that.

Escape the entertaining, commercialized NW corner, and get exploring what is claimed to be Europe's largest urban park (not sure about this: any competing claims?). After seeing the fascinating sports stadium, with its WW2 bunker concealed beneath, agreeably close by is the moated island, full of fishing, bathing and sporting opportunities, culminating in the expansive monas-

tery in the centre. This is well worth the trip alone, with its glorious 17th-century cathedral. The trees have matured, so photography is not easy: good luck!

The park itself is huge, rambling and agreeably random. However often you walk, ride, cycle or otherwise perambulate, you will not follow the same route twice. The vast lake offers a focal point, as well as endless sites for badminton, bronzing, barbequing, bathing and breathing.

On the opposite side of Shosse Enthusiastov lies Terlestskey Park. Compact, pleasant, and handy from Novogireevo Metro, Terlestskey offers an agreeable hour of fresh air and exercise, only a few minutes from Moscow centre. As with all Moscow's urban parks, including



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## Apartments For Rent





*Ismailova Park the C17 cathedral*

the many we have not covered, there are lawns, lakes and leafy lanes. And ice cream at the edges.

## Kuskovo Park

And so to Kuskovo. A fine and fitting finale. "Moscow's Versailles", say the guide books. Yes and no. The house, gardens and Orangery are certainly redolent of French formal built- and landscape-architecture at their finest. The then opulent Sheremetyov family aimed to best their neighbours, and match their counterparts in France in the few decades before the Revolution tore them apart. But at a more compact scale. This is all to the good. The formal parts of Kuskovo are eminently strollable, indoors and out. Entrance is free to the park and all the buildings. The large house/small palace is glorious. It deserves an article to itself, so



*Kuskovo Park the Grotto*

we'll stick to the gardens for now. Surrounded by wild, rambling forest, the formal garden, with intricate geometrical lawns, flower beds and gravel paths is an exquisite demonstration of managing nature. They soothe the mind and add wonder to the soul. Welcome to one of very few places that make me walk slowly.

These gardens are discreetly surrounded by buildings, dispersed among the trees. Clockwise from the house and lake to the south are a Swiss chalet, the orangery, an aviary, a grotto and servants cottages. Each and all are worth visiting. The orangery now has no indoor plants, but instead a splendid ceramic collection, with special sections for Egyptian-style ornaments and Soviet tea services. Sadly, photography is not allowed, so you have to go in person. However, ideally with children, the



*Kuskovo formal gardens*

absolute "must-see" is the grotto. From the outside, a routine classically-styled temple or some such, nicely mirrored in a fish-filled pond. But the inside is a gloriously absurd homage to the sea, packed with ridiculous statues coated in shells, sculptures of mother-of-pearl, collections of nautical pot-pourri and eerily illuminated fishy tableaux. A man-monkey punting a coracle and clad in shiny scales greets you. The Styx itself could not be more extraordinary. It is the perfect folly. I defy you not to be still smiling and chuckling as you amble gracefully back out of the estate, between palace and lake, feeling like you own the world. **P**

*Enjoy this, and all the many other splendid small, large, formal, wild, busy and peaceful parks that Moscow freely offers. Happy exploring!*



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# Traditional prestigious areas hold their value today



By Ekaterina Batynkova,  
Director of the Elite Realty department  
of Est-a-Tet

The ratings of the most popular and most prestigious areas have not changed in years. Changes do occur, but they take place within accepted parameters as result of changes of the location of recently-built elite apartments, fluctuations of rent levels, new supply coming onto the market and the effect of various trends.

Despite instability in the economy, half of all demand is for apartments in the centre of Moscow. The next most prestigious areas are the East and South East each enjoying 15% of demand, then there is the north-west, which takes up 10% of demand.

If during the crisis, our clients' preferences didn't change in the popular regions, there was an increase in demand of the most centralized micro-areas of the city of 5-7%. This can be explained due to a fall in rents and clients being able to improve the conditions of their leases. It is worth pointing out that Krylatskoe is becoming very popular due to the fact that there are a lot of high-class business centres located there, as well as schools for foreign children.

Within the central region we have a rearrangement of the micro areas depending on their popularity. The first place, without a doubt today is taken by Khamovniki which absorbs almost 20% of total demand in the centre. Next we have Tverskaya area and the Arbat with 15% demand rate each, Presnya is 12%, Basmanaya and Zamockvadech each 10%.

Their popularity is explained by objective and subjective factors. The objective factors are that historically-speaking, elite real estate is in the centre of the city. Subjective factors for many clients are related to road accessibility, nearness to their offices as well as schools, good infrastructure and ecological factors.

The high popularity elite real estate in the city central areas for foreigners has a historical explanation: these particular areas are very popular amongst buyers and investors and the buildings have always been well looked after.

When considering demand for elite real estate, we should not overlook the fact that right from the beginning of the economic crisis, rents have been adjusted in practically all areas of the city. Most clients have reconciled their budgets by reducing their expenditures. Despite the fact that the popularity of the Central, East, South East and North East areas did not diminish, these areas lost more in rent than other areas. This tendency can't be called a "collapse" or a "crisis"; it is actually more like a normalisation process. Average rents in the centre ranges from around \$10,000-\$15,000 per month, with

rents varying from \$2000-\$3000, with a maximum of \$50,000 per month.

As far as current trends in the real estate market go, we would like to point out the increased popularity of new buildings in the city's central areas, such as Khamovniki, as well as elite apartments in the South East part of the city. Quite popular amongst employees of international companies, are renowned areas with spacious "family" apartments on Leninsky Prospect. Our clients consider the most interesting area to be Khamovniki; experts from our company took part in planning the infrastructure of some of the complexes in this area.

Now that a number of the Khamovniki projects have been completed, we can offer a wide range of apartments for rent: fully furnished as well as unfurnished apartments, where one can chose individual planning. **P**



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На правах рекламы



# New customs rules for personal belongings



Sherman Pereira,  
Crown Relocations,  
Regional Director – Central  
and Eastern Europe

Recently, there have been a number of changes to the Russian Customs Code that affect nearly everyone coming or going to and from Russia. Understanding these issues may not make a move in or out of Russia go more quickly, but it will prepare you for the bureaucracy and save you some time and headache if you're coming to Russia or leaving.

As of July 1st, Russia joined a customs union with Kazakhstan and Belarus. The establishment of this union was unorganized and haphazard at best with poorly implemented electronic scanning systems, customs posts being reassigned to handle different materials, and the cancellation of previously existing export obligations.

Since July, this has resulted in large delays for shipments of household goods, and given that the summer months are some of the most popular times for families of ex-pats to relocate, a number of people felt an additional stress on top of what's already a hectic process in any country.

One of the largest changes still in effect as of the writing of this article

is the cancellation of temporary import obligations. These "obligations" were essentially promises from the owner of a shipment saying that upon leaving Russia, the personal effects would be exported out of the country again (rather than sold). By canceling these obligations, it was no longer possible to import personal belongings into Russia without paying 4 Euro per kilogram duty on your own goods. To put this into perspective, a typical family ships 15-30 cubic metres of furniture and belongings with a weight of approximately 4,000-6,000 kgs.

Further complicating the process of importing your goods was that payment of the above-mentioned duties could only be performed in Russia, as payment had to come from the owner personally via a cash deposit via Russian bank, or from that individual's Russian bank account (which again, would require presence in Russia).

Russian Customs has promised that temporary import obligations will be reinstituted as of September 20th, but it remains unclear how this will work.

Another complication of late has been from Domodedovo Airport customs which apparently now require foreigners to be present at the airport for clearing their goods. Previously, a power of attorney was signed allowing shipping companies to represent their foreign customers. What this means is that if you're hoping for a quick departure prior to your goods leaving, you may be out of luck. Granted, there are other airports through which air shipments can leave, but costs might be increased and the airlines operating out of those airports may not offer direct flights to your new location.

So if you are planning a move soon, it would be sensible to speak with a relocations company sooner rather than later so that you're prepared well in advance for any changes that Russia may throw out next. **P**

## How to make a suggestion:

### Давайте...

One of the most popular words in Russian, *давай!* or *давайте!* if you are talking to more than one person or addressing someone in the polite form. Followed by the verb in the 2nd person plural (*мы*) here are some of the suggestions you might be making most frequently:

### To get out and about:

Давай встретимся сегодня вечером!  
*Let's meet tonight!*  
Давай сходим в кино!  
*Let's go to the cinema.*  
Давай съездим на дачу!  
*Let's drive out to the dacha.*  
Давай съездим в Венецию на выходные! *Let's go to Venice for the weekend!*

### When you get there:

Давайте выпьем!  
*Let's drink (inviting a toast).*  
Давайте выпьем за встречу!  
*Let's drink to our meeting!*  
Давай вместе! *Let's do it together.*  
Давай уйдем! *Shall we leave?*

### A gentle way to make suggestions in meetings:

Давайте обсудим. *Let's discuss this.*  
Давайте мы у него спросим.  
*Let's ask him.*  
Давайте таким образом.  
*Let's do it like this.*  
Давайте подумаем. *Let's think about it.*  
Давайте подождем чуть-чуть.  
*Let's wait a bit.*  
Давайте перенесём встречу на завтра. *How about we postpone the meeting till tomorrow?*  
Давайте я вам позвоню послезавтра.  
*How about I call you the day after tomorrow?*

### If things are getting a bit anxious:

Давайте побыстрее.  
*Can we hurry this up a bit?*  
Давайте не будем ругаться.  
*Let's not argue.*  
Давайте не будем. *Let's not do that.*  
Давай поговорим

### In every case the best answer:

Давай! *Let's do it!*

Courtesy of RUSLINGUA  
[www.ruslingua.com](http://www.ruslingua.com)

**Ruslingua**



Text and photos by Ian Mitchell

Tallinn used to feature on the ex-pat agenda as a convenient destination for the visa run—until the Russian government changed the rules and compelled applicants to return to their country of origin. Before that it was a popular destination for Muscovites, being their “own abroad”: cleaner, friendlier, more Western—until Gorbachev abolished the Soviet Union and it became the actual abroad, like everywhere else. So is there any reason for either category of person to visit Tallinn today? The short answer is yes. Here are a few reasons why.

The first thing to say about Estonia generally is that anyone entering it from Moscow gets the immediate feeling of being in Scandinavia. It is not just when compared to Russia, but also with much of central and western Europe, that Estonia seems cleaner and friendlier. In general it is more organised and more Nordic, but without any sense of officiousness. Estonia is a lot cheaper than the other Scandinavian countries and importantly, in my own doubtless degenerate view, it does not have the absurd complex about alcohol that makes visiting Norway and Finland—I have not been to Sweden—such a bore.

Physically, Estonia is an attractive country. This is not entirely to do with the scenery, which has a quiet charm but is not spectacular in the way that Norway or the Highlands of Scotland are. It is more to do with the human influence on the landscape. I travelled there recently by train, and from the moment we crossed the border at Narva, the countryside looked different. There was none of the mess one is sadly accustomed to seeing all over Russia. No-one dumps their rubbish in the forests in Estonia. There is an evident civic sense amongst the people.

Tallinn is not just neat and well-cared for, it has a spectacular medieval town centre, one of the best preserved in Europe. The Hanseatic Old Town is a riot of different architectural

# Tallinn







styles, from baronial to baroque, from the thirteenth century to modern. There is a fascinating range of museums, as well as enough smart shops to gratify any credit-card jockey.

But the best part of Tallinn, in my view, is the friendliness of the Estonians themselves—oh, and their excellent command of English.

One aspect of the Estonian countryside which any visitor interested in either history or architecture will enjoy is the immense range of ex-Baltic German manor houses that are open to visitors. Of the 1,200 or so big estates from which the descendants of the Teutonic Knights administered the countryside in their heyday in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, nearly half survive. Perhaps a third of these are open to visitors, either as museums or, more spectacularly, as hotels. I visited three magnificent ones. A whole website is dedicated to them (see below).

Since so many Baltic Germans rose to high rank in the pre-Revolutionary administration in St Petersburg, their story has a wider relevance than merely the Estonian past. Indeed, many were international figures. In the excellent Maritime Museum in Tallinn, for example, I learned that Bellingshausen, Kotzebue, Krusenstern and Vranghel—four of the most eminent nautical explorers Russia produced—were all Baltic Germans from Estonia.

Next year, Tallinn is going to be European City of Culture. All sorts of special events will be held in the city, one every day, apparently. Now is the time to start thinking about arranging a holiday.

How to get there: plane or train, but train is my recommendation as you see more of the countryside: it is not cheap though, with RZHD charging 10,000 roubles for a return ticket in 4-berth coupe.

Where to stay: there are innumerable hotels, but if you want excellent budget accommodation, try the friendly Hotel Stroomi, where I stayed. It charges Euro 31 per night for a double room with bath and excellent breakfast. ([www.stroomi.ee](http://www.stroomi.ee))

The only serious guide book to Estonia in English is canned simply *Estonia* and is by Neil Taylor and is published by Bradt Guides at £14.99 (available through [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk))

If you want to follow the Baltic German Manor House trail, see [www.mois.ee](http://www.mois.ee) For information and a programme of events for Tallinn: European City of Culture 2011, see [www.tallinn2011.ee](http://www.tallinn2011.ee) **P**



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# Na Chai



Charles Borden

Moscow visitors often ask, "How much do I tip the waitress?" Eighteen years after the end of the Soviet Union, the answer is still uncertain. Many visitors apply tipping habits from home, but still wonder if they got it right.

The Russian slang for tip is "na chai," literally "for tea," the words delivered in an off-hand, almost apologetic way, as a small token, certainly not for service, which both giver and receiver know would have been "exemplary" anyway.

In the Soviet era, there were few restaurants in Moscow. Many bore city names: the Prague on Novy Arbat, Peking at the Peking Hotel on Mayakovskaya, or the Sofia across Tverskaya that now hosts a Rostik/KFC. All are rumored to have been well equipped with listening devices for foreign guests.

The populace considered restaurant workers privileged because they had access to food and drink the average sovok never saw—why would a waiter need a tip? In Soviet society salaries varied little with job and position and tips were ideologically incorrect, non-egalitarian. The free market concept of service was also missing. The story runs that when McDonald's arrived, it had to train its staff to smile, and there is the anecdote about the hungry tourist arriving at a restaurant at noon to find a sign that read, "Closed for lunch".

Most Russians outside the emerging middle class in Moscow and St. Petersburg still have little experience with restaurants let alone tips. They seldom dine out except for a bite at a kiosk. If they do, it is as guest at a wedding or birthday party. However, the middle class is growing rapidly in Russia and with it a restaurant culture. Both diners and waiting staff are increasingly coming to terms with tipping.

Based upon conversations with restaurateurs and others in the industry, there is still no clear rule for tipping and habits vary depending upon whether the venue is one of Moscow's elite establishments or one of the more "democratic" cafes or bars, and how far the restaurant is from the centre.

Paul O'Brien, one of the founders of Starlite Diners and Uley, one of Moscow's first upscale restaurants, found the tipping situation socially complicated when he first arrived. "Average salaries were less than \$300, so when someone ran up a \$1000 bar bill for a



group and left a \$150 tip there was a serious disparity," Paul says. "That situation has of course changed dramatically, particularly in the past couple of years."

According to executives at two restaurants at the pinnacle of the Moscow's food chain, the best tippers by far in their houses are Russians, but they are also the most demanding on staff. Naturally, guests at these establishments can afford to tip as well as they can eat and drink. If Moscow is home, regular diners know a good tip brings proper attention on the next visit. Serial restaurateur Douglas Steele (Papa's and Beverly Hills Diner) also reports that, "at the Beverly Hills Diner, Russians are now the biggest tippers."

At restaurants distant from the centre or in the regions, tips tend to be less. Robert Greco, owner of Beaver's, an American-style sports bar and restaurant in the Marino district at the edge of Moscow, reports that "tips tend to range from 5-10% for our crowd, which is almost entirely Russian and younger." According to sev-

eral sources, tips in the regions range up to 10%, but one ex-pat restaurant owner commented that he leaves a lower percentage in Moscow because the checks are higher.

Many American and European visitors bring habits from home, which for Americans means leaving 15-20% depending upon service. In many European countries, service is included in the bill, and the reports are that Europeans tend to be more stingy. However, Doug Steele commented, "I've been shocked recently by poor tips from some Americans. Someone recently left a 20 rouble tip: that's 75 cents, on a two thousand rouble check. He probably thought that 20 roubles was a lot of money for a Russian waitress."

One long-term ex-pat opined that, "Perhaps visitors come with early 90s ideas about the condition of the country. I was just in an AT&T Phone Store in Chicago getting a SIM card. When the salesman heard I was from Russia I was surprised to hear, 'I heard you can make a lot of money by bringing a suitcase of blue jeans to Russia'."

Another common question is: "Do waiters and waitresses get to keep the tips?" The professionals report that waiting staff retain tips at most reputable and upscale establishments, and tips make up a good part of a waiter's compensation. Waiting staff that retain tips sometimes pool with their colleagues, and share a small percentage with servers and dishwashers. At one well-known pub, the waiting staff share a percent of each evening's take.

To make sense of it all, here's the Passport Guide to Tipping: at most ex-pat haunts and better-known restaurants a tip of 10-15% is adequate depending upon service. If you have an expense account and the service was great, a higher tip will be appreciated; a tip of 7% to 10% should be adequate when traveling to the regions or in out-of-the-way locations.

If paying by credit card, never add the tip to the check. Leave cash. Even the establishment is reputable, there are tax issues that would complicate a pay out to wait staff. **P**

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# Chicago Prime



John Harrison, photos by Alina Ganenko

The Chicago Prime and Starlight Diner logo stand proudly outside a stately-looking previous shopping centre. Chicago Prime opened on the 8th of August, and the fifth Starlight Diner in Moscow is to open shortly. Chicago Prime is reached by going up some escalators just by the main entrance. Escalators are a good idea if you are unable to navigate stairs for any reason.

Once upstairs one is hit by a wave of warmth and friendliness rather uncommon in Moscow's sometimes over-priced restaurants. The décor is formal but subdued, with dark stained oak walls, soft lighting and sofa-type seating arranged around medium-sized and large tables, which are mostly partitioned off from each other. Mercifully, the music is not loud. On the night I visited Chicago Prime together with Ross Hunter, headmaster of the English International School, we were ushered straight to the Raw Bar to sample some of the establishment's cocktails. The bar is suitably equipped with oysters, shrimps, lobsters, tuna and other maritime products ensconced in ice and backlit. There is a bewildering array of cocktails to choose from (twenty-four), so I went for an RG Infusion, with Rosemary-infused Hendrik's Gin, raspberry Liqueur and Lemon Juice. This proved to be delicious, and highly addictive. Ross was served a Hang Thyme, which consists of Absolut Citron, Simple Syrup, Fresh Thyme, and Lime Juice, which had a similar effect on the end-user, resulting in us being quite happy to stay at the bar all evening and enjoy the 120 or so other drinks on offer, from Mojitos to Grappa, to Compari and 15 year old Roge Crult.

When we finally made it to the table, the next day, we discovered that the English-language menu was mercifully without spelling

mistakes. Usually menus serve as great sources of entertainment for me, a magazine editor, in Moscow's superior eating places. The RG infusion primed me well for my Lobster and Crab Cakes with Remoulade appetiser, which disappeared too quickly for me to make any meaningful statements about the quality, except to say that they were unusual and delicious. Ross chose Grilled Quail and Baby Spinach with a Honey Whole Grain Mustard Vinaigrette salad, and was ecstatic about the effect the vinaigrette made on the spinach or lettuce. The small pieces of quail were superbly served and tasted slightly sweet and oily, as quail should.

The wine list with its 12 red wines and 7 white by the glass is reminiscent of establishments such as Morton's Steak house in the USA with private wine lockers. The task of choosing a wine to go with a steak, from the 80 or so wines in stock, has been simplified, slightly by arranged them into sections on the menu according to whether the wine concerned is light, medium or full bodied. So it is a good idea to choose your steak first and then hit the wine cellar based on the kind of steak you are ordering. With a bit of help from one of the genuinely friendly waiters, we selected Chateau Bernadotte Cru Bourgeois, Haut-Medoc from France, which was labelled a "medium to full bodied red wine." The nose was intoxicating; the taste better.

After ruminating for what seemed an interminable amount of time on which steak to choose, I ordered USA Prime Bacon Wrapped Filet Mignon with a Porcini and Rosemary Rub. There was a small problem with the definition of well-done, because I am from London. Well-done to a Londoner means burnt to a cinder, which of course the Chicago Prime steak was not. It was





smooth, immensely eatable on a par with offerings from the best steak houses in the country. Ross ordered Double Australian lamb chops, which I understand he enjoyed apart from the garlic which he is allergic to. Food in this restaurant is served on huge plates. You think the servings aren't that big, in fact they are massive and consequently our meal lasted a few hours. I finished off my evening with grilled cheesecakes. Ross couldn't find room in his overworked intestines for anything else, oh journalistic work is so tiring, I decided as I ate the last cheesecake.

Bob Lorenz, one of the partners in the Starlight Diner company that has opened this restaurant, and one of the people behind the whole concept of opening Chicago Prime, told me that all the prime steaks are flown in, chilled, from the USA. He explained that it is not possible, yet, to source meat of the right quality here in Russia. I find this surprising, but then my knowledge of what a true American steak should taste like has only been cultivated in Moscow.

There is serious investment involved in opening a, 625 sq meter, comfortable 200-seater steakhouse in Moscow. The owners say that they are confident that the venue will pay for itself with a few years, and judging by business over the first few weeks that is probably the case. Having a Starlight Diner downstairs is smart. The nearest Starlight Diner is nearby at Mayakovsky, but psychologically it feels like it is a distance away. Another plus is the location. Pushkin Square, does not have that many really good eating places, in fact in recent years, with the conversion of the first floor of the Pushkin cinema into a casino and then into something else, plus a constant opening and closing of other businesses, means

that the square is going through a bit of an identity crisis. This new eating palace is a welcome addition, and could serve as an anchor to attract other middle- to upper-band eateries to the vicinity. After all, this is Moscow's cultural centre and the venue where the great and glamorous of the nation's film industry, and a few from other countries, gather once a year for the Moscow International Film Festival. If the openness and communal spirit of Starlight Diners, which I felt in the Chicago Prime, is something that is going to stay, then the restaurant will draw people in from downstairs. A meal in Chicago Prime is not cheap, but it is not prohibitively expensive either. Try it out. **P**

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# Shafran



Charles W. Borden, photos by Alina Ganenko

Shafran is a cozy Lebanese restaurant just a short walk north and west of Tverskaya Metro station. It's on the same street as the European Medical Center, which might be handy if you need addiction treatment for the hummus that Shafran serves up. A plate of this creamy middle-eastern chickpea and tahini (sesame paste) blended with olive oil, lemon and garlic, served with hot, fresh pitta bread (390 r) is alone worth the trip to Shafran.

Shafran (Saffron) is a Moscow veteran, opened seven years ago by Israeli restaurateur Dmitri Nemirovsky, who more recently brought Yapona Mama and Steaks to the city. Shafran stands as one of few, if the only Lebanese kitchens in Moscow. It's a quiet and comfortable 80 seats or so, decorated with earth tones and saffron trim.

After a quick perusal of the slender menu, PASSPORT editor John Harrison and I ordered a mezze, the collection of small plates that is traditional in Lebanon and other middle eastern countries. In addition to the hummus, we selected baba ganoush (a seasoned eggplant mash), taratour (yoghurt and cucumber) and Bei-

rut aubergine (eggplant cubes), each plate 180 rubles. We added a plate of falafel (360r) and were attracted to the Fried Goat Cheese with Strawberries (410r).

Our mezze came out with a generous plate of warm, fresh pitta and a firm flatbread, trimmed sesame seeds, either to be used to scoop up each dish. The baba ganoush bore the distinct, but mild smoky taste that comes with preparation on a grill. Tarator is a nice garnish, made with yoghurt, cucumbers, dill and walnut. The Beirut aubergine disappeared quickly. These simple eggplant pieces, were nicely spiced and very tasty. I folded one of the fried, spicy ground chickpea falafel balls in fresh pitta with some tahihi and hummus, a heavenly combination. The falafel comes with amba, a smooth pickled mango sauce. Five large, triangles of firm goat cheese came out presented in a small bowl of quartered, fresh strawberries.

The mezze was certainly adequate for lunch, but the imperative of a proper restaurant review compelled us to try an entrée. The waiter suggested the Assorted Lamb (1550r), a generous platter of lamb kebab, saddle steak, rib chop and cutlet, all apparently sourced from New Zealand. The waiter also recommended we order medium-

well, which was surprising since "medium" in Moscow often means well done. However, the rib chop and saddle steak came out just a little pink and were very tender and flavorful. The lamb platter was dressed with grilled zucchini, red sweet pepper and a piece of sweet corn, and sprinkled with ground, dried pomegranate.

Shafran has a large and very tempting pastry table, apparently a recent addition; most selections are not yet on the menu. The waiter set out a plate of about half a dozen different pastries, which we enjoyed with the house saffron tea.

Since it was lunchtime, we passed on the wine. Shafran has a relatively short wine list ranging from about 2000 rubles a bottle and up. The list includes a couple of Lebanese wines from Chateau Kefraya in the Bekaa Valley. Le Dame Blanche 2007, a blend of five white grapes lists at 3200 rubles.

Shafran serves a Lebanese breakfast from 10 to 12 every day and a Lebanese lunch from 12 to 4. Shafran has free Wifi. **P**

**Shafran**  
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## Your restaurant should be here

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## NOTE:

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## Moscow Yacht Show

On the evening of Friday 3 September, the nautical elite of Moscow gathered at the Royal Yacht Club on Leningradsky Prospect to celebrate the opening of the Moscow Yacht Show.

The event is really a grand sales extravaganza. It was held in the reconstructed "Vodny Stadion", built in 1935 as part of the 100,000-life Stalin Canal system that created the Khimki reservoir on which the stadium sits. Originally, the Roman-style terraces overlooked three pools. One was for swimming competitions; one for water-polo competitions; and one for diving competitions. It was a competitive world being a Soviet "spartsmen". Doing things simply for fun was frivolously bourgeois.

Today the pools have gone and been replaced by mooring docks for about 100 enormous motor cruisers. The only competition is to be "in the swim" boat-wise. This means spending anything up to \$5 million on a cabin cruiser, usually with two radar pods mounted above the bridge deck, the better to detect craft on the other side of the canal. Thus equipped, you can motor up and down the reservoir or, if you feel more adventurous, make voyages of discovery up towards Dmitrov and Dubna. Not even Christopher Columbus got that far.

Or you can do nothing more than check your mooring lines and climb up to the after-deck with a party of guests and hand out pink gins. I have been told that the bigger the boat, the less often it moves. The owners seem not to have understood Ratty's point in *Wind in the Willows*: "There is nothing, absolutely nothing, half so much worth doing as simply mess-



ing about in boats." Perhaps that is understandable given the scale of the investments involved here. These are not so much boats as personal floating social contexts. For capitalists as much as for communists, going boating simply for fun must seem irredeemably bourgeois.

The Royal Yacht Club has a Potemkinish aspect too since it is not so much a club as a business. It concentrates on cruisers rather than yachts. And of course it is not in any meaningful sense "Royal". But if you want to feel like royalty you can rent apartments in the neighbouring development at up to \$30,000 a month. That was the first thing I was told when I arrived at the "grandiose gala-evening". Perhaps Ratty was wrong and that really there is nothing half so much worth doing as messing about in expensive apartments. Let's flog the boats! After all, this show is about sales, not sails. **P**

*Ian Mitchell*





## Night Rally

On Saturday 28th August, the company Old-Time held a night rally for vintage cars around the streets of Moscow. It started at 11 p.m. at the Pioneer Cinema on Kutuzovsky Prospekt and ended at the restaurant Wine Story on Nikolskaya Street at 2 a.m., after which there was dinner and prize-giving. Last month I wrote about the experience of going on the day rally organised by the same company ("To the Volga in a Volga"). I noted how uncool it was to be seen in an ancient Soviet saloon. This time, I had the opposite experience, travelling in a lime-green, late-Eisenhower/early-Elvis Dodge Coronet 2-door hardtop, complete with space-age fins, thunderous V8 and enough space on the back seat to have cheer-leader sex with half the Nashville nubility. Now I realised what it is like to be cool. Young boys crowded round the star as he clambered in



(alone, sadly!) to that back seat, finding it quite hard to manoeuvre an old body past a front seat which had been designed before the Age of Ergonomics. But arguably, it was the utterly impractical concept of the car as a whole that made it so brutally cool. Certainly, many of the drivers we passed as we thrashed round north Moscow waved, hooted and gave other signs of approval at such a whimsical sight amidst the half-derelict factories and panelny doms of the Soviet wasteland. I felt my age again when many of the young boys I saw photographing us after we crossed the finish line on Nikolskaya turned out, on closer inspection of their hats, to be Militia men. They put away their little batons and whipped out post-Elvis phones on which to take pictures for the folks back home—in Lyubertsy, one presumes, or Vykhino. Is that really what it means to be cool in Moscow? (See [www.old-time.ru](http://www.old-time.ru)) **P**

Ian Mitchell



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## Whisky Live

Two days of non-stop whisky tasting? Sounds perfect. A test of endurance, and of education and of taste memory, and more. This is a two part story. For pure whisky, scroll on down.

"Whisky Live" was an oversized, brash, confusing and incomplete affair, as befits its location in an unfinished building in Moscow City, that oversized, brash and confusing affair. The festival was a mixture of trade fair, carnival, evangelistic mission and supermarket. It was hosted in a dozen unfinished shops: bare concrete floors with interesting trip hazards between kiosk and corridor, which were well tested later in the evenings. These surrounded a giant atrium, half filled with a red steel sculpture which was half constructivist "Tatlin Tower" and half Forth Bridge, dropped from a great height. The air was half filled with a noisy rock band then the bagpipes, emphasising the event's confusion of purpose. Oddly, it started in mid-afternoon, when most people are busy at work. The invited-only guest-list blended the enthusiasts, the curious, the social mixers and the hard drinkers quaffing free noggins\*.

To whisky! It is not hard to make a bad spirit. A cheap beer, wine or fermented potato soup can be boiled to separate hooch from voda. Lesser products are obvious proof of this, including raw grain whisky. Making an aqua vita to savour, discuss, remember and lift your own spirit requires expertise, patience and time. Blending grain and malt whisky to make a decent Scotch is a remarkable blend of art and science that deserves our regular appreciation. Whisky Live offered an education of the Malted palate. The world's distillers and marketers competed for our attention.

Dozens of the finest Scotch Malts. Blends of bewildering variety. Whiskies



from Ireland, America, Georgia and Japan. Where on earth to start? Heaven is a good place: THE Glenlivet. The first legal Scotch. The benchmark. This wondrous nectar speaks for itself, but we also had the kilted Neil Macdonald and Valentina to explain the finer points and pour the precious dram. Their exposition was expertly enthusiastic. All the great Scotch Malts share the principles, which were reiterated across the fair. A simple process, executed to perfection. Time in the barrel to add subtlety and soak away the disagreeable members of the chain (methyl, propyl and butyl, since you ask). The water, the peat, the distiller's nose. The aromatic esters which grace the taste buds. And so much more. With lifetimes of learning awaiting, get started!

Kilts and sporrans were much in evidence, by no means all above Scottish knees: Igor displayed an enviable knowledge of the Highlands. A big team from Inver House-InBev included Kilted Rowan and Derek, with their Old Pulteney, Speyburn and, most revealing, a gloriously smooth and refreshing An Cnoc. Remember the name even if, like me, you cannot

pronounce it. In the same stable were also the splendidly English suited and bowler-hatted Tom and Jan making an original pitch for the unusual Hankey Bannister. A strong seller in the export and long drink sectors, this singular blend breaks all conventions. No true whisky explorer should miss this interesting taste. Time and renal risk prevented me from tarrying longer with the Glen Grants, this time, in all their splendid variety of ages.

It is impossible to cover all the range. Trying yourself is essential. For me, guaranteed enjoyment and gentle exaltation are in almost any of the great Speyside and Highland Malts, as above, Glenmorangie or Orcadian Highland Park. When the taste buds are adventurous, to Jura, Skye or Islay. Of the others at whisky Live the most interesting was Nikka from Japan, acceptable at 10 year old, but hopefully smoother at 21. These all need more time, both to practise their art, and longer in the oak. Feel free not to agree: I don't mind, I write this with a Macallan at one elbow, and a Lagavulin at the other (only to ward off a cold) so I am as mellow as they are. Good health, or 'Slainte!' as they say. **P**





## Rugby

Oxford University graced Russia for their opening games of the season, playing Moscow's top club, Slava, on 15th September before heading for Kazan for the weekend. It was an honour to watch quality rugby (and this from a regular Dragons member) played on the best 'gazon' in town, in front of a large and lively crowd.

For Oxford, everything is preparation for the annual show-down against Cambridge on 9 December, at Twickenham and on TV screens worldwide. Dark against Light (Blue), high church versus low church, the city of dreaming spires pitted against that of perspiring dreams, establishment versus free thinkers. An 800-year (precisely) rivalry honoured on the pitch.

This year's Oxford are a new and fresh side, with a majority of undergraduates, and a minority of 'Blues', veteran warriors of previous contests. Coach Murray Henderson, a Christchurch Kiwi hewn from something that makes Karelian granite look pale and soft, explains: "We have a long season together building our team skills, and matching ourselves against many of the best teams in England. What the boys need first is a dose of exposure to men's physicality. That's why we came to Russia."

They got it. Slava boast several players in the Russian national team, notably their no.8 and the centres, with the hooker also marking his card impressively. Russia have qualified for next year's Rugby World Cup, in Murray's home country, and they play their rugby hard. Slava's forwards gave the young and svelte Oxford front row a searching examination, and the Dark Blue pack were often in reverse. In late season, Slava's backs had some impressive off-loading, dummy-running and scissors skills, and made themselves space at pace. Oxford held up impressively, and the sides swapped scores until Slava's power overcame the guests' fitness and imagination, 29-19. The ref-

eree added a well-rounded presence. The result pleased everyone, as Slava's triumph against a rugby major was a matter for great team pride, and Oxford gained great experience.

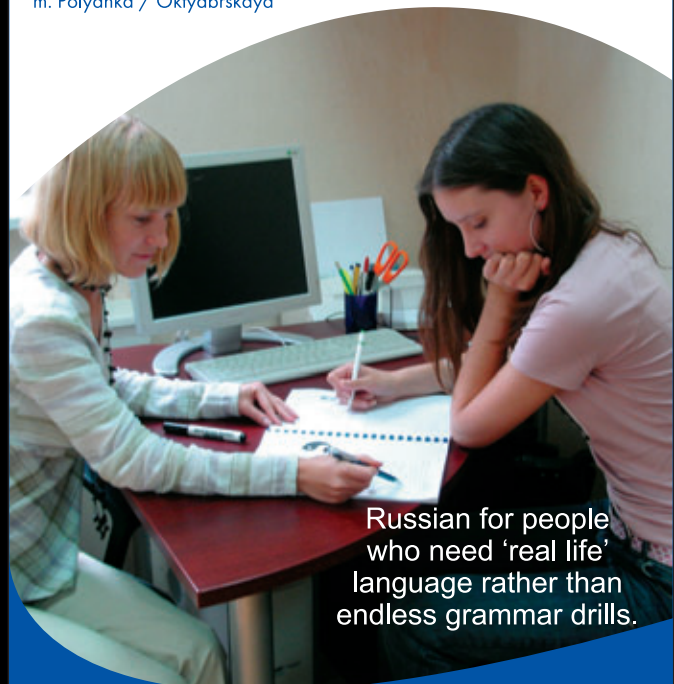
The knowledgeable crowd were in fine voice, and rugby-lovers, meaning both sexes, all ages, players, exes and wannabees, showed their appreciation. The guests were buoyed by a raucous (but terribly well-spoken, of course) bevy of fans in the stands, blue-blooded Brits and Muscovites standing shoulder-pad to shoulder-pad.

In proper rugby tradition, the teams feasted together, before the guests were treated to a feast of Moscow's hospitality by night. The team and their backroom staff were spirited, engaging, articulate and vibrant. I hope they win every game this autumn. Except the last one, of course. **P**

*RDH MA (Cantab)*

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# Church Village Fete

St. Andrew's Church, September the 4th. Photos by John Harrison





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# Life of a Lokh

Helen Womack

"You're getting more and more like one of us," said my friend Tanya when she heard I was downsizing to a one-room, rented apartment in a sleazy area at the end of the Metro line.

Yes, I admit it; from being a privileged, protected Western correspondent, I have gone down in the world to the point where I can almost call myself a lokh (loser).

Of course, there are lokhs far poorer than me. There are guest workers who sleep four to a room in the space I have all to myself. There are commuters who, when reaching the end of the Metro line, sit for another hour or two in marshrutkas (mini-vans), stuck in traffic jams, until they make it home to their small nests.

You may accuse me of being like Marie Antoinette, playing at being a shepherdess. But still I feel I qualify as a lokh, for Westerners can be losers too.

The word lokh came from Fenya, the slang of the gulags, and applied to the dumb idiots who fell prey to the more cunning and ruthless. In the 1990s, the "golden youth" or kids of the nomenklatura used to say that not having a "cutlet" (wad of dollars) in your pocket made you a lokh. Ksenia Sobchak, famous for being famous, now says the rich can also be lokhs, if they're naff enough, and she should know.

To the sneering elite, lokhs en masse are known as bydlo (herd of cattle).

They're treated like cattle so they behave like cattle; they behave like cattle so they get treated like cattle. It's a vicious circle. There's a gap between the rulers and the ruled in all countries, of course, but nowhere is it wider than in Russia, where the powers-that-be have complete contempt for ordinary people (and the feeling is mutual).

Not having a BMW, or indeed a car at all, I see the bydlo everyday when I ride on the overcrowded lokhovoz (lokh carrier) or Metro. In their eyes, I see myself reflected: tired, anxious and dissatisfied but also, sometimes, laughing at a private joke, smiling inwardly at some secret joy. An Azeri man, in a green jacket and trousers that didn't quite match, met my eye the other day with a look of self-respect and dignity.

He was a lokh by definition, not being a Muscovite but a "guest of the capital". He gave up his seat for a woman, a secretary, perhaps, or a teacher. The carriage was crowded with folk: some drunks, a few punks, a beggar, young lovers but mostly workers trying to earn a decent living.

A lokh sticks to his profession, even if it's low-paid. A lokh works for months without getting paid at all and meekly waits until his employer coughs up some salary, always less than promised.

A lokh has a permanent bad-hair day. Or she brightens a cheap coat with a nice scarf. A lokh is ridiculously happy

when he gets a pair of sale shoes that fit or a mattress from Ikea.

"To some, pearls are not big enough; to others soup is too thin," as the Russian saying goes.

A lokh tries not to get sick because he lacks health insurance and money for doctors.

A lokh manages to get a seat on the Metro and studies an English textbook or a copy of the Russian constitution. Alternatively, he reads a magazine because it's easier.

A lokh fears the police, even if he's innocent; especially if he's innocent. A lokh honestly pays tax and ends up in a bureaucratic nightmare; or

he doesn't pay tax and lays awake at night, worrying.

A lokh fears for her children, particularly if they're boys. The last thing she wants is for them to go to the army, for she's heard of conscripts being returned to their mothers in sealed zinc coffins.

A lokh goes to the bank and is asphyxiated by freon gas from a fire extinguisher. The lokh has survived a summer of fires and smog but gets killed by a fire extinguisher—a fittingly absurd death for a lokh.

These are the lokhs; their lives are cheap, except to their loved ones. Their sorrows are great but perhaps they know the God of Small Things.

I don't romanticize them but I honour them; I almost count myself one of them.

"But you can go back to your native England or adopted Australia," I hear you say. Yes, except that I'm a lokh there too, you see. The whole world is ruled by zombies: politicians who forget who elected them, corporate fat cats and celebrities who are brain- and heart-dead.

At least we lokhs do have lives; we have not all sold our souls.

When a lokh goes home, perhaps he opens not a bottle of vodka but his paint box and passionately engages in his hobby. Perhaps he waters a garden on his balcony. And if a lokh is married, there's an outside chance his wife might actually love him, for she certainly didn't marry him for his money. **P**



# Dare to ask Dare



Photo by Maria Savelieva

Ex-pats and Russians alike ask celebrity columnist Deidre Dare questions about life in Moscow.

**Dear Deidre:**

*This really isn't the kind of question people normally send you, but I have a problem no one else seems to be able to help me with, so I thought I would try and see if you, a Western girl, has an answer. Like most Russians, I smoke a lot. I have ugly stains on my fingers from this. I have read that you are a big smoker. Do you have this problem? If so, do you know of a solution to it? I have checked the web and can't find any help!*

**Dear Digitally Jaundiced:**

Relax. I do indeed have a solution for you.

Twice a month, I soak my hands in pure bleach for 5 minutes. This works like a charm at completely getting rid of those 40 cigarettes-a-day stains.

Recently, however, someone pointed out to me that soaking in bleach might be hazardous to one's health.

Yes, well: when I quit smoking, I'll worry about the bleach.

xxooDD

**Dear Deidre:**

*I am a Russian man and I cannot bear to see beautiful Russian woman with ugly ex-pat men. What do these men have that makes these women love them?*

**Dear Boris? Misha? Sergei? Dimitry?:**

Nothing.

Back in Columbus, Ohio, or Birming-

ham, these guys would be the ugly, poor, fat losers they were meant to be.

However, in some ex-pat locations, like Russia or Asia, they get to be ugly, poor, fat losers with a Western passport.

And that makes all the difference.

xxooDD

**Dear Deidre:**

*My 70 year-old mother read your column the other day and I was mortified! I'm thinking of not bringing it into our house and only reading it at Cafe Mania. What do you think of that?*

**Dear Latte Lover:**

Only this: we treat old people the same way we treat children under 13. There's just something off about that, don't you think? Especially since everything we do, they did about 50 years before we even knew such activities existed.

xxooDD

**Dear Deidre:**

*I am a black South African and I want to move to Russia for the girls, the parties and the wild lifestyle. Any advice?*

**Dear Nelson:**

You're black?

Don't.

xxooDD

**Dear Deidre:**

*How can I adopt one of the many homeless dogs in Moscow?*

**Dear Person Who Should Go Back to Wherever They Came From:**

I had a friend who took in a cute shivering puppy she found one winter on Ulitsa Povarskaya. About two days later my friend lost a toe, had to begin a painful series of rabies shots and have the puppy put down.

And the worst part of the whole drama was that because of the shots, she couldn't drink alcohol for six whole months!

My advice is to wait for the next cull—when there are fewer dogs wandering the streets, your desire for the companionship of man's best friend will decrease significantly. If this answer hasn't done so already.

xxooDD

**Dear Deidre:**

*My mate's girlfriend, Anya, was seduced by his Western friend, Denise. Now, everyone is upset. What can I do to repair the situation?*

**Dear Sticky Beak:**

Not much, as I think I once successfully seduced this particular Anya as well.

xxooDD

**Dear Deidre:**

*I am seeing a married man and I want him to divorce his wife and marry me. I've read that many men have divorced their wives to marry you. How did you get them to do it?*

**Dear Measly Mistress:**

I asked them not to.

Picture a "wife." I see a pudgy, nagging woman.

Picture a "mistress." I see a young, slim woman in a flash apartment. ALWAYS be the mistress.

I wish none of them had ever had ever left their wives.

I never got pudgy or nagging: but the men did.

xxooDD

Do you have a question for Deidre Dare?

If so please email her at [Deidre\\_Clark@hotmail.com](mailto:Deidre_Clark@hotmail.com).

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# Pileloops' Festival

Written by Natalie Kurtog, illustrations by Nika Harrison

*This story, written by a talented local author, will be continued*

## Chapter One Grandfather's Hat

"That's the way, press the dough!"

Granny pressed the dough round the pastry, leaving the meat stuffing inside, and delicately moulded the pie. "It's ready!"

"Like this?" Peter asked, covered from head to foot in flour. Meat stuffing obstinately oozed out of the edges of his pie. He tried to put it back inside but the stuffing had got the whiff of freedom and wasn't going anywhere.

"Oh no!"

"Never mind, you'll learn. You've got to get the knack."

"What's the knack?" Peter asked.

"You've got to know how to use your hands, and experience," said Granny, turning over a new pie, "like a magician."

"You are a real magician, Granny."

"No, I'm not, but your great-grandfather was," said Granny nodding towards a yellowing photograph in a frame hanging on the wall.

Peter went up to the portrait and started to look at it carefully. A man with a moustache and a hat peered down at him.

"Is this your father?"

"Yes."

It seemed to Peter that his great-grandfather was looking right at him and smiling. The boy dodged to the left, out of great-grandfather's line of vision:

"He keeps on looking at me! What a strange costume he's got on."

"It's a waistcoat. He used to wear that when he did shows at the circus."

"And what did he do?"

"He did tricks. Just imagine, in less than a minute he could pull all sorts of things out of his hat: a cat, a rabbit, a bouquet of flowers, a ribbon, handkerchiefs and a whole flock of pigeons."

"Was the hat magic?" Peter asked.

"In his hands it was magic," Granny sighed.

"I wish I had a hat like that. When I was this small," with the palm of his hand, Peter showed half his height, "I dreamt of being a magician! Granny, can you do tricks?"

"My biggest trick is tasty pies!"

Peter watched closely as granny carefully cracked an egg, took a goose feather and started to stroke the pies, which made them turn yellow and shiny.

"There, the pies are ready!" she said at last. "Let them stand for a little while. We'll light the stove and bake them, so that you won't be hungry any more. Tomorrow I'm going into town very early, for the whole day. Will you be alright on your own?"

"Babushka, where is great-grandfather's hat now?" Peter asked, poking his head into the flue. He wanted to see the sky through it.



"It's somewhere in the attic, in with the old things. Come to think of it, I haven't seen it for a while. I used to come across it from time to time."

"Will you give it to me!" Peter asked, peering at the black hole in the flue.

"If you find it, please, it's all yours," granny replied.

Then Peter saw two small shining eyes looking at him from deep inside the chimney. Suddenly – whoosh! He was covered with soot.

Peter jumped away from the stove. At first he was scared, then he decided it was just his imagination, and he calmed down.

Granny came up to the stove to stoke it.

"Oh, you're completely covered in flour and soot! Go and get washed and get into some clean clothes. Dinner's almost ready."

"I want to have a look in the attic first, it's dusty there!" Peter couldn't wait to find the hat.

He wiped the soot off his nose with his sleeve, shook the flour off his trousers and quickly climbed up to the attic. He was itching to find the hat.

## Chapter Two Getting Acquainted

It was dark in the attic.

"Ah-Tchoo!" the boy sneezed loudly, "where has all this dust come from?"

"Now that's a question nobody knows the answer to. It gets in everybody's way," a rasping voice said.

Peter swivelled round to where the voice was coming from, but all he could see was dust swirling in the light of a lamp.

"All I can see is dust!" he shouted.

"That's what I am!"

"You are dust? Sure you are," Peter said in a doubting voice. He waved his hand, but dust had got into the light.

"You just blew me out of your nose and shook me off your trousers."

"I blew soot out of my nose and shook flour off my trousers."

"It was me up your nose, when you looked up the flue. I heard everything, Peter. You came here for the hat."

"What's your name?" The boy peered into the dust, trying to see who he was talking to.

"My name is Peeleloop!"

"What?"

"Peeleloop".

"Can I see you?"

"You can do if you turn into dust like me."

"Like you!" Peter laughed. "Turn into dust?"

"I haven't seen you here before," said Peeleloop.

"This is yet first time I've been to Granny's. She used to come to see us."

"What do you need the hat for?"

"I want to be a real magician, like my great-grandfather."

"Every boy dreams of doing magic and all that." Peter heard a heavy sigh.

"Do you know where it is?"

"I'm old, unfortunate Peeleloop, and I've got a hole in my memory. I left it on the pine tree!"

Peter was so surprised he sat down.

"You left your memory with a hole in it on a pine tree?"

"No! The hat with a hole in it. Really! You're going to get me completely confused! The hat hasn't got a hole in it! It's as good as new! It's hanging on a pine tree, in the forest."

"And why did you take it there? Why's the hat so important?"

"I'll tell you what, why don't we fly and get it, and I'll tell you everything."

"What do you mean 'fly'? I can't fly."

"Oh oh, there she goes again! Just listen to her."



From downstairs a voice rang out: "Peter!"

"Granny's calling!"

"Are you scared of her?" Peeleloop asked.

"N-No."

Granny raised her voice:

"Peter where are you? The stove has gone out!"

"I'm coming!" the boy answered and went over to the stairs.

"I'll wake you up in the night! Just don't tell Granny anything about me, not a word!" a whisper reached his ears as he came down from the attic.

## Chapter Three The Adventures Begin

The pies were amazingly tasty. Peter demolished them with great speed, sloshing them down with tea.

"Did you find the hat?" grandmother asked, when Peter, with his mouth full of pie, reclined back on the spine of his chair.

"It's not there."

"Did you look in the cupboard?"

"Everywhere."

Grandmother fell into thought. Then, watching as her grandson pushed his plate away from him, asked: "Full up?"

"Bursting!" Peter replied, patting his stomach.

"Don't get lost tomorrow," grandmother reminded Peter, "I'll be getting back late. There's some pies in the saucepan! I'll take my umbrella with me just in case, they said that the good weather might change on the telly."

Fresh air, and grandmother's pies did their job. Peter yawned. He said good-night to Granny and then went up to his room.

It seemed he had only just closed his eyes when he heard a voice saying: "Peter! Peter! You sleep like a log!"

Peter opened his eyes. It was dark in the room.

"Is that you, Peeleloop?" the boy sat up.

"Shhhh! Granny will wake up. I'm up here in the attic. Get dressed and let's set off!"

The wind rattled the window. The curtains moved, and the moon looked into the room.

Peter got dressed quickly, threw on his anorak, a cap, picked up his rucksack and sat on his bed. He was scared: he didn't know what was waiting for him upstairs. Will he ever return?, and if he knew he would really upset Granny if he didn't. But he was burning to find great-grandfather's legendary hat, and find out why it was so special to Peeleloop. There were so many questions, and even more secrets.

Peter straightened his bedclothes so that it looked as though he was still in bed. Then he tiptoed past granny's room and out onto the veranda. The floorboards betrayed him and squeaked.

Peter knocked over an empty bucket and there was a crashing noise. He froze on the spot and listened. When he heard Granny's regular breathing he sighed with relief, shoved some pies into his rucksack and quickly went up the steps to the attic.

"Peeleloop" the boy said.

But nobody answered.

"Peeleloop, I'm here," he said a little louder.

Silence.

"PEELELOOP!" the boy shouted.

"What are you making such a din for? Come up here!"

Stepping carefully, feeling his way with his hand, Peter moved in the direction of the voice.

"It's dark and frightening in here, and I don't know where you are. Where are you?"

"In the barrel!" answered Peeleloop.

The moon glanced into the small window, and Peter could see a large old oak barrel. The barrel had been used to soak apples, and then stored in the attic, forgotten and had darkened with age.

"I'm getting the place ready for your transformation."

"You're going to transform me? Into what?"

"Into dust!"

"What did you say?"

"You think you can fly with your weight and size?"

"Where can I put this?" Peter asked, swinging his rucksack above the barrel.

Then he heard a scraping laughter that was so infectious that Peter had to join in, although he didn't understand why Peeleloop was laughing.

"Well you really prepared yourself well didn't you!" Peeleloop chuckled. "You should have packed a fishing rod as well!"

"I thought we might get hungry, after all, we'll be flying all day."

"Even pies, aha!" Peeleloop choked with laughter.

"A little bit more, and I won't be able to move!"

"Why?"

"From tears!" Get into the barrel, now!" Peeleloop ordered.

"Why?" Peter said, surprised.

"Are you flying with me to get the hat or not?"

"Yes!"

"Then stop asking questions and get into the barrel, we haven't got much time."

Curiosity got the better of him. Peter climbed into the barrel and sat down. Dust started showering down on him, there was so much of it that the boy closed his eyes with his hands and shouted:

"Why are you chucking dust at me?"

Peeleloop carried on: "Remember, Peter, stay away from water and strong wind, they're dangerous for you!"

The boy tried to stand up, but the barrel rose up over the floor and turned around.

"If the wind carries you away, you'll get lost, if you come into to contact with water, you'll need time in order to dry off and become light again."

"Ah."

"Listen and remember: you must be home before sunset. If you don't get home in time, you will be a Peeleloop for ever!"

Peter felt that he could be many things: syrup and cream for a mixer, a football just about to be kicked into a goal, anything but a boy inside a barrel turning into dust. The barrel revolved so fast that he thought he'd be sick.

He stretched out his arms, trying to reach the sides of the barrel, but then it stopped.

"Well, what are you sitting there for, fly!" he heard Peeleloop saying.

Peter opened his eyes, and immediately overcome with fear, closed them again. **P**

...to be continued!



Compiled by Ross Hunter

## In Training

Like all great cities, Moscow grew with the railway. The first line, to the then capital, St Petersburg, arrived in 1851, and the main termini form a circle roughly around the Garden Ring and the Brown Metro. Six of the nine main 'Voksal' are pictured here. Can you match them to their names? Can you name the other three?



Yaroslav



Kievskaya



Leningradsky

Kazan



Kurskaya

Belorussky



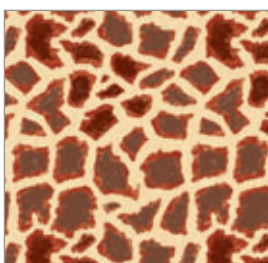
## Great Rivers

Most of the world's great rivers flow through several countries. Which is the MAIN place to find each of these dozen? As usual, I have muddled the waters by shuffling them.

Countries: Australia Brazil China Venezuela France India Pakistan Germany England Russia Egypt Mozambique  
Rivers: Nile Amazon Thames Yenisei Huang Ho Murray-Darling Orinoco Limpopo Rhone Rhine Indus Ganges

## The wild side of Moscow

Last month, zebra were seen on Moscow's streets, as part of a road safety event. There are lots of exotic creatures free range in Moscow. Can you spot their camouflage? I have mixed them up. Be more careful, some are dangerous!



Zebra



Tiger



Leopard



Cheetah



Giraffe

## Mini Sudoku – October

Usual rules:  
1-6 in each row, column and box.

3	5		2	1	
4		6			3
			6		
6	1		4		2

## September solutions

### Paw prints

From the left: bear, fox, dog, cat & lion.  
Clue: the bear is big and heavy, all cats can retract their claws, but dogs can't.

Photo quiz, Capital Holidays  
& Mini Sudoku: see  
[www.englishedmoscow.com](http://www.englishedmoscow.com)

**Mini Sudoku:** September's edition had a mistake in it – apologies. Here is the puzzle as it should be.

			6		
				3	4
4			5		
		5		4	3
	3				6
	2				1

# Thirty-one orgasms before Tomsk

Ian Mitchell

Veteran PASSPORT readers will finish this book wondering whether the author attended Deirdre Dare's groundbreaking lecture entitled "Russian Men" which was reported in our January issue. The hero, Pavel Ivanchenko from Tomsk, confirms most of what Deirdre said about the problems Western women have in relationships with the typical Russian male, especially if he is rich.

Pavel's rise from squalor to squillions follows a trajectory that has curious echoes of Mikhail Khodorkovsky's. Both men are pursued by Mr Putin, who used the tax police to try to arrest Pavel in a blood-spattered Siberian shoot-out. But unlike Khodorkovsky, there is no political back-story here; no issues beyond sex and spending. This is more Joan Collins than Robert Harris.

Pavel gets married twice, the second and more important time to a former girlfriend who is a young English girl, called Mo, whom he met in Moscow when she was on a school trip and he was a rising young black-marketeer. Back in the city several years later, Mo finds the experience of dating Pavel exciting, at least when compared with her previous English boyfriends. "There was no sitting around watching videos and getting stoned."

Pavel arrives for their dates bearing extravagant gifts. He takes her out to expensive restaurants in his chauffeur-driven car, complete with blacked-out windows and body-guards. He always opens doors for her "even if he has to rush round the car to do so", and he will never "let her light her own cigarettes".

After standing her up on one date, Pavel sends Mo a bucket of red roses. So far so good. But then he also sends her a bucket pink roses. Then a bucket of yellow roses. Then a bucket of white roses. And that was all before little Mo has left for work. This, the reader is forced to conclude, is a man with an ego problem.

After ten evenings and ten dates, Mo has received a ruby on a gold chain, a bottle of Yves Saint Laurent scent, a

white mink stole that makes her look like Grace Kelly, and even more flowers. The only thing she has not received is a good seeing-to. Mo does not understand why. But that was before Pavel took her to Tomsk. The invitation is to spend the weekend in the hero's hometown, too about in the company Hummer, have a few saunas and generally chill.

Only after she boards the train, does Mo realise that Pavel has reserved an entire carriage for the two of them. They have hardly left the lights of the city behind when Pavel gets down on the floor to open a hamper too big to go on the table. The first thing he pulls out is a bottle of Moët. He does that with his hands, in the conventional manner, but when he wants to pull the cork out he uses his teeth. This forces Mo to confront his "extremely working-class Russianness".

The champagne is followed by a jar of caviare, a pot of sour cream and a pile of pancakes—all huge of course. Thus fortified, for the next forty-eight hours it is nothing but sex, sex and more sex. After 31 orgasms, Mo loses count.

The whole Tomsk experience is as extravagant as that on the train so Mo, suburban English girl that she is (like the author), assumes that after this rite of passage she will be able to return to Moscow and, for the first time, be permitted to stay the night in Pavel's flat. There she hopes to "eat crisps and watch the telly". No such luck. They go straight back the formal dating routine that so puzzled her before she took the train to Tomsk. After a while, Mo asks when they are going to have sex again. Pavel replies, "Is that all you ever think about?"

Standing back from this bizarre scenario, the reader is naturally interested in why Pavel behaves as Miss Blundy describes. Unfortunately, no definite answer is given, which is a shame. But there are hints along the lines that Deirdre outlined in her talk. Although it is not stated explicitly, Pavel seems to be another mother-dominated Russian male who is overbearing, immature, insanely jealous and inwardly weak.



**The Oligarch's Wife**  
**Anna Blundy**  
**Arrow £7.99**

There is another woman in this story, Katya, who is Pavel's first wife. She is a very beautiful Russian girl who started life as a prostitute and whom Pavel alternately used to beat up, mistreat, ignore and generally trample on—until she struck back. The plot hinges on the interaction between the two wives and their husband. I will say no more.

Anna Blundy has spent time in Moscow and knows the streets and layout of the city. But somehow the sense of the hinterland inhabited by Pavel's cronies, gophers and family is less convincing. Having lived in Khimki for years, I am not convinced that "working-class Russians" are the violent, drunken thugs they are so often portrayed as being in popular Western fiction. Most seem to me too lazy to make really impressive villains.

There are a couple of worthwhile jokes in this book, like the word Mo uses for "Zdravstvuyti" when she first travels to Moscow on that school trip. She cannot remember that long Russian word, so she greets everyone by saying, with a smile, "Doesyourarsefityou". Next time I meet Deirdre Dare I'll try to remember that one. **P**