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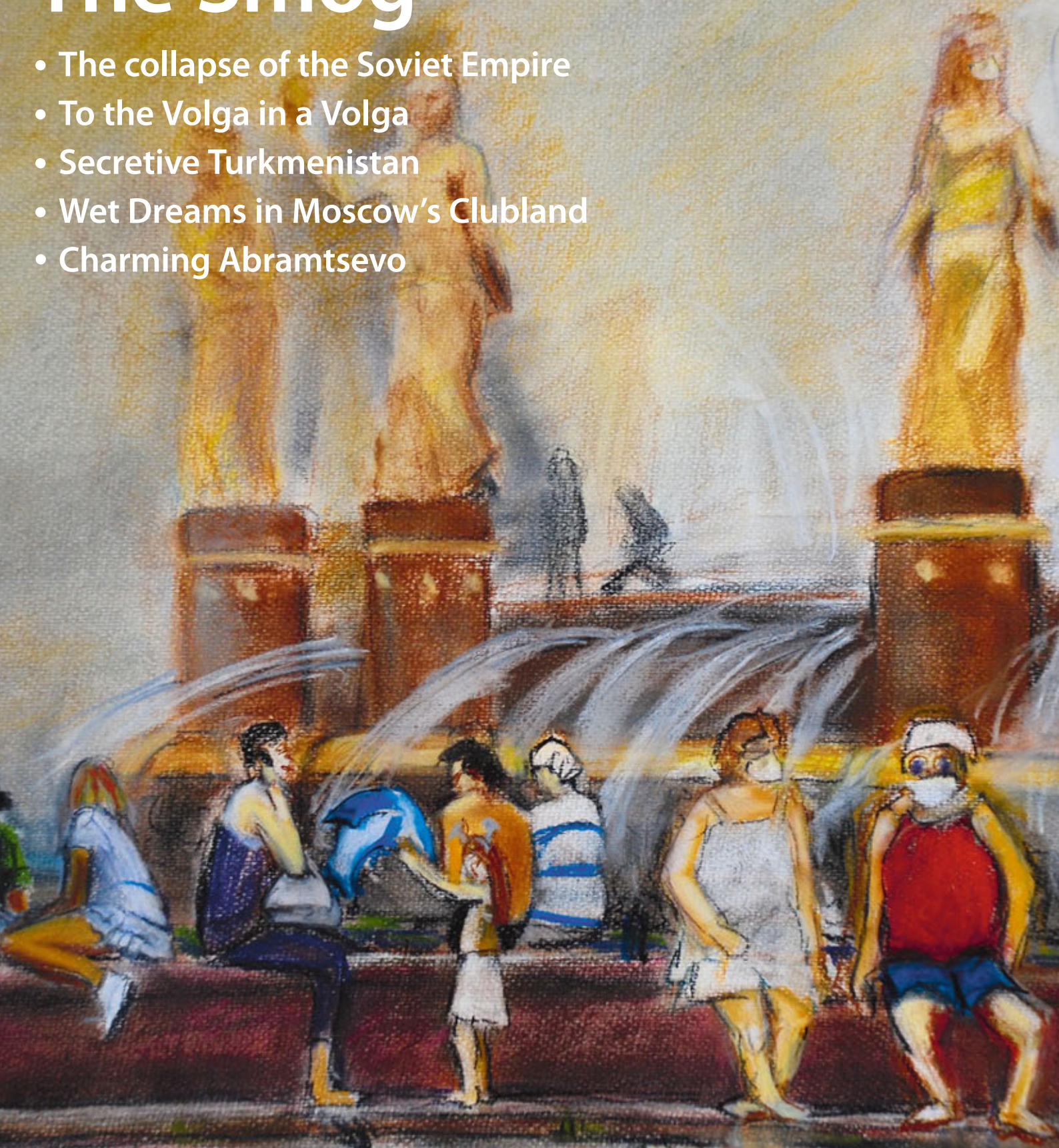
MOSCOW

SEPTEMBER 2010

www.passportmagazine.ru

The Smog

- The collapse of the Soviet Empire
- To the Volga in a Volga
- Secretive Turkmenistan
- Wet Dreams in Moscow's Clubland
- Charming Abramtsevo





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Letter from the Publisher



John Ortega
Owner and Publisher

I used to scoff at talk of Moscow being called a hardship post. I don't any longer. With at least 5,000 people dead as direct result of the Moscow heat wave and the smog, which many called a gas attack; living in Moscow in July and August was almost unbearable. Coupled to this was a feeling of insecurity due to an information black-out, something that John Harrison talks about in the cover story: The Smog.

Last month we started to cover the year 1989, in our series of modern Russian history. This month, we complete the year with a brief look at collapse of the Communist parties in Eastern Europe. Helen Womack has contributed a personal eye-witness account of the collapse of the Rumanian regime under Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu. History marches on, and next year we will be covering 1990. If there is anybody who was here in that year and would like to contribute a Testimony to their experiences then, please contact the editor.

In this issue, Art Franczek follows up his article last month about a possible double-dip in the world economy, with some positive aspects of the development of the Russian economy, in particular the Skolkova high-tech development park. Elena Rubinova finishes off her sociological series on Soviet Man with a frighteningly honest appraisal of the present situation illuminated by research from the Levada Centre.

I hope there is something in this issue for everybody.



Sportland

SportLand on Novy Arbat has just opened, and has already become well-frequented. With live transmission of a wide range of sports fixtures from all around the world, this sports bar is open from 12.00 noon right through to 4am daily.

There is a New VIP viewing area, SPORTCAFE, with 60" wide-screen plasma and LCD TV's. SPORTCAFE bar has a huge variety of drinks! You can watch up to 20 sporting events, in English.

SPORTLAND, NOVY ARBAT 21.

www.metelitsa.ru/sportcafe

cover by John H

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Published by 000 Passport Magazine. All rights reserved.
This publication is registered by the Press Ministry No. 77-25758. 14.09.2006
Printed by BlitzPrint. Moscow representative office:
127051, Moscow, Petrovsky Boulevard, Dom 10.

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Thursday, 2nd

Concert of classical music by "Vremena Goda"

Vremena Goda was one of the most memorable orchestras to appear in Moscow in the middle of 1990s. A surprisingly united collective of musicians interprets compositions of different epochs and styles with a high level of mastery and art. The richness of their sound and the respect that they show to the composers' language makes Vremena Goda stand out.

This concert will be conducted by Vladislav Bulakhov who has been heading the orchestra since its foundation. Today the orchestra unites about 20 young musicians committed to music and passing on to the public their contagious energy. Now that the musicians have won recognition for their talent, they perform all over the world and cooperate with eminent musicians like Rodion Schedrin and Zurab Sotkilava, which has raised their level as musicians to new heights.

Archangelskoye Estate Museum, 19:00

Friday, 3rd

Brainstorm (pop rock Latvia)

The story of Brainstorm is a true story of best friends who grew up together,

went to the same school, shared the same dreams and fulfilled them together. These are not just banal words, as is clear to anyone who has been to any of their concerts. Those guys were born in Soviet Latvia, and experienced a Soviet upbringing, and were part of the first generation to enjoy "freedom", something that their songs are all about.

Their songs, which are in Latvian, Russian and English, reflect both the riotous happiness of being young and the genuine sadness of being.

B1 maximum, 19:00



Saturday, 4th

The "Electric" night of the City Day

The First Saturday of September in Moscow is traditionally full of concerts and celebrations that can satisfy Muscovites with all sorts of varying

tastes. One of the surprises for this year's City Day is the Techno concert on Red Square, when Russian musicians will play together with their French colleagues. The concert will be held with the participation and guidance of Laurent Garnier, the French guru of electric sound.

Mostly known as a techno musician, Garnier keeps broadening the spheres of his activity. He manages his own internet radio, Pedro's Broadcast Basement, writes music for cartoons and cooperates with the Louvre. His music gradually transcends the borders of techno and his creativity leaves the borders of music. That's probably why he appears at the Montreux Jazz Festival and a few years ago wrote a book titled Electrochoc which has been translated into German and Russian.

Red Square, Vasilievsky Spusk, 19:00

Monday, 6th

Russian National Orchestra (classical music)

The founder and head of the Russian National Orchestra, Mikhail Pletnev, has lately drawn the attention of all, even of those not familiar with classical music. Accused of sexual relations with a Thai minor, the famous conductor

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What's On in September

was indicted in Thailand. He has been released on bail and will therefore be conducting the festival of Russian National Orchestra.

Chaikovsky Concert Hall, 19:00

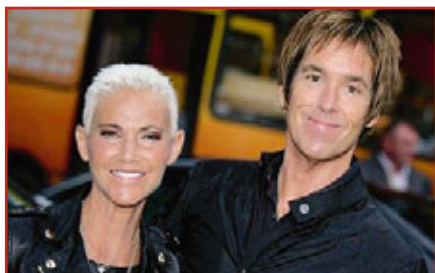
Friday, 10th

Roxette (pop, rock Sweden)

The famous Swedish duet (Marie Fredriksson and Per Gessle) were at the peak of their musical career in the 1980s-90s when they impressed the public by their lyrically pure melodies. They drifted apart when Marie became seriously ill, and Per's solo career began. Then they spent a few not very creative years apart until they realized that their strength is in their teamwork.

The newly united duet will perform their greatest hits in Moscow.

Sports palace Megasport, 19:00



Monday, 13th

Ozzy Osbourne (rock, hard rock, vodka, Great Britain)

61-year old Ozzy Osbourne is without doubt a living music legend of music and debauchery. Ozzy thinks himself also a biological wonder. After more than 40 years of non-stop drinking, as Osbourne admits, nothing has happened to him. The musician decided to bequeath his body to the London Museum of Natural History as he thinks that scientists and the public will be interested in finding out the secret of his longevity.

Sports Palace 'Megasport', 19:00



Tuesday 14th September.

The Moscow International Choir is starting rehearsals tonight for its winter season and Christmas concerts. Anyone interested in joining the choir this season please come to St Andrew's Church on 8

Voskresensky Perulouk at 7pm. Newcomers to Moscow are made particularly welcome. For further information please write to

Moscow.international.choir@gmail.com

Wednesday, 15th

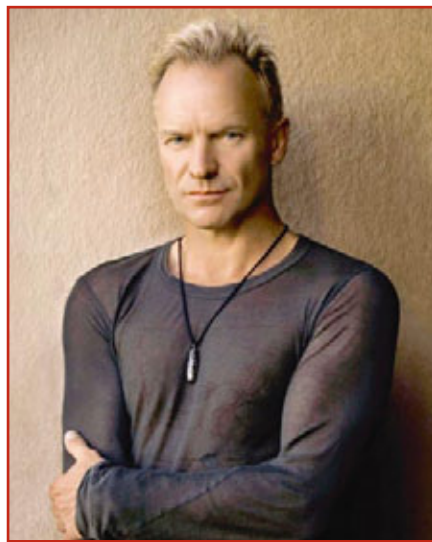
Sting (blues, pop, rock, Great Britain)

There are few stories of truck-drivers-become-stars in the history of music, but Sting's, or rather Gordon's story is one of those. Before he became part of The Police, Sting, the son of a hairdresser and a nurse, worked as a road-digger and due to sheer luck, met his future colleagues. After a first flush of fame with the band, he was, unusually, even more successful in his solo career.

A true lucky devil in all aspects of his life, Sting now lives a quiet life in a cozy suburb of London with his wife, children and pets.

After travelling in the Brazilian tropical forests, Sting and his wife founded the Rainforest Fund. For exceptional merit in environmental protection scientists gave Sting's name to a kind of Brazilian frog.

Crocus City Hall, 20:00



Friday, 17th

Zemfira (pop, rock, Russia)

For anyone who belongs to Russian culture or takes interest in it, Zemfira's songs are a key to understanding the lives of the younger Russian generation and life in general. In 2004, Zemfira was mentioned in the history textbooks of Russian schoolchildren in the section about cultural life. Zemfira has already written her name in the Russian history and was called a founder of a brand new (Tatar) musical youth culture.

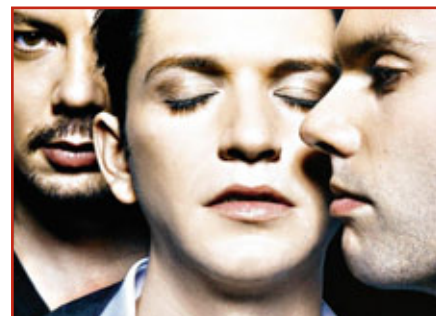
Crocus City Hall, 20:00

Monday, 20th

Placebo (rock, Great Britain)

They say what they do is music made by outsiders and for outsiders. With Placebo, all misunderstood teens see their dream come true: here are freaks that became super-famous. The leader of the band, Brian Molko, applies mascara to his eyelashes, paints his nails black and tells journalists about all the hardships of his childhood and all the burdens of sex, drugs and rock'n'roll.

Arena Moscow, 21:00



From Wednesday, 22nd to November, 14th

The Louvre comes to the Tretyakov Gallery

Another unprecedented exhibition to enjoy this year, another fruit of the year of France in Russia will open in the Tretyakov Gallery. This exhibition has been prepared in cooperation with the Louvre and Musee D'Orsay. The project will contain 50 drawings from the Louvre section of graphics and 6 drawings from Musee D'Orsay. Among the displayed artists are Gauguin, Signac, Monet and Pissarro.

State Tretyakov Gallery. 10:00-19:00

Wednesday, 22nd

Figaro's Marriage by Comedie Francaise

The legendary Comedie Francaise, one of the few state theatres in France, is making a Russian tour. Starting from Moscow, actors will perform in Saint-Petersburg, Kaliningrad and in many of the main Siberian cities.

One of the theatre's missions is to promote La Comedie Francaise to the whole world. This theatre, as the actors say, has an important cultural, political and social purpose, and the theatre in general is one of the best means to find mutual understanding. Bommarche's Figaro's Marriage was chosen for the Russian tour as being one of the masterpieces of contemporary French drama.

Concert Hall to Be Announced

*More information on
www.russia-france2010.ru*

Rene Lalique and His Art

Alevtina Kalinina



The words "art" and "quality" were never used in one sentence to describe art before the Art Nouveau movement at the turn of the 20th century. Reacting to the academic 19th century, pre-dating the disasters of the 20th century, this style of art and decoration comprised all the beauty of nature, and caught its essence in masterpieces that people could handle. "Art as part of everyday life" became the motto of the Art Nouveau movement. Live it now, value it every second. Every surface you see or touch should be beautiful.

Rene Lalique is synonymous with the beauty and quality of Art Nouveau. Not only an imaginative artist, he is a designer who has imported into jewellery new materials, such as opals and semi-precious stones, moulded glass, horn and ivory. With nature as the major source of his inspiration, Lalique and other artists have created ornaments both original and memorable, as if they are pieces of fairytales. For goldsmiths of previous centuries, there used to be an emphasis on gemstones, whereas Art Nouveau was more concerned with design than arranging settings for diamonds. In a way, Art Nouveau re-established the Renaissance, when sculpture and enamelled gold were made by artists not craftsmen.

Lalique has managed to combine 15th century ideals with the demands of modern city dwellers. He has brought both decorative jewels and glass to people's everyday life, using mass-production techniques. Emile Galle, an eminent French artist working in glass and one of the principal leaders of the Art Nouveau movement in France, praised Lalique, naming him "the inventor of modern jewellery".

The exhibition of Lalique's works is an unprecedented event for the Kremlin Museums. Yelena Gagarina, the Museum's director commented: "In September, the Kremlin museums will host a collection of art nouveau jewellery designed by Rene Lalique. It's going to be a very beautiful exhibition but also a complex one. We are bringing to Moscow many great and unique items including from places as far afield as Portugal, Paris, Japan, and New York".

Lalique's works are dispersed around the world in numerous museum collections and even more numerous private ones. Such a complete presentation of Lalique's masterpieces is the first show of its kind.

Among collections that have contributed exhibits to this exhibition are the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum in Lisbon, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, the Lalique Museum in Hakone, Japan, and the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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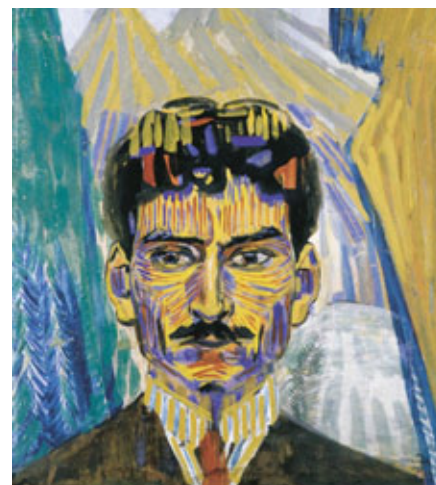
Armenian art at Pushkin Fine Arts

The current exhibition at the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts is a part of a long-term programme initiated by the museum's director, Irina Aleksandrovna Antonova, dedicated to Russia's closest neighbours—mainly CIS countries. Though the Soviet Union no longer exists, national arts institutions continue their cultural dialogue. For Antonova, the important issue is that art should have no boundaries and that neither political nor socio-political concepts should interfere with people's collective spiritual and historical memory.

In September, the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts together with the National Gallery of Armenia will display 18th to 20th

century masterpieces of Russian and Armenian visual arts, from the collections of the National Gallery, Martiros Saryan's Museum and the Ervand Kochar Museum.

This exhibition celebrates the 100th anniversary of the Pushkin Fine Arts Museum. Six years ago in the same museum there was an exhibition called Relics of Saint Echmiadzin, which conveyed the spirit of the applied arts of Medieval Armenia. This time, the works of eminent Russian painters are on display: V. Borovikovsky, D. Levitsky, O. Kiprensky, V. Surikov, I. Levitan, A. Benois, Z. Serebryakova, V. Borisov-Musatov, V. Kandinsky and M. Chagal. Among Armenian names we should highlight M. Saryan, father and son Akop and Ovnatan Ovnatanyan, S. Nersenyanyan and sculptor Ervand Kochar.



September 14 – November 14
Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts
Open: 10:00 – 19:00 except Monday



Beehives for graphic design

Now that the Central House of Artists is not going to turn into a huge orange pumpkin, it is to become a beehive, for the first 20 days of September, for the biennial exhibition of Graphic Design, "Golden Bee" (Zolotaya Pchela in Russian). The comparison to a beehive is entirely accidental. The number of participants prove this. Since 1992, the Moscow Golden Bee Biennale has come onto a par with such professional tournaments held in Brno (Brno Biennale), Warsaw (Warsaw International Poster Biennale), Lahti (International Lahti Poster Biennale) or Fort Collins (Colorado International Invitational Poster Exhibition).

This is an international contest with several categories (poster, graphic design in music,

religion, new technologies), and an exhibition of masters' works and lectures, finishing with a competition and prize awards on September 3. Later exhibitions by jury members will be held at the Russian Academy of Arts, Tsereteli Art Gallery until September 20. For Sergey Serov who has presided over the Biennale since its launch, it is easy to see what the trends are in graphic design. He says, "The post-Gutenberg galaxy is still growing. And the internet component is one of its new faces-multi-level, with texts and hyperlinks and images all in one."

Russians say that it is better to see something once than hear about it seven times. The Golden Bee Biennial is worth seeing.

Unit September 20
www.goldenbee.org
Central House of Artists, Tsereteli Gallery

The phenomenon of western photography of the USSR

The "Lithuanian school" in the context of Soviet photography from the 1960s to the 1980s had an important influence on Soviet photojournalism. Lithuanian photography, which had no propaganda dimension, is of special interest to the curators of the Lumiere Brothers' Center for Photography. More than two hundred and fifty works by three classical photographers, Antanas Sutkus, Aleksandras Macijauskas and Vitaly Butyrin, are presented in the exhibition named The Phenomenon of the Lithuanian School. Western Photography in the USSR.

Those three photographers participated in the legendary exhibition held in the Moscow House of Journalists in 1969 after which *Soviet Photography* magazine actually introduced the term the "Lithuanian School". The Baltic exhibition, with its close-ups, pensive looks, dramatic contrast of lighting, insignificant and accidental fragments, all against a background of the "heroic realism" of the Soviet photography, was revolutionary.

This should be no surprise, as Lithuania always considered itself to be part of Europe, and the same three photographers participated in exhibitions all over Europe, relying on the experience of rather European photo-reportage and the artistic traditions of the beginning of the 20th century.



Antanas Sutkus said: "On the one hand we meant to show that we are not totally Soviet, on the other we did not want to go extremes with 'the national idea'. To show our common Lithuanians what we were doing; that was the aim".

www.lumiere.ru
Open: September 17-November 7
11:00 – 20:00, every day except Monday



Prince Dolgorukov-Master of Moscow

To celebrate Moscow's 863rd anniversary, the State Historical Museum has put together an exhibition dedicated to Prince Vladimir Andreyevich Dolgorukov, the governor general of Moscow from 1865 to 1891.

Prince Dolgorukov's career started in the Army, where he saw military action in the Caucasus and in Poland. But it is in the social and political spheres that he excelled. The second half of the nineteenth century was a time of progress in Moscow. Gas lighting was installed; railways were constructed which connected Moscow to Central Russia towns; academies and the Moscow Conservatory were built—and Prince Dolgorukov was appointed governor-general.

In those decades Moscow hosted the Ethnographic Exhibition, the Polytechnical Exhibition, the All-Russia Industrial and Art Exhibition, and horse-breeding exhibitions. All these exhibitions brought in funds that were put towards constructing what would become the present Historical Museum. Dolgorukov is also accredited with the construction of Christ the Saviour Cathedral, which would become one of Moscow's best-known symbols and later, in the 1990s, when the cathedral was rebuilt, a symbol of Russia's post-Soviet revival.

A major section of the exhibition is dedicated to all the presents that Prince Dolgorukov received. They include rarities like architects Vladimir Sherwood's and Fyodor Schechtel's sketches, a unique 16th century bible presented to the governor-general by the Moscow Jewish community, statuettes by Eugene Lanceret.

The Bolshoi Theatre museum and the State Bakhrushin Theatre museum have provided other exhibits from their collections to illustrate Prince Dolgorukov's other passion for the theatre. "Moscow school" painters; V. Perov, A. Savrasov, I. Levitan are on display, too.

State Historical Museum

September 1 – October 31

Open: 10:00 – 18:00, every day except Tuesday www.shm.ru



Mathematical prototypes of objects

Whilst waiting for the Moscow House of Photography to reopen its reconstructed space in Ostozhenka street, one should not miss an exhibition it is holding at the Ekaterina Foundation gallery. Within the framework of the Year of France in Russia, French artist Fabrice Hyber presents his works: "Immortalité".

Hyber's genre has been quite difficult to identify over the past twenty years. It combines drawing, painting, sculpture, video installations and video films. After obtaining a degree in mathematics, Hyber successfully entered and graduated from the Nantes School of Fine Arts. He gained popularity through these "unidentified genres".

At home in France, he is a well-known and popular creative personality, with special missions representing France to his credit at the Biennale di Venezia, where in 1997 he won the Il Leone d'Oro prize for his installation Eau d'or, eau dort, odor.

September 7 – October 3

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Wet Dreams



Miguel Francis

This summer, Moscow has been bombarded by some strange weather. The only remedy for such a summer is a pool and a beach party, and let me tell you, Moscow's pool and beach parties are unlike anything you're used to. Without holding back, let's dive in.

The place to be for an awesome wet afternoon, which now developed into a daily all-day pool party is "Shorehouse"! What a place! Initially a restaurant, this is a beautiful pool overlooking the vast outskirts of Moscow. All luxuries are included: towels, pool chairs, exotic drinks

and beautiful women. Awesome electronic music, from lounge to house, with a live DJ keeps you moving in the water. Besides, some of the more prominent event producers are there almost daily, like Arkadiy Doncov, and of course Giorgio Paolucci with his ex-pat crew that guarantees to keep the atmosphere ignited. Located at the 65th kilometer of MKAD at the Crocus City Mall (the home of the annual Billionaire fair) the place offers an almost outside of Moscow experience.

Another interesting wet adventure you can embark on is called the Sky Club Summer Terrace. This isn't simply a club-like club, it's actually a sports club! Just when you thought I was kidding, right? An important aspect for any clubber is to shake off that excess alcohol and recover from the night before. This place would be the perfect bridge to rest on between your Friday and Saturday nights.

Located on the roof of the Zolotie Kluchi 2 Complex, Ul. Minskaya 1. It's the first roof-top beach in Moscow I've seen! The place has a full protein and alcohol bar (the only one in Russia) and a live DJ. The 21st of May marked the club's birthday and their opening of the new summer season called "Fitness Summer Miami-style" which lasts through September. With the weather holding hot and firm, a rooftop Miami-style beach in Moscow with protein and alcohol? Sounds like a good place to start a Saturday!

Next up are the actual beaches in Moscow. Yes, they're mostly lakes, mostly filtered. I prefer the Serebreniy Bor, its lively, fun, lots of sand, beautiful people,

alcohol and music, and a filtered portion of the Moscow river that I personally took a swim in and survived! It's located near Metro Polezhaevskaya, at Beach #2 and #3. The easier way to get there is by car, or just take a taxi from the Metro. This one is a free-entry beach, unlike some beaches in Moscow which require you to pay between 500-1000 rubles to get in (\$25-35 USD)—and I really don't see much difference. Here you can rent a jet-ski and enjoy riding the Moscow River, or try water-skiing. Even better you could rent a yacht and enjoy a more secluded tanning party. By the way most of the beach attendees, especially the female ones, won't even think twice when you ask them to join you on your yacht. I suppose that is the beauty of the Russian beach!

And now for a quick update on the nightlife happenings in case it ever gets so hot and smoggy again. Summer season keeps sending people to fly outside of Moscow with the Clubs, as seen in the July issue with "We Are Family", one of Moscow's super clubs that took most of their dedicated clients to Kemer in Turkey.

August marked the return of another super club, Rai, which just returned from a visit to Ibiza in Spain! I had the pleasure to work with the creative directors of Rai and Russia's superstar DJs Vengerov & Fedoroff on two house tracks!

The Russian track "Katyusha" was turned into a house remix with my vocals, and I got the honor to lay down my voice for the official English version of the Kazantip hymn 2010. Kazantip went great. It's basically a Russian Ibiza festival that is hosted in the warm part of Kipr, Ukraine, with all the craziness and musical freedom you will find in Ibiza, Spain.

Paul Oakenfold held the premiere of his new album, Pop Killer, at Imperia Lounge in August, playing an awesome set for the guests. In short and in my honest opinion, the best places in Moscow with the best ACs, foreign DJs and a fun international crowd are the super clubs We Are Family, Rai, Soho Rooms and Imperia Lounge.

As September settles in and hopefully the summer turns into a pleasant fall you will notice the coming back of the magical force behind Moscow's nightlife, which truly could only be experienced to the fullest during the cold months, simply because that's what keeps the city warm during the winter.

Stay tuned, there are new realms, clubs and nightlife activities that you don't know about, coming at you in the October issue! Stay safe and keep it fun. **P**



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Radif Kashapov

The first ever U2 concert in Russia, on August 25, is going to be not only a major musical event but also something of a political event since U2's Bono and other band members are involved in humanitarian work, tackling poverty and lack of freedom in developing countries. The fact that U2 is finally playing a gig in a country with certain freedom issues simply cannot go unnoticed.

Until this year the Irish four-piece band have never played in Russia, which has led to some speculation among local fans about humanitarian problems in Chechnya and terrorist attacks. Among other possible explanations is Bono's famously complex personality. There is also the high costs of U2 shows, which is out of kilter with the band's not-so-high popularity among Russian speakers, a fact which local concert agencies like to point out.

But U2 are a long way from being alone on Russia's list of long-awaited acts. Although it is true that the number of foreign artists coming to play in Moscow has been growing, that nearly every weekend there are plenty of gigs around to choose from, with local promoters being able to bring all sorts of music from around the world to the Russian capital, and even to other cities, there is still a category of musicians who, it seems, will never come to Russia.

The American singer Tom Waits has rejected offers to play in Russia many times. While some promoters point out that he is still attracted to the idea, others say that he has been very disappointed with the way minorities are treated in the country and that he is scared of Russians. Also, the singer does not allow any sponsor ads at his concerts, which makes the chances of Moscow hearing the maestro's trademark growl rather slim.

Thom Yorke of Radiohead, in an interview with the BBC, spoke of his brother Andy who studied in Russia and had

had some travel experience there. "Last time he went there he got cornered by some Russian guy who was out of his mind on vodka for the whole trip. And you're stuck there. I mean, you're on that train. And he said: 'I am a vegetarian', but they served only sausages". So Tom has got the idea of what this country like. Also, rumours have it that all band members believe Russia is a deeply unfair society controlled by mafia.

These are only the most well-known cases, and many more can be added. For example, Andrey Makarevich, the lead singer and guitarist of Mashina Vremeni, one of the oldest and most famous Russian bands, wrote in his memoirs that in the 1990s, Mick Jagger agreed to play with them in Red Square but then changed his mind, allegedly because of the war in Chechnya. But this didn't stop the Stones from playing a gig in Moscow just a few years later in 1997, did it?

Bizarre it may seem, but some examples can be found even among native Russian musicians. The famous cello player Mstislav Rostropovich declared in 1998 that he would never play in Russia again, following a particularly unfriendly review by the local media of one of his performances in Moscow.

As you have seen from these few examples, different artists may have different reasons for not touring in Russia. Those are mostly based upon real facts, not rumours and prejudices. These issues are only too well known to Russians themselves who, as far as showbiz is concerned, remain post-soviet at best.

Look what happened in the 1980s when a lot of artists said they wouldn't play in South Africa. You might remember a song named Sun City. It was recorded in 1985 and performed by a large group of famous artists such as Bob



Dylan, Herbie Hancock, Ringo Starr, Lou Reed, Run DMC, Peter Gabriel and others, who sang that they would not come to the popular South African resort of that name because of the country's policy of apartheid. Today, Sun City has become the symbol of equality and hope for a better future for the entire continent.

Recently another country has been declared a similar kind of cultural pariah, Israel. Along with many other artists, the British singer Elvis Costello has cancelled a planned tour earlier this year. The Jewish newspaper *Forward* wrote: "In a lengthy explanation he provided, the rock musician said that merely having his name added to those appearing in Israel this summer may be interpreted as a political act that resonates more than anything that might be sung and it may be assumed that one has no mind for the suffering of the innocent".

These days, it looks like many of the world's rock stars are once again separated from their Russian fans by a sort of iron curtain. And to be honest, the western media is not doing much to help bring these two sides together. In 2008, British music journalists were discussing the prospect of emo being made illegal throughout Russia because as a "dangerous teen trend encouraging depression and suicide".

This hasn't happened so far and probably won't, though it is true that the followers of certain subcultures might not feel safe in Russia. But that discussion caused further speculations among My Chemical Romance fans that their heroes, being one of the most prominent emo bands, were going to be banned in Russia too. Can you imagine anything like that ever happen in any other country?

A trip to Russia can still be a slightly hazardous and mysterious experience. While in the 1980s many Western artists would choose to come to the USSR as an act of goodwill, today it's more often the prospect of high profits that brings them to Russia. A lot of venues across the country host yesterday's rock stars which now are making their living touring obscure places. In Moscow touring musicians often get paid really high fees, even when compared with most of European cities.

In certain aspects, Russia still remains a half-closed country. This means that, for example, a local promoter might not be able to get visas issued for members of an indie band, or a truck with equipment can be held up indefinitely at the border. It is very likely that REM, who were unable to play in St. Petersburg for the latter reason, won't come here again in the near future.

In April, a concert of the Italian singer Eros Ramazzotti was cancelled in St. Petersburg. Again, the cancellation was caused by the late arrival of the artist's equipment due to a long customs inspection procedure.

In 2008 Nightwish and Pain both had to cancel their concerts, as local promoters failed to fulfil all parts of their agreement.

Tokyo Hotel flew over to Moscow but their fans never saw the band play because of an argument between the tour management and the local promoters, which happened just when the first of the two scheduled concerts was about to start.

One of Rammstein's tour legs, which included gigs in Russia, was postponed due to unrest among football fans.

In August 2006 a concert by Eric Clapton in Red Square was being negotiated, but when the location had to be changed to an adjacent area some 100 metres off the square, the legendary guitarist also changed his mind about playing.

So, can we say that the South African story is repeating itself in Russia? Certainly not. And yet all those rumours about Russia are probably not without substance. **P**



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Romanian Reflections



Nicolae Ceaușescu

Helen Womack

Christmas 1989 was one of the holidays I managed to spend at home in Yorkshire. My job as a journalist often took me away and my family valued it if I was with them for the decorating of the tree, the opening of the presents.

On Christmas Day, we switched on the TV and heard the news that Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu had been tried by a military court in Romania, put up against a wall and shot. The Securitate, Ceaușescu's vicious secret police, were still sniping from the sewers and there were gun battles at the airport.

"I hope to goodness you don't have to go to Bucharest," said my Dad.

"I might have to," I replied.

I'd recently joined *The Independent* as one of their specialists on Eastern Europe. But I was still at home on Boxing Day for Mum's mince pies.

A day or two later, a call did come from the office and I flew to Budapest, from where I took a train to Bucharest. I was frightened. It was good not to have to land and go straight into action but to have a slower entry into the country, enabling me to judge the situation somewhat through the train window.

By the time I arrived, the shooting had stopped. Other colleagues had been heroic; I was mopping up.

The editors now wanted the human interest stories—the accounts of poor Romanians queuing for their ration of chickens' feet; the shocking revelations coming out of the country's orphanages. The West had called Ceaușescu the "mav-



The Presidential couple is received by Queen Elisabeth II at Buckingham Palace in June 1978

erick" of the East bloc, implying some independence from Moscow, but it turned out his regime was the most brutal of all.

I had been working in the Soviet Union, where Perestroika was in full swing, so I was used to dealing with confident, talkative Russians. It came as a shock to see how cowed and fearful the Romanians were. In addition, there was the language barrier.

Luckily, I found a family of ethnic Germans who took me under their wing. The eldest daughter and her brother helped with contacts and showed me round Bucharest, speaking to me in German.

The girl gave me a gift of a hand-knitted dress. I believe some months afterwards the family moved to Germany, which was the dream of most ethnic Germans in Romania at that time.

I went out news gathering each day—demonstrations, student meetings and the like—and in the evening filed a report to London. All foreign journalists had to share one telex machine and there was always a long queue to use it. Mindful of the queue, I typed as fast as I could, barely noticing that there was no key cap over the letter T, just a metal spike. The letter T crops up rather often in texts. By the time I'd finished typing, my left index finger was ripped to shreds and bleeding, an occupational hazard of covering revolutions.

The highlight of my assignment to Bucharest was gaining access to Ceaușescu's residence. This was not the giant, ugly, white House of the Republic, but a smaller villa where he lived. Guides told us he had 365 pairs of curtains, a set for every day of the year. And for his

wife, Elena, fresh orchids were flown in regularly from Singapore.

What struck me most was the juxtaposition of priceless items, such as Chinese vases, with cheap plastic souvenirs. I particularly remember a tasteless toy hedgehog on Ceaușescu's desk.

At one point, I realised the guides had gone on ahead, leaving me alone in the bedroom of the dictator's daughter, Zoia. In her wardrobe, I saw rows of silk shirts and bell-bottomed trousers. I rifled through her drawers, finding letters, contraceptive pills and another hedgehog.

The temptation to pocket something was almost overwhelming but I resisted, which was lucky because we were searched on the way out.

I was having the time of my life when word came through from London that Andreas Whittam Smith, co-founder and editor of *The Independent*, was so transfixed by the Romanian story that he was coming out to Bucharest to see things for himself. This is the last thing a working journalist usually needs, a "state visit" by the editor, who gets in the way and requires entertaining.

But the boss was great. He mucked in and worked with me. Together, we got an interview with the new Romanian Prime Minister, Petre Roman. And when he left, Andreas kindly found a seat for me on the plane too.

My stint in Romania was a short interlude. By April 1990, I was back in Moscow, where I would stay for a decade. The East bloc satellites had spun off into their own space. The collapsing Soviet Union remained the big story. **P**



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1989



John Harrison

part II - the collapse of the Soviet Empire

The political map of the world shifted in 1989 in almost as radical a way as after the end of the Second World War. By the end of the year, the only country east of the Elbe still loyal to the socialist cause was Albania, and Albania had been hostile to the USSR since Khrushchev's period in office. As central communist authorities began to crumble within Russia, the Soviet satellite states in Eastern Europe imploded, quickly. Suddenly the Berlin Wall was down and dictators who had been feared were ridiculed or even shot.

In December 1988, Gorbachev made a speech at the UN in which he repudiated the Brezhnev Doctrine, which lay at the core of the Soviet Union's hold over Eastern Europe. He kept his word when he said he would not interfere in other country's affairs. His non-interference was enough to seal the fate of the pro-Soviet regimes in Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. If he had tried to preserve the old system, he would have forfeited western support for Perestroika. Any wavering in his liberal stance would have been exploited by Gorbachev's emerging opposition inside Russia: Boris Yeltsin.

Poland

The first domino to fall was Poland, which was in a pitiful economic condition. General Jaruzelski, the leader of the Polish communist party, who had displayed no mercy in crushing Solidarity in 1981, agreed to parliamentary elections in 1989, after prolonged strikes. Fully understanding the implications of what was happening in Russia, Jaruzelski announced a "brave turnaround". The Com-

munists were defeated in June elections, and in August meekly joined a coalition under the anti-communist Tadeusz Mazowiecki. The Solidarity leaders, most of whom had no real understanding of economics, were plunged into managing a country in crisis, something the re-cast, reformed Communist Party was soon to take advantage of, yet the communists never came back to power.

Hungary

Hungary had always been a reluctant member of the Soviet camp. Sensing the change from Moscow, the Hungarian government felt confident enough on the 2nd of May to switch off the power in the electrified security barrier running the length of its western border with Austria. Hundreds of East Germans drove to Hungary, ditched their cars and hiked across the border to Austria, then on to West Germany.

This signalled the beginning of the end of "Honecker's wall". Miklos Nemeth, the new Prime Minister had already ensured a visa-free passage through Austria for the escapees, and had made an agreement with Chancellor Helmut Kohl that they would be accepted. Gorbachev had in turn assured Kohl that under no circumstances would Moscow intervene.

Nemeth saw this as Hungary's and his chance to make Hungary the first Eastern bloc nation to re-join the West. In September 11th the border was officially opened and tens of thousands mostly East Germans rushed across. Not everyone in West Germany welcomed the new citizens. The leadership expected up to 1.2 million people, and jobs and housing were scarce in West Berlin.

East Germany

Just as this exodus was at its peak, Erich Honecker who still thought he was in control of events in East Germany, managed to arrange for the southern Czech border to Hungary to be closed, blocking his citizens' exit route through Hungary and on to the West. Thousands were trapped in Czechoslovakia, and most descended on the West German embassy in Prague for help.

As disease threatened the overstretched colony inside the embassy, Honecker announced his "solution" of special boarded-up trains which would transfer them straight through to West Germany. This lunatic decision, which likened escapees from East Germany to Jews being transported to extermination camps during Hitler's "final solution", put petrol on the fire of discontent within East Germany and also fostered the seeds of rebellion in Czechoslovakia.

On October 7th, Gorbachev met the East German politburo. He realised that Honecker was unreformable. Gorbachev made it quite clear to the leadership and the people as a whole that he had distanced himself from Honecker.

Demonstrations, unheard of in East Germany, broke out across the country. Police retaliated viciously, and foreign journalists were expelled. Demonstrators who at first demanded to be able to travel freely soon shouted out for the end of the Communist Party. In a final showdown Honecker backed down, it was all over.

On the 20th of October, the day that his successor, Egon Krenz took office, 50,000 people marched in Dresden demanding free elections. On November 4,



Soviet stars coming down in Budapest

half a million Berliners demonstrated in Berlin. On November 1, Krenz re-opened the border with Czechoslovakia and proposed to allow East Germans to visit the West from there. But this and other compromises weren't enough.

At 11.17 on the 9th of November, border guards at Checkpoint Charlie, hearing that the Bornholmerstrasse crossing further north had opened up, shouted "Alles Auf" (all open). Only minutes before, top officials gave up trying to reach members of the Politburo. They had suddenly become unavailable. A few hours after the wall fell, Bulgaria's communist leader of thirty-five years, Todor Zhikov

resigned. The next day, the Communist Party gave up its political monopoly.

Czechoslovakia

The Czechoslovak government was also replaced. In December, President Gustav Husak resigned and the dissenting dramatist Vaclav Havel was elected by parliament to take his place, while the communist leader of the 1968 Prague Spring, Alexander Dubcek, returned to head the federal Assembly. There was no Solidarity movement in Czechoslovakia, no political reformers who dismantled communism from above. It was the thousands of East Germans camped in and around the West

Germany Embassy in Prague that gave Czech reformers the courage they needed. Here was solidarity, the writing was on the wall. The Hungarian Socialist Workers Party was abolished on October the 11th.

Romania

Events took a dramatic turn in December 1989 in Romania, when Nicolae Ceausescu appeared on his palace balcony to address a Bucharest crowd. The unthinkable happened. He was heckled. When he failed to intimidate the crowd, he tried to flee the country, but was captured, summarily tried, and executed on the 24th of December. **P**

Marc Barrie (in Moscow)

I first arrived in Russia in 1989. Prior to that I had lived here on and off from 1979 to 1981, when my father was a military attache with the US Embassy.

He retired from the Army in the mid-80s and came back in 1988 to open the AlphaGraphics franchise on Gorky/Tverskaya St.

By the time I arrived, he had moved on to work with a company called Satra, which amongst other things was the exclusive exporter of Lada brand cars to the West. He eventually was in charge of a division called Satra Aerospace which worked in the Soviet/Russian aviation industry, and specifically with a sports plane they called the Sukhoi 26, which was considered to be the best aerobatic plane in the world at that time.

We lived in an apartment on Mal. Nikitskaya (ul. Kachalova at the time) that belonged to some Soviet folk singers that my father knew through some friends. I drove a series of Zhiguli cars and then Volgas that I rented from a cooperative venture based in the Moscow hotel for \$4 a day including insurance.

One of the clearest memories of that time when I first arrived was attending the November 7th parade on Red Square. Dad got us passes for the bleachers dead centre on the square in front of GUM, and I remember us having to clear at least seven police checkpoints to get that far. That may have been the last time that all those tanks, rockets, etc. were part of the event.

We had an associate membership at the US Embassy AECA, and ate breakfast there most Saturdays. For the



most part I didn't hang out too much with the ex-pat community at that time, preferring a group of Russian friends who spoke practically no English—thereby giving me a crash course in Russian. At the time there wasn't anything (officially) open at night except for a few hotel bars such as the infamous "Snake Pit" Heineken bar in the basement of the Intourist (now replaced by the Ritz) hotel on Tverskaya. What ex-pats did for fun was the embassy bar circuit.

Tuesday night was the German Embassy club and when the bar closed a group would end up in the kitchen drinking with the Embassy guards. I remember later printing some "Kitchen Party" T-shirts for them. Wednesday and Saturday were at the British club on Kutuzovksy, Friday was the best of all with the Canadian, Australian, and US Embassy bars open, and finally the New Zealand Kiwi club on Sunday night.

All of these places simply required a Western passport, but the US embassy required that you be escorted in by a US citizen, and later by someone who actually worked there such as the marines. This resulted in folks who want-

ed to get in trying to find Americans at the other clubs to follow over, or usually just hanging out at the security hut at the Embassy while the marines made trips back and forth from the bar to escort people in. Every now and then entire crews of stewardesses from Pan Am would arrive.

Traffic was non-existent. Late at night you would see maybe one or two cars on the Garden Ring. The main reason, other than the fact that very few people owned a car, was that there was nothing open at night to drive to. In 1990 there was a cooperative state store opened near Taganka that sold simple stuff like bread, eggs, meat and some snacks at night. If you ran out of alcohol there was one place to go however: taxi parks. The one we usually went to was located under the bridge near the white house. You would pull up, get someone's attention, and they would open up the trunk of a taxi to reveal cases of vodka, cognac, and champagne. Of course they never had all three but always something or other.

Buying gas was a real problem due to shortages. Lines at gas stations were several hours long during the day, and maybe an hour long in the middle of the night. I used to go late at night and fill up jerry-cans which were then stored on the balcony. Once in a while I would get some diplomatic gas coupons which could be redeemed at special gas stations. The only problem with that was not having a diplomatic or foreign plated car to pump the gas into. This wasn't a difficulty when driving my dad's company Mercedes, but a bit more of a problem with my Russian Zhiguli rental car. In the latter case I would park a couple blocks away and show up with a jerry-can saying the car ran out down the street. **P**

Ian Mitchell (all at sea)

I spent the month of August 1989 as the guest lecturer aboard a small but luxurious cruise ship, the *Illyria*, which sailed round the Baltic, giving me a fascinating insight into Eastern Europe as it stood three months before the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The ship carried only a hundred passengers, mostly US citizens, with varying degrees of interest in their surroundings. The entrepreneur behind the trip was a tall, white-haired Swede, Lars-Eric Lindblad, who was determined that his customers should be educated in the realities of the emerging Europe. We sailed from Copenhagen to Rostock in East Germany, then on to Gdansk, Riga, Tallinn, Leningrad (as it was then called), Viborg and Helsinki.

Rostock was the only depressing place we visited. It was obvious that, just as the Germans do freedom in an impressively ordered way, they also did slavery in an impressively disciplined way. Grey hopelessness was efficiently quality-controlled by the Stasi.

But the sun came out, both metaphorically and literally, when we reached Gdansk. We saw the memorial to the Solidarity strikers who had caused the first crack in the Communist façade in 1980. I even saw their leader, Lech Walensa, hosing down the family microbus in his garden early one summer morning as I sat in the back of a Mercedes taxi with some of the more curious Americans on our way out to look at Hitler's Bunker, the famous Wolfsschanze, at Rastenburg in East Prussia (as then was).

The genial trade union leader, with the trade-mark moustache, seemed as happy as the crowds of tourists we later saw camping in the birch and pine forests surrounding the place from where Hitler and his henchmen guided the war on the Eastern Front. He had done this from one of half a dozen single-storey bunkers which had twenty feet of reinforced concrete above them. This made them almost indestructible, which is why they are still there. What is not there is the hut in which the Officers' Plot reached its sadly unsuccessful climax in July 1944, when Count von Stauffenberg tried to kill Hitler with a suitcase bomb. It de-



stroyed the building but not the Fuehrer. Today the foundations are reverently preserved as a memento of desperate times.

The rest of the tour was just as interesting to me, though not to all the passengers. A successful young lawyer from Los Angeles complained to Lars-Eric after the city tour of Riga: "We could have got round that town in 15 minutes if Ian Mitchell had not asked so many questions."

Perhaps the nicest place we visited, where the dark shadow of Communism seemed lightest, was Tallinn in tiny but beautiful Estonia. On the Toompea, the inner heart of the Hanseatic Old Town, the Estonian flag was flying proudly. Guards wearing Estonian arm-bands were patrolling the main square outside the baroque building where the Estonian Supreme Soviet sat twice a year. Clearly the Wall, as it were, was crumbling from within.

Leningrad was much as it is today, but that was unusual. Everywhere else the sense of change was palpable. We were the first foreign passenger ship to dock in Viborg since Stalin took over Viipuri (as it was until 1940) after the Winter War and gave it back its Swedish name. We were received courteously, if cautiously, by the authorities, who negotiated for perhaps half an hour before Lars-Eric was allowed to step from the bottom of the gangway onto the cobblestones of the quayside. We were all aware that it was a historic moment. **P**

Miguel Francis (on his potty)

I remember 1989 as a tough year. I was 3 years old back then, my Mom tells me it was a year of rough turbulence for us. Financially most of Russia was struggling. My Mother remembers standing at a long line near the Metro with me, waiting for our loaf of bread. I clearly remember my great Grandmother making money by recycling glass bottles. I helped her scout them sometimes.

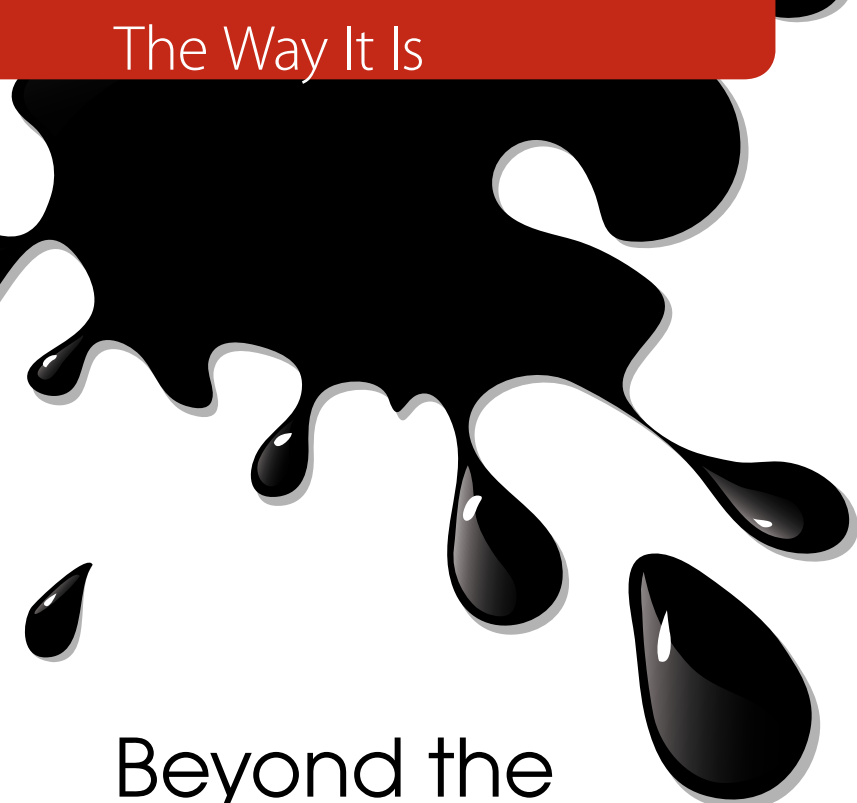
1989 was one of those transition years between the Soviet Union and the Russia that we see today. My uncle went to Switzerland and made a connection through the Red Cross that was able to ship food boxes to Moscow. Salami, cheese, bread and various spreads were included. These boxes helped me and family through the tough times, and boy were they delicious.

I remember when they started selling coconuts in elite supermarkets, I bought one and brought it over to my kindergarten. Everybody was thrilled, including my teacher. I was treated like a celebrity the whole day, and of course the Soviet thinking "you must share" kicked in and I had to let the whole of my kindergarten group demolish my the coconut.



The lifestyle in Russia was generally a marketplace way of living. Chickens, fish, veggies would be laid out on long tables practically anywhere in the street and sold to hungry people. Some vendors even managed to get Western porn magazines into Moscow, and sold them the same way.

I spent most of my days playing my small guitar, sometimes I played together with my Dad, who had a proper, big guitar. That was until he went back to his home in Santiago, Chile, and bought two computers which helped us buy two apartments later that year in Moscow. It was a magical time of opportunity. **P**

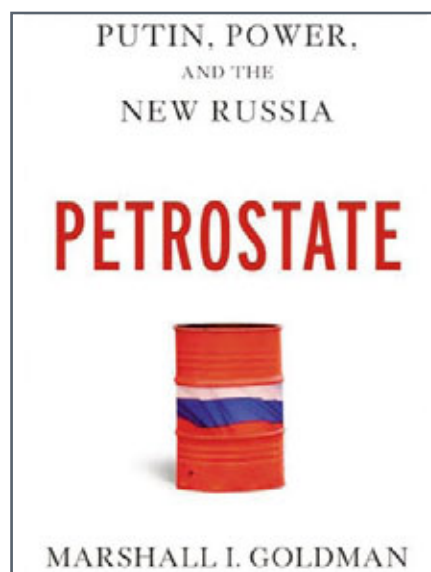


Beyond the Reset, the Trend toward a New Russian Investment Climate

Art Franczek

In *Petrostate*, Marshall Goldman tells the story of the oil industry in Russia and how the country became an energy superpower. In 1898 Russia was the world's leading producer of oil. Throughout the Soviet period, oil exports were the primary source of the hard currency that was so vital to the Soviet state. Goldman even speculates that in the 1980s the CIA conspired with Saudi Arabia to reduce the price of oil to sabotage the Soviet Union. Coincidentally, the price of oil, which was \$35 per barrel in 1980, fell to \$15 by the late 1980s. The 1998 financial crash was precipitated by a decline to \$10 per barrel. The most recent Russian crisis was largely the result of the fall in the price of oil from \$147 to \$35 per barrel. Russia's economy has always been dependent on oil exports and this is its core problem.

In the 1990s, control of many of Russia's natural resource enterprises was handed over to a group of oligarchs in the Loans for Shares program, under which ownership of Yukos, Sibneft, Norlisk and other companies was given for loans provided to the government. In addition, Profit Sharing Agreements were entered into with Exxon, Shell and other Western oil companies. In many



instances these agreements were not favourable to Russia.

Putin's accession to the presidency coincided with the rise of oil prices and a subsequent economic boom that saw Russian GDP grow annually by 7%. Putin's governing philosophy was largely based on his 1997 PhD thesis "Strategic Planning of the Renewal of Mineral Raw Materials in the Growth Strategy of the Russian Economy". During the next 8 years the share of oil production controlled by the government increased from 16% to

50% reflecting the re-nationalization of such companies as Yukos and Sibneft. State control of oil companies is normal practice in such countries as Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, particularly when the price is rising.

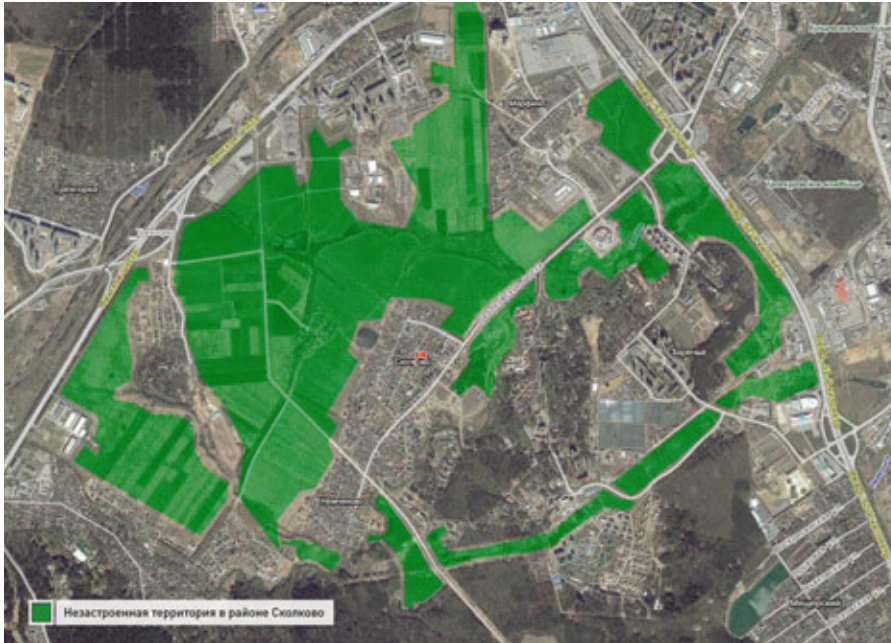
While Russia was on the ascendency as an Oil Power, the United States was encouraging democratic movements in Georgia and the Ukraine, and inviting these countries to join NATO. Also, the US announced that it would build Missile Defence Systems in Poland and the Czech Republic; these systems seemed to be directed at Russia. These US actions were perceived as a threat to Russia and provoked what has been called the "Chilly War". During this period trade relations between the US and Russia were tense and the "neo-cons" in the Bush Administration disregarded Russia's interests.

The Obama administration's "Reset" policy quickly transformed the Russian/US relationship. In March of 2009 the US determined that the missile systems were expensive and did not provide real security. Georgia and Ukraine's membership of NATO was no longer considered a priority. Russia responded by providing the US with some assistance in Afghanistan, signing the SALT renewal and supporting the US in enforcing sanctions against Iran. The fact that the Reset Strategy is working on the diplomatic front set the stage for enhanced economic relations between the US and Russia.

Russia's 17-year WTO (World Trade Organisation) accession process has been beset with vicissitudes. In the early years of this century WTO entry was a priority and many reforms such as the Customs Code and IPR reform were enacted. In 2006 the accession process was almost completed in time for Putin's G8 Summit in St. Petersburg.

In 2008 the chances for WTO accession suddenly looked much worse because of the Georgia conflict. In 2009 the accession process seemed to die when it was announced that Russia would apply to the WTO as part of a customs union with Kazakhstan and Belarus. After the July Summit, Medvedev announced that Russia would apply to WTO as a separate country (not with the customs union) and he thought the process could be completed by September 30, 2010.

The World Bank estimates that Russia's accession to the WTO could increase GDP by 3% in the medium term and as much as 11% in the long term. Russian businesses



An aerial view of the Skolkovo development area

will have improved access to services of multinational service providers in telecommunications, banking, insurance, transportation and other business services. This should lower the cost of doing business and increase productivity. In addition the investment climate for foreign investment will be greatly enhanced.

Once in the WTO Russian industries will have to modernize quickly or face the consequences. Overall, tariffs will come down from 10.1% on average to 7.1% seven years after joining. Liberals on Medvedev's team see WTO membership as critical to economic modernization. Statists like Sachem, along with Deripaska and other oligarchs who benefit from lack of foreign competition, generally oppose Russia's global integration.

Russia is very close to completing the WTO accession process but a number of issues must be completed before it becomes a WTO member some of the open issues are:

Protectionist Tariffs: Russia must reduce its tariffs on automobiles and heavy equipment

Agree on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards: this is important for US exporters of chicken and pork

Protecting Pharmaceutical Test Data: legislation must protect this data for 6 years

State Run Companies: Russia must guarantee that they will be treated the same as commercial firms

Pass ex-officio legislation: this will provide customs official with the power to stop fake goods

On January 1 2010, the first stage of

the customs union between Kazakhstan, Belararus and Russia came into effect, establishing an area in which free movement is provided for goods either originating from its territory or imported from third countries that have entered into free circulation. The first stage of the customs union harmonizes tariffs on over 11500 goods among the participating countries. The Customs Union Customs Code was implemented on July 1, 2010.

This is the first stage what will become a Common Economic Space by 2012. The CES will be comparable to the European Union and will allow for free movement of goods, services, capital and labour. The process of economic integration will be complex and has already resulted in delays of goods at the new borders.

However, after 5 years the GDP of this region is expected to increase by 15% and many investment opportunities in manufacturing, assembly and other areas will emerge for multinational companies. It is likely that other countries such as Ukraine may be invited to join what has been referred to as the "Soviet Reunion".

Innovation and Modernization have become buzzwords for the Medvedev/Putin administration. This is no surprise because Russia spends about 1.5% of its GDP on Information Technology while the US spends about 3% of its much larger GDP. In March, Arkady Dvorkovich and other leading Russians attended a seminar at MIT on innovation. In June, President Medvedev and his entourage visited Silicon Valley and met Steve Jobs

of Apple, John Chambers of Cisco, Sergey Brin of Google and others to experience innovation for himself.

These activities set the stage for the big announcement of Russia's Silicon Valley. Over the next three years, the government will build offices, apartments and laboratories at the Skolkovo Innovation Centre. Victor Vekselsberg the Centre's Director invites innovators to "Come, live, create and do good for yourself, Russia and the whole of civilization."

So far Cisco Systems is planning to invest a billion dollars there, and Nokia has promised to invest in this project.

Businesses that set up at Skolkovo will receive cheap rents, a 10-year exemption from income tax, lower social security payments, reduced customs duties and minimal bureaucracy. In exchange, tenants will be expected to develop new technologies for the country and to sell to the rest of the world.

It is hoped that the Skolkovo innovators takes a look at India and its development of techno-austerity. They have developed the Nano, a car that sells for \$2,200, and a \$70 fridge among other innovations aimed at the frugal. It is my hope that Skolkovo understands the wisdom: "Frugality is the mother of Invention."

Recently, Russia announced it would sell non-controlling shares in some state companies to raise \$29 billion. Aleksei Kudrin strongly emphasized that these asset sales would be transparent and at fair value, in contrast to the Loans for Shares giveaway in the mid-1990s. Companies such as Rosneft, Sberbank, VTB and others will offer shares to foreign investors.

This "re-privatization" reverses the trend toward state ownership that occurred in the first part of this century. These asset sales may provide an incentive for the Russian government to improve property rights and corporate governance so that these assets can be sold to investors.

Doing business in Russia is not easy. Russia ranks 120th out of 180 countries in the World Bank Survey for ease of commercial operation and many critics claim that it will never improve. I have just described a few of the concrete steps Russia is taking to integrate itself into the world economy and move away from its dependence on oil. Medvedev referred to recent events between Russia, US as a "paradigm shift" in which common goals could be pursued and Russia could fulfil its need for "modernization alliances". **P**



A GREY SHADOW OF SOVIET MAN - PART 2

The study “Soviet Man, 1989-2009”, as discussed in the August 2010 issue of PASSPORT, was conducted by the Levada Analytical Centre and painted a broad sociological picture of post-Soviet social reality. Along with revealing Soviet-era personality traits that have made it possible to resurrect archaic political mechanisms, the study also noted a growth in professed religion. This second article explores whether the population of Russia really has become as religious as figures from the Levada study say, and explains why those young people who never lived in the USSR often demonstrate standards and stereotypes inherited from their parents, who did.

Elena Rubinova

Orthodoxy in post-Soviet times

A major factor that determined the social and psychological evolution of post-Soviet society was a cognitive vacuum. One of the few parameters that radically changed in the course of the Levada Centre study “Soviet Man, 1989-2009” was people’s faith and religious identification. However, quantitative statistics are not the same thing as qualitative changes in mass consciousness.

“In 1988-89 approximately 65% of those polled openly said that they were atheists, only 20-23% called themselves believers, and the rest hesitated in answering. In 2008 the pyramid turned upside down, with 70% claiming that

they were Orthodox. But in fact this religious belonging is a symptom of a different social phenomenon. When other symbols of Russianness are not clear, Orthodoxy tends to substitute for other ways of national self-identification,” says Boris Dubin, the Head of Social and Political Research at the Levada Analytical Center.

This, according to Dubin, has very little in common with faith. Only 3% of those who claim to be Orthodox are regular church-goers and only 8% occasionally participate in parish life. Thus self-identification as Orthodox becomes closely linked to the mythology of “a special way for Russia”, [as discussed in the August article], which has been actively resurrected in the past decade. Fully in compliance with this State-supported trend, religious

education has become a mandatory discipline in the secondary school curriculum. The most recent initiative by Patriarch Kyrill to set up a system of special secular “Общая лексика” coaches who will be responsible for moulding religious and patriotic young souls in parishes is reminiscent of measures taken in the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

How different are the young?

The Levada report stresses that new conditions in which young people are growing up, emphasize individual survival. Young people have had to adapt to the post-socialist world. The result is, apparently, that many refused to conform to the norms of the older generations. For the majority of young Russians aged 18-25, it is vitally important

to realise their aspirations for a prosperous life and established patterns of social success.

"Young people are pragmatic, but at the same time have high levels of anxiety and conformism," says psychologist Olga Makhovskaya, Senior Research Fellow of the Institute of Psychology at the Russian Academy of Science. "They live day-to-day without high ideas or convictions, they value education mostly judging by the dividends it can bring, they are very individualistic and this defines their lifestyle. It's a kind of short-term type of consciousness and suits rather shallow and small-scale personality types. In former times, this kind of person would be called a Philistine."

It goes without saying that young active people exhibit more courage, business initiative and adventurism than was usual with Homo Sovieticus. However, they are more like Soviets than perhaps meets the eye. Very often, young people's individualism is geared towards adaptive and asocial individualism of the late Soviet times, mainly oriented towards a quest for an optimal niche in the system of statuses supported by the bureaucratic state.

Sociologists notice another trait in the young generation of Russians. Unlike other categories of the population, young Russians are open to social contacts and intensive networking, they are more cosmopolitan, but only if the situation is stable. If something extraordinary happens, the compensatory mechanism that justifies the special "Russian way" kicks in, even with young people.

"Despite the fact that young people are heavy consumers of Western culture and products, once it becomes necessary, the young join up with the standards and stereotypes of the majority," explains Boris Dubin. "In a very simple situation, for example when a Russian team is winning or defeated at some sports competition, young people are just as intolerant or even xenophobic as the rest of the population. The majority of young people share views on the exclusiveness of Russia and Russians and general animosity to the outer world."

For them, freedom has become synonymous with living securely and stably, to have a lot of free time and to consume as much as possible. In numerous surveys, after expressing their

conviction that individual freedom is a priority, practically in the same breath, young people supported the idea of "restoring order" used a lot in government rhetoric of the past decade. Very few young Russians comprehend and support freedom as understood in Western culture where it is not only a value, but also an institutionalized phenomenon.

Deep-seated authoritarian tendencies, which are hallmarks of Russia's post-Soviet rulers, quite naturally spread their influence on youth. Elena Volkova, a professor of comparative literature and culture at Moscow State University, is convinced that "...in the last 20 years we have been trying to revive different historical patterns, but have been able to restore only communist ones. Whatever we try to restore takes the shape and the sense of communist Russia. They [political leaders] can only copy old patterns which are dear to them, but cannot create anything new."

No wonder that even those who were born after the USSR imploded have become easy targets for pro-Kremlin political movements like "Nashi" rather than joining anti-globalization organizations, ecological movements or other youth organizations that have very limited support amongst Russian youth.

Conclusion

When I was writing this article, an inscription appeared overnight in the lift of our apartment house in the very centre of Moscow. It said: "Other countries are created for those who are not strong enough to be Russian." Besides the obvious nationalistic connotations of this notion, it implies that being Russian still exists in people's minds as something very special, and perhaps has the unintentional effect of glorifying Russian suffering and hardship as a unifying national trait and source of pride. How long will this continue to be an excuse for justifying everything that does not fit into the general perception of universal human existence?

Not all changes in the young generation are negative. The growth of individualism and self-sufficiency may be a step in the development of interpersonal trust and social solidarity. Maybe the next generation of Russians will eventually part with the myth of "a special way" and the conceit associated with it. Only if they do so will they become simply people, and citizens of their own civilized country. **P**

How to... get by at the gym.

Something you might need from reception:

Дайте, пожалуйста, полотенце.
Can I have a towel please?
Дайте, пожалуйста, халат.
Can I have a robe please?
Я потерял(а) ключ от шкафчика!
I've lost the key to my locker.
Я не могу открыть/закрыть мой шкафчик. I can't open/close my locker.

Something you might need while working out:

Мне не хватает коврика.
There aren't enough mats for me.
Мне не хватает степ платформ.
There aren't enough steps for me.
Мне не хватает весов / скакалки.
There aren't enough weights/ropes.
Позовите врача, пожалуйста!
Please call a doctor!

Personal training

Я хочу записаться на персональную тренировку. I'd like to arrange a personal training session.
Покажите, пожалуйста, как работает этот тренажёр. Can you show me to use this workout machine?
Какие упражнения вы мне посоветуете? What exercises do you recommend?
Я хочу... I want to...
... подкачать мышцы. ... develop my muscles
... накачать кубики на животе! ... get a six-pack!
... сбросить 10 килограмм. ... lose 10 kgs.
... подготовиться к соревнованиям. ... prepare for a competition.
Разработайте для меня программу... Can you prepare a program for me...
... с маленькой / средней / большой нагрузкой. ... with a light/medium/high intensity.
Посоветуйте мне диету, пожалуйста. Can you recommend an eating plan for me?

After all that exertion, what you'll really need to ask is:

Где сауна? Where is the sauna?
Когда работает спа-центр?
When is the spa open?

Courtesy of RUSLINGUA
www.ruslingua.com

Ruslingua

Understanding the sales and service culture of Russia: is work a place to go or a thing to do?



Text by Luc Jones,
illustration by Sonya Hallett

American technology giants such as Microsoft, Google and DELL are proud of their humble origins, many beginning as a one-man show in someone's garage. In fact you can even visit the garage where Hewlett-Packard was founded back in 1935, before it grew to become one of the largest IT companies in the world. When asked why there are so few such examples in Russia, a local businessman cynically replied that Russian garages are far too cold!

Joking aside, it is worth taking an in-depth look at the entrepreneurialism, service and sales culture of Russia (or as some might say, a lack of it) to gain a better understanding of what drives the world's largest country and what opportunities there are to be had.

Whilst throughout the 20th century business flourished in Western economies, particularly in the 1950s and 60s, any entrepreneurial spirit that existed in the pre-revolutionary Tsarist Russia was brutally wiped out. All private companies had been nationalized and their former owners had either fled abroad or been sent to the Gulag branded as "enemies of the people".

All economic activity in the USSR was completely under state control and any attempts at private enterprise were met with a swift and severe response from the authorities. The expression of the day was "Initsiativa nakazuema" (Initiative is punishable) which pretty much

summed up the entrepreneurial climate in the Soviet Union—simply put, there wasn't one.

Countries which had embraced the free market continued to boom (and occasionally bust) as the Soviet economy stagnated under Brezhnev, and despite an attempted revival with the appearance of Gorbachev, the economy eventually collapsed under the weight of its own inefficiency. The USSR splintered into 15 independent republics. A population which used to be fairly certain of what tomorrow would bring were suddenly plunged into a chaotic uncertainty. Brought up to believe that private business and making money was what the evil capitalists did suddenly became not only the norm, but a necessity as guaranteed employment disappeared overnight.

As a student in Russia in the early 1990s, I witnessed the empty shelves gradually filling up with food. But that didn't necessarily mean they would sell it to you. In a "Produkty" shop on the outskirts of Yaroslavl I recall a conversation with a shopkeeper when wanting to buy some beer for a party.

"Can we have 40 bottles of beer please?"

"I can only sell you twenty"

"Why? Don't you have 40 bottles?"

"Yes, I have more than 40 bottles but if I sell you 40 bottles then there won't be enough left for other shoppers."

My Russian wasn't as good back then, and I was less argumentative so I neglected to comment: "So there are bottles for



Luc Jones, partner, IT/Telecoms, Antal Russia

other shoppers, but not for me"?!)

The easiest solution was to buy the 20 allowed and to send someone else down afterwards to buy more. But I couldn't help thinking to myself why this should be? Surely this lady should be delighted that I want to buy lots of her goods. Growing up in the UK they would be positively delighted at your purchase and would probably offer you a discount for a bulk purchase. And on regular trips to Canada and the USA to visit family, I would marvel at the fact that someone would not only pack up your groceries into (free) bags, but would then carry them out to your car for you!

Many employees who deal with the public wonder on a daily basis what sin they had committed that resulted in their having to deal with the public. Their atti-

tude is "I get paid a pittance so therefore I don't care". Trying to explain that in fact "you get paid a pittance BECAUSE you don't care" seems to have little notable effect!

On the one hand, it is easy to justify or explain the situation by the fact that given the persistent shortages that the country faced, coupled with the total lack of competition, there was absolutely no incentive whatsoever to try sell (or produce) more. The concept of P&L was non-existent and every enterprise, from small shop to large factory was state run so there was never any possibility of going out of business, regardless of performance.

Although Pepsi originally set up a joint-venture in the USSR way back in 1959, one of the first global corporations to really make its mark on the landscape was McDonald's during the Perestroika years. A common misconception in the west was that a Big Mac cost a week's salary (in fact the Golden Arches' trademark burger retailed at 3 roubles and 75 kopeks when the average salary at the time was round 100 roubles) but in all honesty they probably could have charged a week's wages given the demand in January 1990, when McDonald's opened its first outlet in Pushkin Square, replacing Cafe Lira and making it the company's largest food outlet in the world.

The long lines broadcast to the world gave a clue as to how the first customers would be treated. In flew the North American seagulls from corporate HQ with a plan to make McDonald's as successful and ubiquitous in the new free Russia as everywhere else in the world where they operate. One of the first induction sessions for the new staff began as follows:

McDonald's senior executive, standing in front of a room of glum-looking, newly hired Russian staff with the hope of ridding them of their Soviet-era ways: "We're now gonna train you to be polite to the customer".

Young guy sticks his hand up "zachem?" (why?)

McDonald's bigwig, who has probably never faced such a seemingly obviously question, replies "erm, well-so that the customer feels welcomed, satisfied and will want to come back again in future and buy more."

Same young guy who had asked "zachem?" asks with genuine sincerity: "It's -10C outside, there's a three hour wait to be served— and we've got the burgers." !!

Welcome to the world of customer service, Soviet style. This is gonna take longer than we thought, no doubt pondered the McDonald's executive. And yet, with hard work and perseverance, the McDonald's empire has become is a massive success story in Russia, with around 250 outlets, which tend to be much fuller than their western counterparts. However, not all Russians warm to the obligatory "have a nice day" said with a forced smile. One teenager grumbled that when the staff say this to you, they don't actually mean it. "Eto nie iskrenno." (it's fake, not sincere) His friend replied, "Zato v rossii iskrenno posilayut!" (But then in Russia people will genuinely tell you to get stuffed)!

But there has to be a bit more to it than simply blaming Russia's customer service failings on communism. Even twenty years after the arrival of a free market economy and the huge choice of products on offer, many Russians genuinely believe that if a product or service is good then everyone will want to buy it.

Consequently, this is reflected in my day job when recruiting staff for multinational corporations in Russia/CIS. Around half of all the requests for personnel here are in some kind of sales role, whereas in our London office it is a tiny proportion. Perhaps in the West we were all born as expert bullshitters, but continuously in Russia I struggle to find strong salespeople for my clients.

Most commonly when I enquire about someone's day-to-day tasks, the response is "when a customer makes an enquiry or places an order, we react". "OK", I interject, "but last week how many outgoing calls did YOU make to prospective buyers last week? How many clients did YOU visit? How many presentations/demonstrations did YOU arrange? How many of these did YOU then follow up on? All too often I am met with bemused looks.

Granted, it is probably quite a good thing that we are unable to help with requests from across the pond demanding "someone's who's gonna break that door down and will that deal" as not only do such people not exist, but if they did they wouldn't sell anything in this manner anyway. I have explained countless times to first-timers to the former Eastern bloc that it's not about having the flashiest presentation; rather sales in Russia are based much more on relationships and Russians like to talk technology, product and process. Connections

are helpful but not everything. It's a big country and you can't know everyone. My guess is that Russia will need over three generations to shake off what the Soviets ingrained into the population's mind-set, and we still haven't passed the first one. Initially employees expected to be paid for showing up at work and saw little or no connection between the "work" that they did, and the salary that they received. But this is now changing, especially in Moscow and some larger, more progressive cities, albeit mostly among those not old enough to remember the old days.

My general advice to foreign managers here is that although Russians value freedom in a job, they will nevertheless expect you to tell them what to do, especially in the beginning. Flying in, hiring someone and saying to them "here are our products, go out and sell them" is unlikely to be the most successful strategy. Although it is true of the whole world but especially the case in Russia, far too many people equate "being busy" with "doing a good job" and assume that "work" is a place you go to, rather than what you do. A clear system of achievable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) shouldn't be seen as condescending, but a structured and necessary approach to the task(s) in order to achieve certain goals.

The upside of this situation is that it is much less likely your competitors are not speaking to, or dealing with, your target audience. I laugh when Russians tell me about excessive competition in Moscow. I tell them to visit New York or Frankfurt and try to do business there.

In my line of business, at the last count, Moscow had approximately 300 recruitment agencies. There are more such agencies within the vicinity of tube station near our head office in London than in the whole of Moscow, and most of them are bigger! London has around 10,000 recruitment companies alone, some with many branches throughout the city. Now that's competition for you!

So next time you walk into an empty hotel and a bored-looking woman looks up from her magazine and barks "Miest nyet" ("We're full") at you, you may now understand her logic!

Luc Jones is a Partner with Antal Russia, an British executive recruitment company operating in Russia/CIS since 1994 and employs 100 staff in Moscow and has a branch office in Almaty (Kazakhstan). **P** luc.jones@antalrussia.com www.antalrussia.com



Text by John Harrison

Illustration by Julia Nozdracheva

For those returning or having just returned from holidays abroad, reports about the smog in which Moscow was shrouded for a couple of weeks may seem exaggerated. But for those in Moscow the opposite seemed true, and the way it was handled by the authorities reminded me of a tragi-comedy. I was unfortunate enough to return to Russia from holiday on the 29th of July, just before the worst of the smog hit Moscow. The following are a few notes and impressions of the couple of weeks that followed.

Monday 26th of July

Newspaper reports of peat fires in the Moscow region started to appear in the Russian press from about the 14th of July onwards. It wasn't until about the 26th of July when smog covered most of the city, and pollution levels started to go off the scale of acceptability that we finally realised that something was seriously wrong.

To ward off the heat—it was 35C, making it impossible to sleep at night—we tried in vain to buy a ventilation fan, and eventually had to pay 6,000 roubles for a fan that would normally have cost 3,000 roubles, and that through a friend as there were none in the shops. Most people carried on working normal hours. Despite what they say on TV, the economic crisis has not ended in Moscow, and most are still terrified of losing their jobs, but more importantly: there are air-condi-

tioners at work, well at most places. Official news channels said the weather will cool down in a few days.

Tuesday 27th July

I begin to dig in the internet and find reports, to my horror, from Mosekomonitoring, that the amount of harmful substances in Moscow's air exceeds the norm by many times. What the norm is and what all this means in respect to the future of our physical bodies, and how to protect ourselves is not very clear, but it is now crystal clear that this is a very serious situation and we have been fooled into thinking that it is a just a normal summer forest fire situation.

Thursday 29th July

Yesterday, Russia's chief lung doctor, Alexndera Chuchalin, warned that walking the streets of Moscow is like smoking two packets of cigarettes every few hours because of large concentrations of toxins in the air. Mosekomonitoring says that pollution levels of carbon monoxide and micro-suspended particles in the air have reached 10 times the norm, but again, no detailed explanation has been given of the permanent damage the particles can cause to your health. A doctor friend has told me that these particles are so small they never leave the body. Other toxins, whose names are too complex for me even to transliterate and which we have been breathing for the past few days, cause cancer. Why aren't we being told this? Respirators capable of blocking the gasses should be being given out.

Monday 2nd August

Temperatures yesterday hit an all-time high of 37.7 C according to the Forbos weather forecasting centre. Today is even hotter. With 2,000 made homeless from forest fires across Russia, a state of emergency has been declared in seven regions across Russia, including the Moscow region. Pedestrians walk slowly as their city turns into a grey abstract painting of shapes which are buildings. Moving quickly causes the eyes to sting. Cars have their headlights on as visibility is down to 100 metres in places. The official death toll from the fires in Russia is 34. Fire-fighters have been sent to Sarov to guard a nuclear power station from the fires. Where is Sarov?

People start wearing masks today. Days later did we find out that only 8-ply masks would be thick enough to keep out the micro-particles. Vladimir Gaidalenok of the Lor-Asthma clinic told Interfax today that ideally it would be better to leave the city altogether. If Muscovites should fall ill, they were advised to go into hospital, advice which few of our friends took, as few Moscow general hospitals have air conditioning. Official advice is to sit at home with closed windows, which is hard to do if you don't have air-conditioning and it is 40C. We decide to send our daughter to the seaside for a week.

Tuesday 3rd of August

My anger and distrust in the powers-that-be heightens. I find out at work that Alexei Yaroshenko, a forestry representative at Greenpeace Russia, mentioned that the 2007 Forest Code, signed by the then president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, resulted in the dismissal of 75% of the foresters and other personnel involved in monitoring and protecting the forests. Fire-fighting efforts have now been privatised. It is impossible to verify all the information I am reading. Commercial fire-fighting organisations have been hired according to their price, not their abilities. Blogs are full of speculation about the real reason behind the Forest Code, which made it easier for local administrations to sell forests for development. There is no official reaction at all to these kind of allegations. Instead, Putin today orders more money to be poured into the fire-fighting program, and calls on all forces, including volunteers to "extinguish everything" (including life?!). Meanwhile, fires rage across at least 120,000 hectares of Russia.

The government has pledged to pay 3 million roubles (\$100,000) to people whose houses have burned down in the wildfires, and said it would pay up to 200,000 roubles (\$3,600) as compensation for those who lost any other property. Echo Moskvyy reported that some rural visitors in Voronezh and Vladimir regions let their houses burn down in the hope of getting the compensation. Over 1,800 houses have burned down by August 3rd, according to regional development minister Viktor Basargin. www.lifenews.ru reported a shortage of fuel for fire-fighting helicopters and the Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch, Kirill, said Russians should seek to stop sinning in order to end a record drought that has stoked the fires, the *Moscow Times* reported. Vladimir Putin said he would watch the houses being rebuilt himself via the internet! Wow!

Thursday August 5th

GZT.RU report that not one of the 270 forestry areas around Moscow was prepared for the fires, and had not been following obligatory anti-fire fighting regulations. As the temperature hit 38C, President Dmitry Medvedev, who only returned from holiday on the 4th of August, made himself busy by sack-

ing officials. What about sacking Yury Luzhkov, still on holiday, for failing to save my lungs, I ask my friends. They shake their heads and smirk at me wondering how many more decades I do I need to live in Russia to *understand*. About 667,460 hectares of forest have been ravaged since April 1st, the Emergency Situations Ministry reported. The smog is everywhere. We wake up in the middle of the night with stomach pains. The bathroom is like a banya, as hot water pipes can't be turned off. The smoke has begun to pong badly.


Friday August 6th

As temperatures rise to 40C in some parts of the city, news begins to come in of the possibility of fires in the Chernobyl accident fallout-area lifting up radiated particles into the atmosphere. *This* was quickly denounced by the authorities. Things must be getting bad, the History Museum on Red Square as well as the Lenin Library have been temporarily closed.


TV news has enjoyed a tremendous come-back throughout the country—even I watch it! But a feel of disillusionment soon sets in. It is most disconcerting. Russian victories in the European track and field championships are more important, as are the floods in Pakistan.

Saturday 8th August

I was happy to hear that our mayor has returned from holiday in the Tyrolean Alps where the air was considerably better than that in Moscow, and where his wife's company Inteko has opened a luxury 5-star Grand Tyrolia Gold & Ski resort. For the second day the blogosphere is full of complaints that

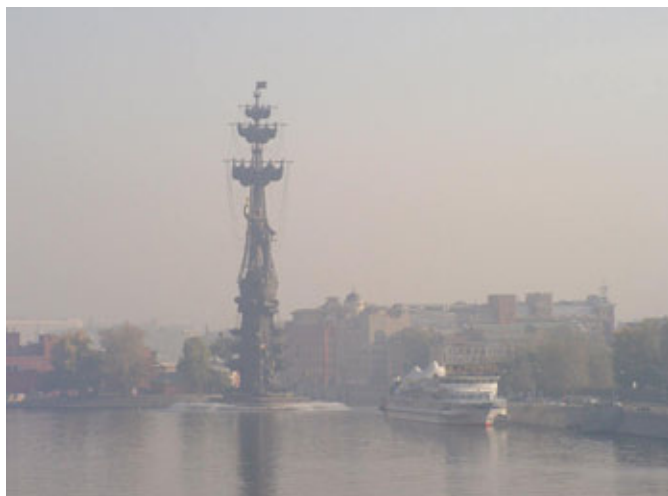


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Luzhkov's press secretary, Sergei Tsoi, commented that the situation in Moscow is not critical enough for the Mayor to shorten his holiday. "What problems?, what, we have a crisis situation in Moscow? No, other regions have a critical situation on their hands, not Moscow."

Nikolai Svanidze, a journalist at Kommersant FM, made the point that as governors and the Moscow Mayor are no longer elected, they are not so worried about their popularity.

Meanwhile, ordinary Muscovites wondered why the magic rain-man couldn't make it rain. "At least he could supply us all with free respirators and shorten the working day," my work colleagues grumble.

Sunday 9th August

Muscovites, me included, are experiencing real fear regarding our safety; especially when reports began to filter in, again via internet publications about the rise of the average daily death toll from 380 per day to over 700 per day in Moscow. Over 5,000 people have died in Moscow alone so far as direct result of the smog and heat-wave. This has not been corroborated by the authorities. Corpses, according to one report in www.gzt.ru are being piled up in the cellars of hospitals, because all the fridges are full.

In response to earlier criticism, civic authorities have opened 123 air-conditioned "smog centres" in government buildings. Air-conditioning isn't working in the one on Tverskaya.

Monday August 9th

Andrei Setsovsky, head of the city's health department conceded that the daily death rate has doubled, but that statement was not endorsed by Tatiana Golikova, Russia's health minister, the *Guardian* reported. Activity on the Russian stock exchange is way down, and a top Russian doctor implored foreigners not to be scared off by the thick fog, even as embassies evacuate some of their staff.

Masks are being rationed to no more than 10 per person @ 5-8 roubles per item, to put a halt to stockpiling and re-selling for 50 roubles per piece. Portable air-conditioners, reports *Obiskaya Gazeta*, are retailing for 30-35,000 roubles, up from 15-20,000 in the winter. However finding a fan or air-conditioner in Moscow has become completely impossible.

Sorry about not being very green, but I was truly joyous to get my car back from the garage so I can drive to work, avoiding the 2 kilometre walk from the Metro which has been killing me, literally. I was able to de-frost my fridge in record time this evening.

www.GZT.RU reports that the smoke cloud over Russia has attained the size of France.

Tuesday August 10th

Today my facebook page is full of other faces saying that it is raining, and yet others asking: "where?" In fact it rained for 15-20 minutes on the west side of the city, then stopped. The smog seems to be easing due to the wind direction slightly changing rather than a major reduction in the number of wildfires still burning. The Kremlin (Medvedev) accuses the Mayor of returning from his holiday too late, while Putin congratulates him on his timely return. The grapevine has it that ambulances are working round the clock, but crews have been briefed only to pick up the most serious cases, as there are not nearly enough vehicles to cover all call-outs.

Today the awful news circulates that meteorologists consider it possible that the anti-cyclone which has held temperatures at their unnaturally high level will not shift from its holding pattern until the middle of September.

Wednesday 11th August

The smog continues to ease slightly today. Despite President Medvedev's warning against engaging in political PR yesterday, Putin earlier today took the co-pilot's seat of a Russian-built Be-200 amphibious aircraft, although he has no known pilot training. He held the throttle, as carefully placed cameras showed, and dumped 24 tons of water on forest fires about 200 southeast of Moscow. Channel One showed a clip of him asking: "Did I hit the target?" to which the pilot answered: "A direct hit". Both Medvedev's and Putin's ratings are apparently dropping quite seriously, but this is now irrelevant. Meanwhile, Muscovites were given free admission to select cinemas, where free water is provided!

Thursday 12th August

Moscow's skies are relatively smog free, and temperatures have dropped as the anticyclone seems to be budging. Cost so far, according to Business FM on the 16th of July is about \$30 billion. It would have been cheaper to keep the original forest service intact.

I have had the impression throughout this period that the government was only able to react to situations as they occurred. It had no strategy. The internet made many of us feel like we have been treated like idiots, because it showed the shallowness of the official news channels. Parallels were drawn to the way that the Chernobyl disaster was reported on, or not reported on in 1986. **P**



Abramtsevo:

Colony of Russian Art Nouveau

Text and photos by
Katrina Marie

Whether fleeing from Moscow's choking smog, or simply in need of a quick salve for the pounding head, consider a day trip to the peaceful 19th century artists' colony and estate at Abramtsevo, located just south of Sergeyev Posad. The winding country road off the M-8 is a tranquil omen, with rolling hills of white birch, fields speckled with wildflowers and, yes, a river running through it.

Established in the 1870s, the artists' colony gave rise to Russia's rich art nouveau and modernist periods. It was home to such well-known talents as Vrubel, Repin, Serov and the Vasnetsov brothers. The expansive estate, made up of several architectural delights, also contains parks and gardens perfect for picnicking—but mind the bees.

The estate's main house, built by writer and Russian traditionalist Sergey Aksakov (1791-1859), later passed to industrial entrepreneur Savva Mamontov (1841-1918), who founded the artists' colony and had a taste for the modern. The house was the model for the manor in Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, and it also briefly accommodated Gogol, who wrote part of *Dead Souls* here.

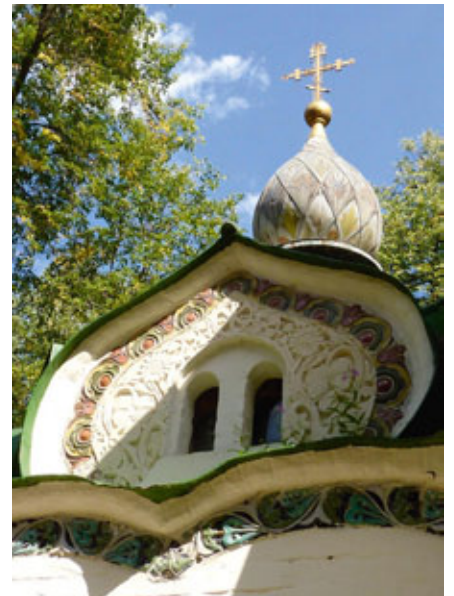
The real gem, however, is the separate studio, placed in a quintessential

Russian kottedzh with an ornate fretwork roof. Across the threshold, the aesthetics of Mother Russia are expressed in shining ceramic. Writhing intertwined, are layers of color as lush as the tangled ivy dripping from the studio's exterior.

The love of the natural world with a mystical dream-like twist draws heavily from Russian fairytales. Vrubel's work is dominant, from the brilliantly tiled fireplaces to gleaming decorations. One can see much of the style he later incorporated into the Metropol Hotel. The vivid metallic sheen captured produced pieces so freshly modern, they'd be at home in any gallery today.

A reverence for peasant or folk art is also prevalent. No less intricate, remarkable examples of hand-carved housewares, including primitive irons and utensils, are a must-see in the neighboring Museum of Folk Art, particularly with its fanciful purple and green checkered board roof.

Artistic periods of Russia's past continue to converge with the splendid Church of the Savior, built in 1882. The church curtsies to medieval Russia, but guides her into the modern era with what many consider to be Russia's first monument to the Art Nouveau style. The elegant flowering mosaic flooring,



Art Nouveau frescoes and icons, and again, lustrous tiling perfectly convey the period.

The whimsical House on Chicken Legs, built by the Vasnetsov brothers for the colony's children, sadly now appears to be missing its clawed feet, but its charm still lingers. Inspired by the fairytale of Baba Yaga, the Russian equivalent to the witch in Hansel and Gretel, the diminutive cottage pays homage to Baba Yaga's sinister threats to gobble up little kiddies who come too close. **P**



Green Parts – the North

Text and photos by
Ross Hunter

Spoiled for choice this month. Moscow boasts a wide variety of green spaces on its northern side, all closer to the Third Ring than the MKAD, and all handy by car or Metro. From The Botanical Gardens via VDNKh to Sokolniki there is plenty of variety, and is very easy to find: the TV tower is not pretty, but it helps navigation being Europe's tallest structure.

The Botanical Gardens

Starting at the north, the huge, rambling, spacious parks and forests of the Botanical Gardens of the Academy of Sciences are without doubt the most cultured and upmarket of all Moscow's great parks. Uniquely free of commercialisation, they offer more space per visitor than any other. At a bargain 50 roubles (and again for a bike) its emptiness can hardly be caused by price. Once inside, choose your landscape. The most popular areas are by the entrances: by the main building (NW), the Japanese Garden (NE) and the Orangery (SW).

The palatial classical styled HQ and laboratory is a pre-revolutionary stately home, with stories to tell. The facade is imposing, unless you get too close, in which case the poor quality square bricks of the main house suggest the investment was not as lavish as hoped. Worse is to stand further back as the perfect setting, view and panorama are graced by a Soviet-era electricity pylon and power station chimney. Not even symmetrical! Communist aesthetics both ask and answer troubling questions. Do not be put off: this is a gloriously accessible and pleasant place, and a favourite with Moscow's newly-weds doing their rounds, toasting each other and the

views. The pond, the conifer collection and the ornamental bushes all add to the ambience.

The Japanese garden is tidily done, neat and about believable. It requires an additional entrance fee, which may explain its higher standard of upkeep. The Orangery is a magnificent greenhouse, a vast glazed hangar that somehow combines industrial and Russian heritages. It is the repository of the exotic tropical plants, including the finest orchids. Opening hours are limited, and only for pre-booked groups, so plan ahead.

If these areas are compact, the heart of the park is the vast, rambling interior. Managing a botanical garden is a hugely skilled and time consuming job. The entrance fees clearly come nowhere near covering costs, and the gardens are on a fragile cusp between a planned and manicured exhibition of managed nature, and reverting rapidly into living proof of nature's chaotic exuberance. Odd corners are precise and concise and well tended, other tracts are going feral fast. This mixture affords endless quiet corners for picnics, and is pretty in dappled sunlight. With a spot of imagination, one can delve into oak forest fit for Robin Hood, dense pine stands for shielding gingerbread houses, and even enough birches for a Baba Yaga. The oaks look brilliant. The pines' perfume is enveloping, so you cannot smell the bears, bats, Ents, wolves and witches which must be in there somewhere. Great for adventures, but you won't find me there on a dark moonlit night.

VDNKh

Out of the woods, the busy chaos of the All Russia Exhibition grounds is a total contrast. All the fun of the fair, popular culture at its densest. Very commercial and very noisy with



all manner of curious sights, from ethnic pavilions rockets to Soviet showpieces to gilded fountains. The last named are packed with impromptu bathers in the summer heat. There is no dress code. It doesn't resemble water, but the occupants don't care.

Sokolniki

Something of a mixture of the previous two, with the advantage of being very handy from central and eastern Moscow, Sokolniki was once the Tsar's falconry centre. It does not feel like a royal hunting ground today. Large and eerie woods hide a variety of incongruous public buildings, some bathing ponds, a few stagnant weedy swamps and footpaths. All roads lead to the central circles, where refreshments come in the form of fountains, cold drinks, donkey rides, bikes for hire and more besides.

Timiryazevsky Park

I have run out of space. It looks good on the map, and if you know this park, I'd love to hear from you. Or your views on any

of those already covered in in this series. **P**
ross_hunter@endlishedmoscow.com

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Sokolniki bathing pond

Private Rental Brokers: Better Safe than Sorry?



Vadim Lamin, Elite rentals
Director, Penny Lane Realty

The recent crisis in the rental market brought more private real estate brokers to the playing field. Some of them are employees who lost their jobs during the economic instability in Russia and later became independent brokers; others are new players who decided to start a business in a profitable segment of the market. There are certainly a number of trusted professionals operating in the private segment, but it is easy to come across a "scammer". So, can you trust a private broker? Or is it best to always stay away from them? Vadim Lamin from Penny Lane Realty shares his opinion in this interview.

Vadim, how does one become a private broker?

There are several ways to become a private broker. I would say there are four basic types of people who follow these paths.

The first type includes people who pioneered a profession of broker working as an independent player. Generally, they have an extensive expertise in rentals and are able to do quality work. However, they do not provide additional services like apartment insurance and legal support. It should be noted that the services of such specialists are expensive. Most of their clients come from referrals from friends or acquaintances.

The second type is comprised of former real estate company employees. Some of these brokers left their position thinking they had gained enough experience in this field to set out on their own, while others were asked to leave due to

poor performance. These specialists usually provide minimum rental-related services, but at a reasonable price.

The third type includes people who have moved to Moscow from other regions. They believe that they can successfully work in the real estate market without adequate training. There is always a risk associated with these brokers, as a client may encounter non-professionalism, incompetent paperwork, poor familiarity with Moscow district specifics, inadequate knowledge of average prices, etc. Such specialists work for a minimum fee, but even this fee does not correspond to the poor quality of services.

Finally, the fourth type is represented by scammers, whose real objective is to simply rob clients. This may include everything from common robbery to document forgery.

So, private brokers cannot be trusted?

That's not always so. If a specialist can produce references, if he or she has considerable work experience in this field, you can use his services. But, if a client wants a secure deal not involving any legal risks, he or she should turn to a professional company. One of the reliability factors of the real estate agencies is that they have corporate clients. No corporation will attempt to use a private specialist for finding accommodation for its employees. Large agencies will provide a tenant with an immense database of apartments for rent and a leaseholder with exclusive rental conditions. Moreover, these agencies usually offer legal support, and some, like our company, provide real estate insurance.

What are the common tactics that scammers use?

Scamming scenarios vary. Some scammers take the realtor's fee from a client and disappear, changing their phone number. In other cases, a tenant would move into an apartment, only to find the locks changed the next day or worse, meeting the real owner, who is not aware of this.

One of the most common scams is to provide so-called "information services" by realtors. This scheme works best with non-Muscovites, who are looking to save money on realtor's fee. A client is asked

to pay a rather small fee (4-5 thousand rubles) in advance. For this amount, dishonest agents provide a list of addresses and phone numbers of apartment owners based on the client's requirements. There is not a single chance to rent an apartment with the help of this list.

Another variation goes even further. A potential tenant will talk to the owner from the realtor's office and arrange for an appointment to see the apartment later that day. However, the "owner" on the other end of the line is on the same scamming team. And when the time for the appointment comes, the "owner" would either cancel it under some excuse or just vanish.

Probably the worst scam of all is an outright fraud. Owners lease their apartments through a private broker for an extended period of time. Having rented an apartment, let's say for the summer, scammers forge powers of attorney and quickly compile a package of documents required to sell the property. When the owners come back home, they find new "owners" living in their own apartment. Situations like this can be settled only in court, but the problem here is to locate the brokers, because, as a rule, after receiving the money, they change residence and cut all ties that may lead to them.

How can people can protect themselves? What would you recommend?

My advice is to go for an established real estate agency. A large company is a guarantee in itself. It is not able to vanish overnight unlike a private broker. If you are a tenant or a leaseholder and have decided to use the services of a private specialist anyway, you should try to gather as much information about this specialist as possible: check his/her references, ask him/her for telephone numbers of former clients, call these clients and ask for their account of working with this specialist. In the event that this broker is a former employee of a real estate agency, call this agency as well and find out, if he/she is competent and if he/she left the company in good standing. Always check related documents, like passport and certificate of title, when entering a deal. Never pay realtor's fee in advance, only after the deal is approved. Avoid paying rent too far in advance (like six months or a year in advance). Always sign lease agreement and before signing it, examine carefully every item in this agreement. And finally, be cautious and aware of possible risks. **P**

W



To the Volga in a Volga

Ian Mitchell

The heat belted out of the uninsulated engine compartment; the steering wheel had about 20 degrees of free play making straight-line progress more a matter of luck than judgement, and corners an adventure; the brakes did not work until you exerted your full strength pushing the pedal down, and then they pulled savagely to the right; the gear-box lacked synchromesh; the oil consumption was fierce; the indicators did not work; and there were no seatbelts. But that was not the worst part of going rallying in a 1962 Volga with *Старое Время*, or the Old-Time Car Club, of Moscow.

The serious fact was that amongst the crowds that lined our routes into Uglich, Rostov and Pereslavl-Zalesky, hardly any

of the spectators who pointed cameras at the cars—and there were many of them—bothered to photograph my friend Ilya and I in our GAZ Mk 3. For some reason their preference was for the Lincolns and the Buicks, the Mercedes sports models, the two Rolls-Royces, the Covette Stingray, the pink Dodge and even, most humiliatingly of all, an MG Midget.

For the first time in a long life of not bothering to be cool, I learned what special level of coruscating uncoolness must have been suffered by those who were forced by Soviet reality not just to ignore cool but to have to choose between being uncool in the serious Soviet meaning of the word, or walking. No wonder Communism collapsed. I learned more about political history in two days of bouncing around the

back-roads north-east of Moscow in an old Volga than I had in twenty years of studying the ineffectiveness of anti-consumerist propaganda. When young boys laugh at your car, then you know it is time to change political systems.

But still, my two days in the Volga were one of the most enjoyable I have spent in four years in Russia. There were many reasons for this, starting with my companion Ilya and the others on the rally—tour would be a better word—and going on with the amazing hospitality of the authorities in the various towns, where the police stopped the traffic so that we could parade in like visiting celebrities. I suppose that, as pink Dodges and Rolls-Royce Silver Ghosts are rare in Uglich, we were something like that.



But the nicest aspect of the event was discovering that rare thing in Moscow, an association of Russians devoted purely to quiet enjoyment, in this case cruising around country roads in ancient cars until evening falls and the party starts. The members of the Old-Time Car Club are straight-forward lovers of old time cars, nothing more or less.

The moving spirit behind this wonderful organisation is Alexander ("Sasha") Smirnov, who runs a small restoration and repair business for classic cars in an unpretentious garage near Tushinskaya Metro station. He came with his wife and two children in a Lincoln that used to belong to the Governor of Delaware, and which had in its boot two boxes for high-tech communication devices and another for automatic weapons storage. He said to me, "This is not sport, it is for socialising." How unusual is that in modern Russia!

Unfortunately, I could stay only for two of the four days of the trip, which went on to

Suzdal, Vladimir, Bogolyubovo, Veles and Kirzhach—a total distance of just over 900 kms. Last year they all went to Kaliningrad oblast. Next year will be somewhere else.

For readers interested in going touring in this area independently, I should say that you will not be disappointed. The roads were better than I had expected—most of the time. All the towns had hotels where you could spend the night. At Rostov, the recently-restored Kremlin was one of the most magnificent I have seen. But Uglich on the Volga, where Ivan the Terrible's son was murdered, and Perslavl-Zalesky, where Peter the Great learned to sail, were also fascinating. I would happily have put up with searing heat, the sloppy steering, weird brakes and other discomforts to have seen all the other towns the Rally visited. From a tourist point of view, central Russia is one of the least-known jewels in Europe.

The event was sponsored by the Oil-Trade company and Old Time. **P**

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Turkmenistan

Luc Jones

Articles on Ashgabat, the Turkmen capital, usually churn out the well-worn quote “Dubai meets the Soviet Union”, which may suit lazy hacks who couldn’t be bothered to actually visit Turkmenistan. But those who do venture into what must to this day be one of the most secretive and bizarre regimes outside of North Korea, and they will certainly be left curiously surprised.

Getting in is the tricky part. Everyone needs a visa; yes, even other CIS citizens, and it’s not simply a case of rocking up at your local Turkmen Embassy (of which there are not a vast quantity), smiling nicely, filling in a form and walking out with a shiny sticker in your passport. Oh no, you’ll need official state approval to enter Turk-

menistan. But the good news is that there are a handful of accredited tour firms who can ease your passage of entry. The only catch is that they will organize the entire trip for you. There’s no wondering around on your own here; you’ll be chaperoned throughout the day by a local guide, lest you poison innocent Turkmen minds with your evil, foreign ideas!

Turkmenistan was born out of the collapse of the USSR, being one of the last of the republics to declare independence and although it joined the Commonwealth of Independent States (basically the old USSR minus the Baltic States), the newly formed country showed little appetite for openness, change or democracy. Saparmurat Niyazov, the Turkmen Republic’s leader since 1985 was

voted President of Turkmenistan in 1991 (he was the only candidate) and shortly afterwards declared himself both President for Life, and Turkmenbashi (Father of all the Turkmen). Niyazov’s eccentricities have been well documented, such as building gold statues of himself in Ashgabat, and changing the months of the year to sound like the names of the parents he never knew, his father dying in WW2 and mother and the brothers and sisters perishing during a massive earthquake which flattened the city in 1948.

Post-USSR Ashgabat is largely a testament to the promotion of Turkmen culture, fronted of course by Niyazov himself and a personality cult which comes close to rivaling that of Kim il Sung. Massive funds have been lavished on marble-fronted palaces,



various other government buildings, and most importantly is the Arch of Neutrality complete with a massive, golden statue of Turkmenbashi himself rotating so that he is always facing the sun—and you can even take the elevator inside it up to the top for great views of the city.

When wondering where the money came from to fund all of this, don't forget that Turkmenistan boasts some of the world's largest resources of natural gas, so the country certainly isn't short of a bob or two. On the one hand, given that most African dictators would have done the square root of bugger all to develop their nation whilst simultaneously siphoning off state funds into Swiss bank accounts, Niyazov has certainly left a legacy (he died in 2006). His dream to turn his country into a central Asian version of Qatar or Dubai is still a long way off, and with large swathes of the population living close to the poverty line, one can't help thinking that the cash could have been better spent. Niyazov's successor is Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov and was his personal dentist—hey, what's wrong with a bit of cronyism, and with a name like that who knows what his parents were smoking!

Your first grabble will be changing money. Keeping pace with Soviet times, there is still a black market for foreign currency, so although \$1 will officially buy you 5,400 Manat, you should be able to get around 3–4 times this with the assistance of your driver. Bring a rucksack with you to be ready to carry sackfuls of the stuff around with you—this might not be Germany in the 1920s but you get the picture.

You are likely to spend your first day or two being shown the city sights plus a trip out to the Kipchak Mosque where Niazov is buried, and a chance to sample the city nightlife. Ashgabat itself is beautifully lit up in a vast array of colours after dark, but



Wanna buy a Kamaz? Visit the Tolchuka

if you're a party animal then you'll find your options somewhat limited after dinner. Officially there is an 11pm curfew on all venues so for many it's back to the hotel bar, although one place that has a license to stay open later is the Florida bar (worth the trip, if only to see the Plymouth Argyle scarf on the wall; it recently changed its name to The British Pub), where foreign business visitors gather into the early hours to drink beer and play pool. The upstairs disco, called Kumush Ay, is the most kicking place in town and about the best chance you'll have of pulling any local tottie—just don't arrange a meeting for 9am the following day as it doesn't get started until the early hours.

If you only visit Ashgabat then you'll leave with a pretty lopsided view of the country, since around 70% of Turkmenistan is made up desert; the mighty Karakum which translates as black sand. A four hour drive along the highway parallel with the Iranian border, with a quick stop at a micro-brewery just outside Tejen, brings you to Mary (pronounced 'Mar-ree') which is the gateway to the desert and the ancient city of Merv. Founded well before the birth of Christ, you are free to explore the ancient city walls and you're likely to have the place much to yourself, if you don't count the wild camels wandering around.

Merv may satisfy the UNESCO World Heritage box tickers, and impressive it is, but this is small beer compared to a trip out to Margush several hours into the unforgiving Karakum. A Russian mad professor has dedicated several decades of his life to unearthing the remains of what he claims could prove to be the world's fifth ancient civilization (after Ancient Greece, China, India and Mesopotamia). Whether or not he's right is hard to say, but his excavations cover a wide area and one can only begin to imagine what went on here sev-

eral millennia ago.

The forty minute flight from Mary back to the capital was on a brand new Boeing, yet cost only \$4 for a single (and locals get a 50% discount). We took a trip out to Central Asia's largest open air market, where you can buy anything from a KAMAZ truck, to a carpet, to a camel. We took the easy route and bought nuts and dried fruit before a cup of green tea and a tasty samsa in a local café which looked as though it might struggle to pass a health and safety inspection back home! Finally, given their love of horses, no trip to Turkmenistan would be complete without a trip out to a local stud farm for a display of how to antagonize a horse to the point that it's ready to bite or kick you (well, that's what it looked like to us); fortunately we were quite a distance away, and these guys seemed to know what they were doing.

Getting in: Forget trying to do this yourself, you'll get nowhere. We used DN Tours (www.dntours.com) who were great, as well as efficient. They sorted out the visas, hotel bookings and all transport within the country, plus providing a super guide who actually thought that five drunken English guys were funny!

Getting there: Turkmenistan Airlines (daily) and S7 (2–3 times a week) fly between Moscow and Ashgabat; domestic flights cost peanuts thanks to state subsidies although you may need to secure the services of a travel agency to actually get them.

Getting around: Everything will be taken care of by your tour company. If on business, you'll be met and shown around by whoever it is you are seeing.

Language: Turkmen is the official language although nearly everyone speaks Russian (perhaps not as well as in other former Soviet Republics due to the country being so closed). People in tourism, and some in business, speak English. **P**





Endless bustle in Singapore's Chinatown



By John Bonar

If you can sneak in a one-day stopover in Singapore on your way to South East Asia's beach resorts, then spend it in Chinatown. The area was allocated to the Chinese community in 1828 by the founder of the modern city state, Sir Stamford Raffles. It became famous as the area to find roadside food hawkers, fortune tellers, travelling medicine salesmen, story tellers, buskers and opera singers. It is the oldest ethnic district in Singapore, with over a hundred years of history, and while much of the district has been subject to an eclectic makeover, the religious and family traditions remain unchanged.

Every shop in China town has its own history like no other. Many of these shops, passed from generation to generation,

have grown from their humble origins to become trademark brands attracting overseas visitors eager to experience true Singapore culture.

I dropped in on Thye Shan Medical Hall, at 201 New Bridge Road. Its team of service staff and Chinese physicians is now in its third generation. Mervyn Chan, the grandson of the founder, having had a successful international career, has been drawn to the family tradition and is now in his final year of studying Chinese traditional medicine. He is the only one of the family to speak English. Chinese medicines, he told me, are typically made up of 80% herbs, 15% insect or animal products and 5% minerals. These will be mixed in the correct proportions and instructions given to the patient how to cook them and when to consume them.



Wedding gifts are traditionally red

Recognizing that today's lifestyles do not always allow a patient to infuse a tea Chinese medicine now embraces what Mr. Chan calls "patent medicines" where the ingredients are ground and encased in easily taken, and transported, capsules. The one-stop shop, besides being a retailer, manufacturer, supplier and distributor also offers consultation and treatment by certified Chinese physicians, acupuncturists and medical masseurs.

Its reputation has spread, and Mervyn has even helped treat prominent Russians who are visiting Singapore in increasing numbers, whether to participate in the annual Russian-Singapore Business Forum or watch the Formula 1 Grand Prix. A consultation with a Thye Shan Medical Hall physician will cost between S\$10 and S\$20.

Heading down Pagoda, at the centre of the reconstructed Chinatown Street Market with 161 stalls lining Pagoda, Trengganu and Sago streets, at No. 40 you will find Henry Ng presiding over the Sir Master Tailor exclusive silk and tailor shop. Within a day or two he is capable of making you a suit that would do credit to Saville Row, at a fraction of the cost.

Exquisite hand-embroidered, fully-lined formal evening dresses can be made to measure for ladies. A suit costs from S\$ 200 to S\$ 800 while the dress I admired was only S\$ 250. At No. 30 Pagoda Diana Lim or Catherine Teo will help you choose traditional Singaporean gifts ranging from Chinese year symbols to beautiful hand crafted Singapore costume dolls.

Parallel to Pagoda Street, at 62 Temple Street just round the corner from South Bridge Road. Pop into Wong's Jewellery which offers an amazing array of jade jewellery and table ornaments in an array of colours, from white to violet, and of course green, all from the mines around Mogaung in upper Myanmar.

After a hectic day's shopping, head to Smith Street, where the Chinatown Business Association in cooperation with the Singapore Tourist Board has revived Chinatown Food Street where row after row of tables fill the pedestrianised street.

The best local fare, served the way it used to be by small, family-owned businesses thriving on maintaining traditional standards using ancient family recipes.

Must-try dishes include Chili Crab cooked in thick gravy with a tomato and chili base, eaten with bread soaked in the gravy. This is Singapore's signature dish.

The best way to start, or finish your time in Chinatown is a visit to the Heritage Centre at 48 Pagoda Street. In three newly restored shop-houses at the Centre houses recreate memories and the history of how Singapore's founders settled in this area.

The hard life of the migrants resulted in many of them seeking solace in the four evils: opium smoking, prostitution, gambling and secret societies. On a brighter note, Chinatown, in its heyday, was always bustling with life and activity. Traditional festivals of the different races that make up the citizenry of Singapore were celebrated here, thus making Chinatown culturally vibrant and unique.

From 10am until 5pm guided tours lasting 90 minutes are offered on the hour at a cost of S\$8 for adults and S\$4.80 for children.

Of course there is much more to Singapore, the Lion City, than Chinatown. If you have the time, there is the opportunity to get up close with lions, tigers and other night animals in the world's first and only night Zoo Safari, take a Captain Explorer DUKW tour, or ride the world's tallest observation wheel beside Marina Bay which will give you unobstructed views of the city and glimpses of Malaysia and the nearest Indonesian islands. **P**

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Jenson Button noises up the Kremlin

On Sunday 18 July, Potemkin motor-racing in the shape and sound of a Formula 1 demonstration came to Moscow, bringing with it the current World Champion, Jenson Button of Great Britain, and the number 2 Renault driver, Vitaly Petrov, who is the only Russian ever to have competed in a Grand Prix.

The streets round the Kremlin were cordoned off for a crowd which was predicted to be about 300,000 but which was probably closer to a quarter of that, so that the cars could drive from the square below St Basil's Cathedral, down onto the embankment, and round the Kremlin walls to the National Hotel, where they did an about-turn and drove back again to the Cathedral, to be greeted there by a hysterically-waved chequered flag.

During these runs, both drivers performed deliberate spins to make their rear tyres smoke which, the organisers said, was a popular sight with Russian petrol-heads. To some foreign observers, this form of destruction was less interesting than it would have been to



have seen the cars being driven fast and elegantly. My impression from listening to Jenson Button talk wryly about this form of showmanship in the Mobil hospitality tent between excursions was that he felt much the same way.

It was announced at the pre-demonstration press conference that there is likely to be a Russian Grand Prix on the

Formula One calendar by 2012. That would be worth attending. As it was, this event, though unusual, seemed to me rather sad. It was noisy, expensive, brutishly spectacular, but ultimately as meaningless as a Kremlin election.

At least the location was appropriate, I suppose. **P**

Ian Mitchell



The steamy Pacific comes to steamy Moscow

On Monday 26 July, the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines held a gastro-nomic evening to launch Filipino Culinary Week, which was held in the Café Swiss at the Swissotel, Krasniy Holmi, near Paveletskaya. The evening's festivi-

ties were introduced by the manager of the Swissotel, and the event opened by the Philippine Ambassador to Russia. Traditional music and dancing were features of the evening, as well as a lavish selection of Philippine dishes prepared by two visiting chefs from the Makati Shangri-La Hotel in Manila. The event was preliminary to celebration of the

35th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and the then USSR. It was ironic that the temperature in Moscow on the night was higher than that in the near equatorial islands whence the food and chefs came, presumably expecting conditions less tropical. **P**

Ian Mitchell



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Dare to ask Dare



Photo by Maria Savelieva

Expats and Russians alike ask celebrity columnist Deidre Dare questions about life in Moscow.

Dear Deidre:

I do not understand why Western girls do not use attractive pictures of themselves on their Facebook profiles. Sometimes they even use photo of a flower or mountain! Why don't they do it like Russian girls and be very sexy?

Dear Likes a Good Visual:

You've got me. I have absolutely no idea and have often wondered about this myself. Though I agree with you that flowers and mountains are awful, I find the Western women who post their child's picture as their profile shot even more frightening.

What it basically means when they do that is that these women have subsumed their entire identity into their offspring. They have simply disappeared as individuals - and it seems to me that since that is what is expected from mothers in the West these days, they are only blindly reflecting the society they live in. See? Frightening stuff.

This is one of those Western "values" that I hope never arrives here. It would only oppress Russian women, who I admire a lot for their naked individuality whether they are mothers or not.

As for your scenes of nature ladies, I've decided that the only possible explana-

tion for posting such a picture is that these chicks must be really butt ugly. And Russian women never are.

xxoo DD

Dear Deidre:

I am an expat woman and I want to fix up two people I know here in Moscow. The guy is an expat friend of mine who's been looking for a wife and the girl a Russian I met in my building. Any advice?

Dear Matchmaker, Matchmaker, Make Me a Match:

Yes. Don't!

I was in the middle of doing the exact same thing recently when I realised that I was fixing up the man of my dreams.

I think it was all that "Oh, he's very smart and kind" and the "Yes, he does work out and make a lot of money" stuff that finally clued me in: there aren't a lot of those guys running around Moscow.

Best we keep them to ourselves, eh?

If I've learned anything, I've learned that Russian girls can take care of themselves in this department. They really don't need a helping hand from us.

xxoo DD

Dear Deidre:

I got fired and my husband left me. I feel just awful about everything and feel very depressed. What would you do if you were me?

Dear Troubled One:

Think of yourself as going through your own personal Russian Time of Troubles. Something that happens to us all on occasion.

In America, a lot of people get comfort from the acronym WWJD, which means "What would Jesus do?"

I invented a different question however and it might just help you.

I use WWSD. Which means "What would Scarlett do?" and refers to that hell-bent-on-survival character, Scarlett O'Hara from GWTW (which means "Gone with the Wind.")

In any crisis as difficult as yours, I ask

myself "WWSD?" and take whatever actions I decide Scarlett would take if she were in my shoes.

Frankly, my dear, TIAD.

Which means, chin up! Tomorrow is another day.

xxoo DD

Dear Deidre:

How are you doing in this smoke? I am thinking of leaving Moscow very quickly.

Dear General Kutuzov:

Hopefully, by the time we go to print, the fires will be out and this question will just remind us all of how lucky we are that the bitter unbearable winter is coming at last.

I try to think of these smoky days as Napoleonic. In other words, I like to imagine that this is what it was like for the Grande Armee when they entered a burning and deserted Moscow in 1812.

Sure, most of them died. But remember: it wasn't the summer that got them. It was the winter.

xxoo DD

Dear Deidre:

I am an American and I married a Russian woman and now I realise she is crazy. I am very unhappy - what do I do? It is a disaster.

Dear Screwed:

It almost always is, my friend, it almost always is.

WWSD?

Scarlett's unhappy marriages always ended up with her husband dying in some battle. But since the Grand Armee is gone from Moscow, that probably doesn't help you very much.

I suggest you volunteer in Iraq and pray you die in some battle.

xxoo DD

Do you have a question for Deidre Dare?

If so please email her at Deidre_Clark@hotmail.com.

Your restaurant should be here

Please phone or write to PASSPORT sales manager:
+ 7 (495) 640-0508, v.astakhova@passportmagazine.ru

NOTE:

**Indicates *Passport Magazine* Top 10 Restaurants 2009.

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New American, non-smoking environment, cool comfort food at several Moscow locations

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M. Mayakovskaya

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16 Ul. Bolshaya Sadovaya, 650-0246

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M. Universitet

16/5 Bolotnaya Ploshchad, 951-5838

M. Polyanka

www.starlite.ru

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1 Ulitsa Sretenka,

M. Chisty Prudy

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tion on the Old Arbat overlooking the busy pedestrian mall. The usual rock paraphernalia and a somewhat mediocre presentation of the HRC standard menu.

44 Stry Arbat, 205-8335

M. Smolenskaya

www.hardrock.com

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Indian Restaurant
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www.ilforno.ru

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12/8 Tverskaya Ulitsa, 694-0229

M. Tverskaya, Pushkinskaya

DARBAR

With great views from the top floor of the Soviet relic Sputnik Hotel, veteran expats say it's the city's best Indian. In addition to the usual north Indian fare, Darbar has an extensive south Indian menu.

38 Leninsky Prospekt, 930-2365

M. Leninsky Prospekt

COFFEE AND PASTRIES

COFFEE MANIA

The Coffee Mania next to the

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

M. Arbatskaya, Biblioteka im. Lenina
www.coffeemania.ru

STARBUCKS

Now has 32 locations.

www.starbuckscoffee.ru

EUROPEAN

CAFE DES ARTISTES

Restaurant and bar offers fine European cuisine in a relaxed atmosphere, often with recent artwork on the walls of the upstairs room. 5/6 Kamergersky Pereulok, 692-4042

M. Teatralnaya

www.artistico.ru

CITY SPACE

Panoramic cocktail bar. A breathtaking view and loads of delicious cocktails. Located on the 34th floor of Swissôtel Krasnye Holmy Moscow

M. Paveletskaya

52 bld.6, Kosmodamianskaya nab., Moscow 115054

+7 (495) 221-5357

KAI RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE

Some of Moscow's best contemporary French cuisine with an Asian touch from chef at Swisshotel Krasnye Holmy.

52/6 Kosmodamianskaya Nab, 221-5358

M. Paveletskaya

LABARDANS

The restaurant "Labardans", is a cultured comfortable place in Vladimir Mayakovsky's theatre on Bolshaya Nikitskaya, right in the heart of historic Moscow. The restaurant has three halls, and serves

Russian and European food. There is live music most evenings, and a warm, homely atmosphere.

Bol. Nikitskaya Str., 19

M. Arbatska

tel. (495) 691 5623, (495) 691 6513

SCANDINAVIA

The summer café is one of Moscow's main after work meeting venues. Excellent Scandinavian and continental menu.

19 Tverskaya Ulitsa, 937-5630

M. Pushkinskaya

www.scandinavia.ru

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GOODMAN

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

23 Tverskaya Ulitsa, 775-9888

M. Tverskaya, Pushkinskaya

www.goodman.ru

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

Open 18:00-05:00

17 Tverskaya Ulitsa, 629-4165

www.nightflight.ru

M. Tverskaya

SPORTLAND

SportLand on Novy Arbat offers live transmission of a wide range of sports fixtures from all around the world, this sports bar is open from 12.00 noon all the way to 4.00am daily.

The newly-opened SPORTCAFE is equipped with 60" widescreen plasma and LCD TV's.

SPORTLAND, SPORTCAFE, NOVY ARBAT 21.

www.metelitsa.ru/sportcafe

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



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on A. Nevsky Ploschad

(812) 333-50-77

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www.7KRASOK.ru

The Trafalgar Ball, 23rd October

This year the Trafalgar Ball, which will be held on the 23rd of October, promises to be something special. The ball is moving to a new, larger venue, and is to be themed around flags. PASSPORT talked to Don Scott, the President of the club about the event.

Can you tell us about the concept behind the Trafalgar Ball this year?

Firstly, let me give you a little history. The Trafalgar Ball was started eleven years ago by the British Business Club's previous incarnation: the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland Business Club. It was Geoffrey Cox who came up with the idea of the Trafalgar Ball; at that time, the battle of Trafalgar was the next celebratory day coming up for the UK, and that was how it started.

We have generally tried to keep numbers limited, and made the event the best quality that we could; and make some money for charity as well. All profits will be passed on to charity, and in this case it is the Taganka Children's Fund, which we have been supporting since we started. They are the only charity that we support apart from St. Andrew's Church.

We have used the Marriott Grand Hotel for nearly all of our time, but this year we are changing our location. The Marriott Grand has provided outstanding service and quality for us throughout our years with them, but unfortunately, to increase our numbers, to make it a bit bigger and better, we have no option but to move. So this year we will be at the new



Renaissance Moscow Monarch Centre Hotel at Begovaya, where we are aiming to attract 350 people.

What's special about this year's Ball?

Each year we have always tried to theme the Ball, for example, lamps or cannon balls or something nautical. This year we decided to do flags. As everybody knows, one of the key episodes of the battle was the announcement, made with flags, which Nelson sent out to the fleet, which said: "England expects that every man will do his duty." So the tickets, the design inside the ballroom, and the other designs we are using will have that flag design incorporated into it.

Who is the Ball open to, and how can tickets be obtained?

The Ball is open to absolutely everybody. We will be selling tables of ten, and individual seating, everything will be available for online registration on the British Business Club website. (www.britishclub.ru) British Business Club board members will also have tickets, and you will be able to buy directly from them. **P**



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Hickory Dickory Dock,
The mouse ran up the clock.
The clock struck one,
The mouse ran down!

Hickory Dickory Dock.
Hickory Dickory Dock,
The bird looked at the clock,
The clock struck two,
Away she flew,
Hickory Dickory Dock

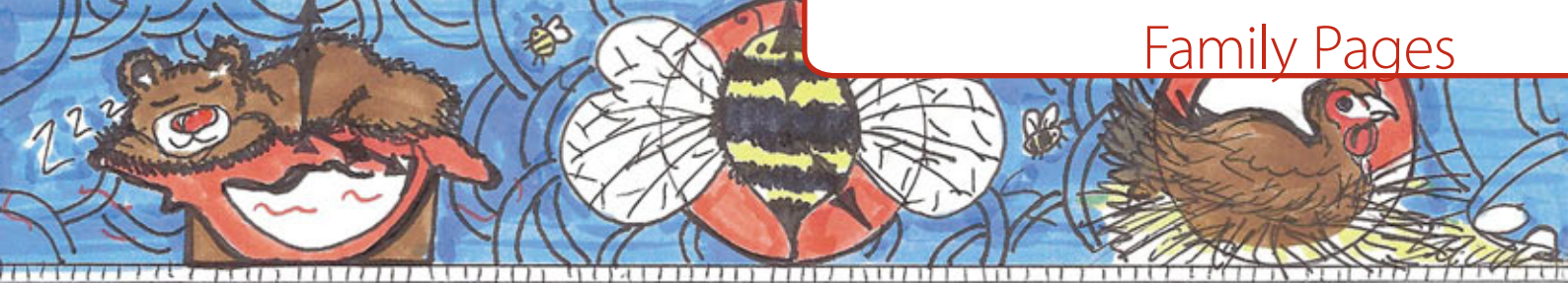
Hickory Dickory Dock,
The dog barked at the clock,
The clock struck three,
Fiddle-de-dee,
Hickory Dickory Dock!

Hickory Dickory Dock,
The bear slept by the clock,
The clock struck four,
He ran out the door,
Hickory Dickory Dock!

Hickory Dickory Dock,
The bee buzzed round the clock,
The clock struck five,
She went to her hive,
Hickory Dickory Dock!

Hickory Dickory Dock,
The hen pecked at the clock,
The clock struck six,
Oh, fiddle-sticks,
Hickory Dickory Dock!





Hickory Dickory Dock,
The cat ran round the clock,
The clock struck seven,
She wanted to get 'em,
Hickory Dickory Dock!

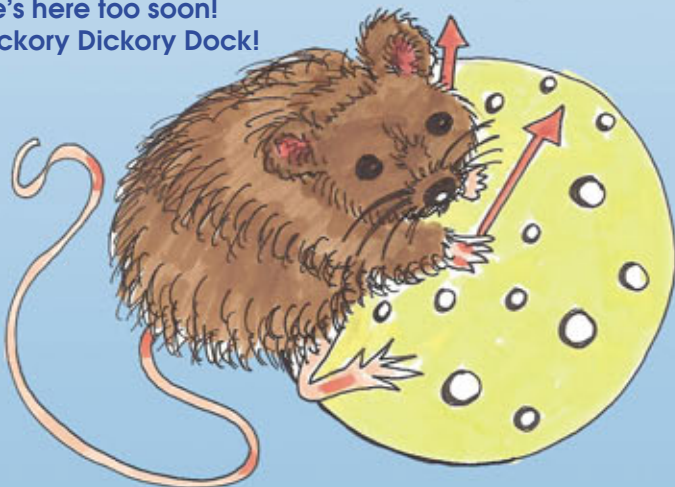
Hickory Dickory Dock,
The horse jumped over the clock,
The clock struck eight,
He ate some cake,
Hickory Dickory Dock!

Hickory Dickory Dock,
The cow danced on the clock,
The clock struck nine,
She felt so fine,
Hickory Dickory Dock!

Hickory Dickory Dock,
The pig oinked at the clock,
The clock struck ten,
She did it again,
Hickory Dickory Dock!

Hickory Dickory Dock,
The duck quacked at the clock
The clock struck eleven,
The duck said 'oh heavens!'
Hickory Dickory Dock!

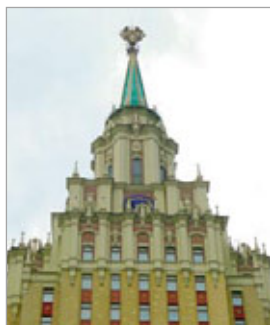
Hickory Dickory Dock,
The mouse ran up the clock
The clock struck noon
He's here too soon!
Hickory Dickory Dock!



Compiled by Ross Hunter

1 The High Life

Moscow is not really a city of skyscrapers. That means the few tall buildings can be seen and enjoy great views. Here are five of the biggest and most famous, with views from them. As usual, they are shuffled. Can you pair them up?



The Swiss Hotel



The Ostankino
TV Tower



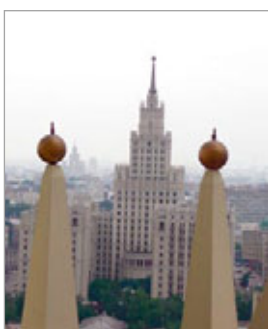
The Russian Academy
of Science



The Leningradsky
Hotel



The Stalin Skyscraper at
Kotelnicheskaya Naberezhnaya



2 Capital Holidays

Where did you go for your holidays? Match up these countries to their capital cities. Naturally, they are muddled up.

Countries: Sweden Namibia Australia Bangladesh Senegal Turkey Peru Chile Denmark Laos

Capitals: Canberra Dhaka Dakar Windhoek Ankara Stockholm Copenhagen Vientiane Lima Santiago

3 A Paw Quiz

Have you been tracking animals on safari? Match up these prints to the animals. They have been shuffling, of course, and they are not to scale.



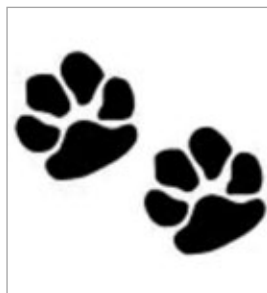
Fox



Cat



Bear



Lion



Dog

4 Mini Sudoku

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

August solutions

Central Moscow quiz:

Bolshoi Theatre (top left) The State Historical Museum (top right)
Metropol Hotel The Kremlin GUM Kazan Cathedral

Radial roads:

NW: Tverskaya, N: Prospect Mira, NE: Myasnitskaya, E: Pokrovka,
SE Solyanka/Marxistskaya, S: Yakimanka, SW: Ostozhenka, W: Novy Arbat

Ring roads:

Kremlin Ring, Boulevard Ring, Garden Ring, 3rd Transportation Ring, MKAD

Mini Sudoku: see www.englishedmoscow.com

Handsome Habsburg homosexual

Ian Mitchell

To anyone interested in the likely fate of the Slavic world in post-Soviet times, especially on the east European borderlands, this book will make fascinating reading. It tells the story of one of history's forgotten figures, the charismatic but gay Archduke Wilhelm of Austria, who adopted Ukraine as his country and tried to become its King after the Russian Revolution. The history of the Slavic world would have been very different if one of its wealthiest areas had been ruled after 1917 by a sympathetic German aristocrat rather than a gang of murderous, pseudo-internationalist "proletarians".

Wilhelm was born on the Adriatic in 1895 into a family that went back to 1273 when his ancestor, Rudolf, became Holy Roman Emperor. In the fifteenth century the Habsburgs made marriages which brought them control over Hungary, Bohemia, southern Italy, the Low Countries and Spain, the latter subsequently bringing with it one of the largest colonial empires in the world. In the sixteenth century, the family married into the Polish royal family as well, acquiring extensive territories in Galicia and the western Ukraine.

In the eighteenth century a series of dynastic re-arrangements, starting with the War of Spanish Succession and ending with the three Partitions of Poland, disturbed but did not destroy this incredible series of international links. Napoleon came close to upsetting it, detaching several key territories, chiefly Spain. But the centre held, not least because, once again, the family married aggressively, giving the Archduchess Marie Louise to Napoleon himself as a wife in 1810.

Incidentally, she was related to Marie Antoinette, who had been another Austrian Archduchess. It was of course at the Congress of Vienna, masterminded by the Austrian Minister of State, Prince Metternich, that Europe was reorganised after Napoleon's defeat, in a settlement which lasted until Wilhelm came of age during the First World War.

Given such a history, it is obvious that a homosexual Archduke presents a diplomatic problem of immense difficulty, especially for a country in need of allies. Another problem was that the

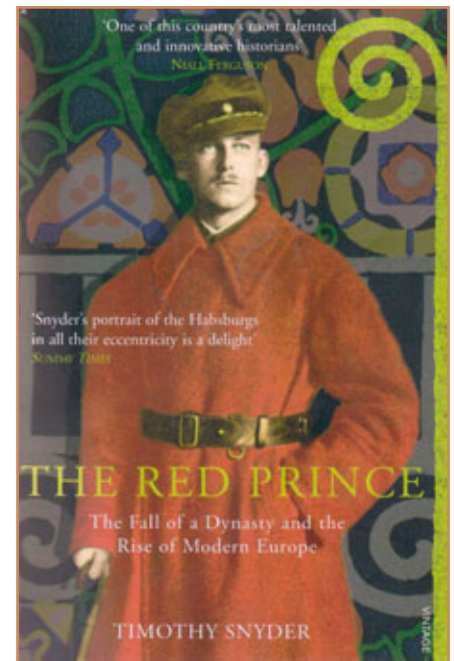
Austro-Hungarian Empire was the most cosmopolitan power in Europe, embracing Germans, Hungarians, Czechs, Poles, Ukrainians, Romanians, Slovenians, Serbs, Croats, Slovaks, Italians and Jews. With the exception of the Jews, most occupied discrete areas, so the pressures of late-nineteenth century nationalism made it likely that an Empire might break up into its constituent national parts.

Wilhelm's father's response to this was to suggest that various members of the Habsburg family should adopt one or other of the nations and become King of that. A Habsburg network would be preserved, if only on a distributed basis. He hoped to become King of Poland. His eldest son, who shared this ambition, married a formidable Swedish aristocrat and became as Polish as any Pole—being subsequently tortured by the Gestapo for his trouble. Wilhelm, for reasons which are not discussed in detail, latched onto the Ukraine.

The Habsburg Empire included the province of Galicia, with its capital Lvov, which is today the westerlimost part of Ukraine. Before the First World War, Galicia had a Polish upper class, Ukrainian peasantry and a large number Jewish traders, lawyers and townsmen. The Poles looked down on the Ukrainians, who did not look up to the Poles and both were extremely anti-Semitic, especially the Poles.

So Wilhelm's romantic embrace of Ukrainian culture when he first visited Galicia at the age of seventeen had an element of family conflict to it. His father and elder brother were "Polish" so he, the less than favoured younger son (who eventually broke completely with his father), would become what the Poles despised: a Ukrainian.

As a junior officer in the Austrian Army during the First World War, Wilhelm fought in the famous Galician campaign in 1916 where many of his troops were Ukrainian. He thought they were excellent soldiers and they returned his respect. He spoke flawless Ukrainian, enjoyed the manly camaraderie of the camp-fire, and wore an embroidered Ukrainian shirt underneath his field-grey battledress. He earned the nick-name Василь Вишиваний (Vasyl Vyshyvanyi) or Embroidered Vasily. The



The Red Prince
Timothy Snyder
Vintage £9.99

Austrian Emperor Karl, who had succeeded the elderly Franz Joseph in 1916, consulted his cousin Wilhelm personally on Ukrainian policy, which became very important after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917.

By the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, in March 1918, the Germans occupied the northern half of Ukraine and the Austrians the southern half. The latter, partly on Wilhelm's advice, adopted a policy that was designed to fulfil Ukrainian aspirations to nationhood, admittedly under Austrian supervision. By contrast, the German aim was only to fill German stomachs with Ukrainian food, requisitioned from the peasantry by local forces under the control of a slightly sinister Ukrainian monarchist called Pavel Skoropadsky.

Wilhelm's dream of greater power, which was shared by Emperor Karl, was destroyed by the German collapse in late 1918. Austria had to withdraw and the Ukraine became a battleground between Red and White Russians, a situation he deplored but could do nothing about. He spent much of the rest of his life engaged in Ukrainian affairs.

Eventually, while living in semi-retirement in Vienna in 1947, Soviet intelligence troops kidnapped him and took him to Kiev where he was tried for anti-Soviet activities under laws which were both retrospective and extra-territorial. He was sentenced to twenty-five years in a forced labour camp, but survived only a few months before dying of tuberculosis. **P**

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Cafe Michelle
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Starbucks on Kamergersky
Starbucks Baltchug
Starbucks Festival
Starbucks Belaya Ploschad
Starbucks MDM
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Starbucks Atrium
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Talk of the Town
Tapa de Comida
Tesoro
Vanilla Sky
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Yapona Mama

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Golden Apple Hotel
East-West
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Marriott Tverskaya
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Maxima Hotels
National
Novotel 1, 2
Proton
Radisson Slavyanskaya
Renaissance
Sheraton Palace
Soyuz
Sretenskaya
Swissotel Krasnye Holmy
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Novinsky Passage
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Russo-British Chamber of Commerce
St. Andrew's Anglican Church
Savant
Schwartzkopf & Henkel
Shishkin Gallery
Sport Line Club
Swiss International Airlines
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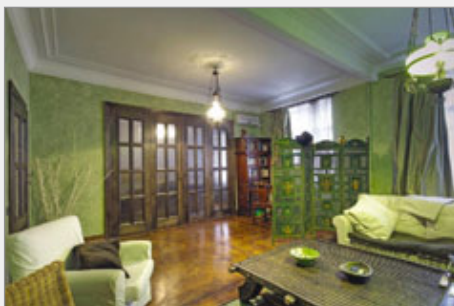
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