





The Moscow Times

SINCE 1992

THEMOSCOWTIMES.COM

June 18-19, 2018



Mexico beat Germany 1-0 on Sunday, a day after a taxi drove into a crowd of pedestrians in central Moscow, injuring two Mexican citizens. The incident did not dampen excitement in the capital.

Terror Attack or Accident?

a crowd of pedestrians in central Moscow, injuring eight, it was back to partying f foreign football fans.

It only took about an hour on Saturday afternoon for the yellow Hyundai, which had swerved onto the pavement earlier on Ulitsa Ilinka, to be towed away, the victims to be rushed to hospital and the street to be reopened to the public. Nothing to see here.

Only a handful of shocked witnesses remained to talk to the media, while rowdy football fans around them seemed blissfully unaware.

"He yelled: 'It wasn't me," said Emile, 30, a Russian wit-

the taxi driver who dashed from ok?" Renee Romero, 40, told his car after hitting the sidewalk. "We're all in shock. Rus sians most of all."

> Among those injured were citizens of Russia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Mexico, the state-funded RIA news agency reported. City health officials on Sunday told media that three people who were still in hospital would be discharged soon.

Although the incident played out next to the Mexico House community center and the Embassy set up an emergency hotline, many fans only found out about the crash later. "Someone wrote to me saying some Mexicans were involved,

people were asking, are you The Moscow Times in Rostovon-Don. "But I hadn't heard anything."

The driver has been identified as a citizen of Kyrgyzstan, a predominantly Muslim country in Central Asia and former-Soviet republic.

Several versions of what happened have been doing the rounds. In one telling, the driver was drunk or lost control behind the wheel. In a video released by the Moscow branch of the Interior Ministry, the driver denied he had been drinking and said he had

See TAXI, Page 3

From Cairo to Moscow on Two Wheels, Mostly

BY EVAN GERSHKOVICH > @EVANGERSHKOVICH



It was raining and unseasonably cold for the middle of June, but Muhammad Nufal was happy to be on Red Square. "You can smell history in the streets," he said.

Nufal, a 24-year-old Egyptian, came to Russia to support his country's national team, which qualified for its first World Cup in 28 years. But unlike his estimated 4,000 countrymen who flew to Russia for the football tournament, Nufal took a more original approach: He came by bicycle.

Over 65 days, Nufal, starting in Cairo in April and ending in Moscow last Sunday, biked through Egypt, Jordan, Bulgaria, Romania, Belarus and Russia. The trip was not without its hiccups. Because of

circumstances outside of his control, Nufal said he had to complete two legs of the journey by plane.

The first flight, he said, was planned. Flying from the Jordanian capital Amman to Sofia in Bulgaria allowed him to bypass the Syrian war. But when

See CYCLIST, Page 4

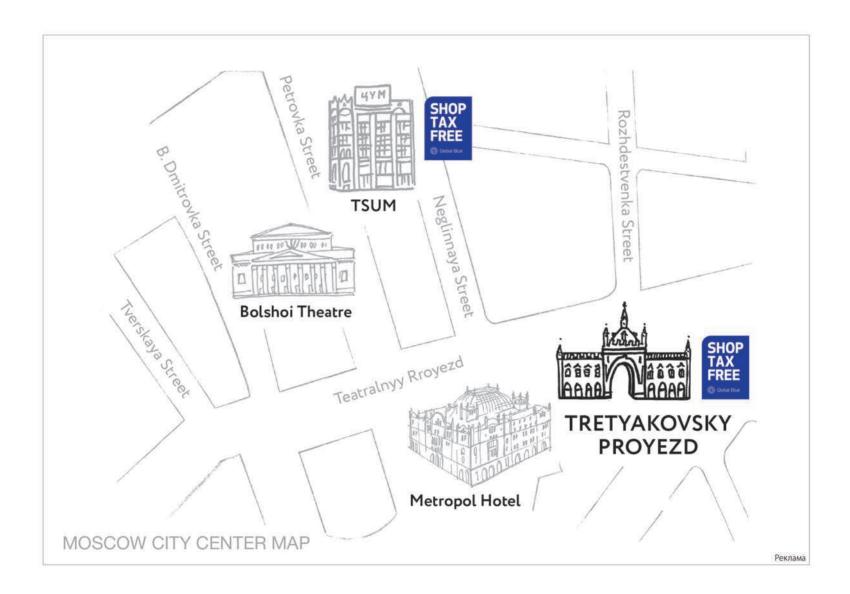




Tretyakovsky Proyezd

The main luxury boutique street in Moscow

DOLCE & GABBANA · VALENTINO · GIORGIO ARMANI · RALPH LAUREN TOM FORD - LORO PIANA - BOTTEGA VENETA - CÉLINE - SAINT LAURENT ALEXANDER MCQUEEN - BRIONI - KITON - ZILLI - ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA MERCURY - CHOPARD - GRAFF - HUBLOT - ROLEX



CAPSULE COLLECTION EXCLUSIVELY FOR MOSCOW



Sweatshirt and backpack Dolce & Gabbana



June 18-19, 2018 RUSSIA NEWS The

Moscow Times 3

Many Rus-

ers are

meet.

forced to

sian pension-

supplement

their income

to make ends

The Kremlin may be

tempted to enforce tighter

foreign fans leave.

security measures even after

Live Longer, Work Longer, Says Russian Government

A long-shelved plan to raise the pension age risks coming up against a wall of protest, as Russians of all ages cling to their Soviet-era social privileges.

Compared to many Western countries, Russians retire early: men at 60 and women at 55. Those who operate heavy machinery or work in difficult conditions qualify for early retirement.

Nevertheless, pension payments are notoriously low in Russia, with the national average at just 14,000 rubles (\$220). Many pensioners supplement their incomes with jobs on the side or rely on support from their families to make ends meet.

Plans to raise the pension age, which was established in 1928, have circulated for years. But they have gathered pace in recent weeks, culminating on Saturday when Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev signed off on a Cabinet proposal to the State Duma.

The new system would see a staggered rise in the pension age starting next year, until reaching 65 for men by 2028 and 63 for women by 2034.

In a note alongside the bill cited by the Interfax news agency, its authors argue the measure is needed to secure pension payments in the long run.

"Russia's population is aging quickly," said Oxana Sinyavskaya, deputy head of the Institute of Social Politics at the Higher School of Economics. "If the pension age isn't increased now, then this will eat into the federal budget."

The authors of the proposal also use gender parity as an argument to narrow the gap between men and women, saying that women's "status" in society has changed, including "the equal division of household duties in families."

That Russians have known for some time what was coming does not make the idea any more popular. A poll by researcher Romir said 92 percent of Russians opposed the proposal. A protest petition on Change.org had gathered a million signatories by Sunday.



Russians' prospects? To "work to death!"

A day earlier, some 300 people attended a protest in Novosibirsk, the local Taiga.info news outlet reported. "We pay taxes, and they turn around and tell us there's no money for us," local activist Viktor Sorokin was cited as saying. Protests have also been planned in other Russian cities.

Unusually, much of the anger is directed at President Vladimir Putin himself, who promised in 2005 during his annual phone-in show that the pension age would not increase as long as he was in power.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has emphasized that the proposal was worked out by Medvedev's government, not the president. But "It's important to realize that [Putin's promise] was made 13 years ago," he said. Russia has changed since then, he added: "No country exists in a vacuum."

Concerned about possible backlash, the presidential administration is closely monitoring the mood in the regions, the Vedomosti business daily reported, citing a source close to the Kremlin.

One possible scenario is that the proposal will be softened at the president's initiative, political scientist Mikhail Vinogradov told The Moscow Times.

"The bigger the gap between what the government and what Peskov say, the higher the chance of protest from the State Duma, trade unions, the church," he said. "Discord would be a signal that the government is not under the president's protection, and you can attack it."

Many have argued the measure was deliberately planned to coincide with the World Cup, while news coverage is focused elsewhere. But, Sinyavskaya said, it is more likely it was done as early as possible into Putin's new term. "Doing it later would be political suicide," she said. "By the next election, the anger will have subsided. That it coincided with the World Cup was just luck."

OPINION

By Mark Galeotti



The World Cup's Dangerous Legacy

driver loses control of his taxi and mounts the pavement, injuring eight people. Is this world news? It is when it's in Moscow during the World Cup. Being in the spotlight, especially where safety issues are concerned, has driven an unprecedented security campaign in Russia, the effects of which will linger long after the closing ceremonies.

According to Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin, the driver fell asleep at the wheel. However, the news that he was from Kyrgyzstan briefly raised the specter of terrorism. This is not the message the Kremlin wants outsiders to hear.

Although the U.S. State Department has played up the terrorist threat, most Russian cities are safe. A massive operation has been under way to ensure security during the tournament.

The police and National Guard have been drafted in to provide extra officers at the World Cup host cities, buttressed by private security and Cossacks. Moscow and other cities have sprouted concrete obstacles around their pedestrianized areas to prevent vehicular terrorism.

Close-circuit cameras, which are already common in Russia, have become increasingly visible. Many are high-resolution cameras connected to state-of-the-art facial recognition software that can flag known terrorists or hooligans.

Much is also happening behind the scenes. For months beforehand, the police and the Federal Security Service (FSB) quietly assembled lists of known hooligans and suspected terrorist sympathizers. Many have been detained, confined to their hometowns or encouraged to leave the country

for the tournament.

The FSB has also been enthusiastically reviving the practice of the "prophylactic chat." Others suspected troublemakers are simply called in for a conversation to let them know the state has its eye on them. Refined by the old KGB under their chief Yury Andropov in the 1970s, this is a surprisingly efficient way of warning off all but the most dedicated or foolhardy.

Similarly, senior figures within the *vorovskoi mir*, or "thieves' world," have been warned that the state would be unhappy if foreign fans were to face serious problems. Earlier in the year, for example, the gang leader known as "Kvezhoyevich," whose group is especially involved in organized pickpocketing rings in Moscow, was arrested and warned off targeting the

Meanwhile, electronic surveillance has also been kicked into high gear. The unique identities of mobile phones are logged as they enter and leave the metro system. Texts, messages and e-mails are intercepted and analyzed by programs looking for keywords, phrases or suspicious correlations. All these have been in place for some time — and are hardly unique to Russia — but reports suggest the net is especially fine and has been cast wide during the World Cup.

Of course, none of this can guarantee security, whether from a determined attacker or, as the taxi incident demonstrated, bad luck. Nonetheless, it does show how serious the Kremlin is about doing everything it can to ensure the tournament runs smoothly.

But this extraordinary level of effort cannot be sustained. Already, cities and regions which have been emptied of their police to secure the tournament are expressing concern about their own crime rates. Likewise, the FSB and other security agencies are working flat out and cannot maintain the same pace forever. Once the World Cup is over, we can expect to see a scaling down of the campaign.

For all that, though, there will be a legacy, and a mixed one for Russia. Extra spending on law enforcement and urban security measures will carry forward and be especially useful for venue cities such as Rostov-on-Don, Volgograd and Yekaterinburg, which have needed something of an assist.

However, if the more intrusive campaign of "prophylactic chats," local confinement and unofficial intimidations are also deemed successful, the temptation will be to adopt them more generally. Russia may gain a better reputation abroad while losing even more of its freedoms at home.

Mark Galeotti is Senior Fellow at the Institute of International Relations Prague and author of "The Vory: Russia's super mafia."

MarkGaleotti

TAXIContinued from Page 1

worked a 20-hour shift on two hours of sleep, seemingly confirming it had been an accident.

The Russian authorities will be keen to downplay fears of terrorism. But concerns remain, fueled by a video of the incident circulating on social media.

"I watched the video attentively and saw he deliberately drove the car into the crowd," tweeted opposition politician Yevgeny Roizman. "I consider it an act of terrorism."

"My first impression was that it was not deliberate. But after I saw the video, I changed my mind," said Anna Castillejos, 29, from Mexico City. "I don't feel unsafe, but it's a little weird."

While it is too early for conclusions, the incident is a reminder of a looming risk, said Nabi Abdullaev, a Control Risks analyst and former chief editor of The Moscow Times

He cited a suicide bombing by another native of Kyrgyzstan last year in St. Petersburg, in which 15 people died.

"We warned about the emergence of a new streak of the terrorist threat," Abdullaev said in a written comment, namely, "the radicalization of young Muslims in Central Asian states who can easily travel to Russian cities and blend in among millions of

labor migrants."

But, he added, "the Russian government continues to invest enormous resources in its security agencies, and there can be no doubt as to its motivation to prevent terrorist attacks during the football tournament."

One fight Russia appears to have mastered hands-down: that of winning hearts and minds. "I've met a lot of Russians and they have explained how their country works," said Sinuhe Garcia, 28. "They're very nice."

Romero, in Rostov-on-Don, echoed the point. "There are a lot of friendly people here." But the food, he says, "is awful. It's truly awful."

4 The Moscow Times WORLD CUP June 18-19, 2018

CYCLIST

Continued from Page 1

the Ukrainian Embassy in Bucharest denied Nufal a visa, he was forced to book a second and last-minute ticket.

"I think it must have been political since a lot of media outlets had reported that I would be making this trip to Russia," he said. (The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry did not respond to a request for comment for this article.)

Indeed, when Nufal arrived for an interview with The Moscow Times, he came off as something of a celebrity. Trailed by an Egyptian news outlet, Egyptian football supporters who were gathering in the square recognized the cyclist and came up to him to take selfies.

Beyond loving cycling and wanting to see his country play in a World Cup — Nufal has tickets to two of Egypt's group stage matches, against Saudi Arabia and Uruguay — he said his trip had a second purpose: To show the Muslim world that Europe can still be welcoming even with the xenophobia that has mushroomed there in recent years.

"We all think there are big problems in eastern Europe and Russia for Arabs and Muslims," Nufal said. "But I didn't encounter anything."

"Though of course I can only speak from personal experience," he added.



After cycling for 65 days, Muhammad Nafal arrived in Moscow as something of a celebrity.

Documenting his trip with GoPro and Osmo cameras, Nufal plans to put together a documentary film when he returns to Cairo. En route to Moscow, he posted photos and videos of his trip on his Facebook page, which boasts nearly 50,000 followers.

If there were any difficulties along the way, Nufal said, the biggest will probably hit home for many in the host country: Russian roads.

"The journey from Smolensk to Moscow was the most difficult part," he said. "The road was very narrow and bumpy in places with trucks sometimes pushing me off the road."

But the roads were not enough to put a damper on Nufal's experience of Russia. He said he had enjoyed his time here, and has especially appreciated his couchsurfing hosts — though, until arriving in Moscow, none were able to communicate with him in English.

And he said he has yet to encounter another Russian stereotype: that Russians never smile. "Everyone here seems to always be smiling," he said. After a moment, he reconsidered. "Maybe I'm lucky because everyone is smiling with all the tourists coming here." (Indeed, Russian state organizations including Russian Railways and the Moscow Metro have reportedly been training their staff to smile more to be welcoming to foreigners.)

In the group stages, Egypt is playing Russia, Saudi Ara-

bia and Uruguay. Many have pointed to its match with the hosts on Tuesday as the group's pivotal meeting. Two countries will advance to the knockout rounds, and with Uruguay considered the clear favorite and Saudi Arabia the likely cellar-dweller, Egypt and Russia are the contenders to come in second place.

Nufal, however, played the diplomat when asked who would advance. "I think both teams have a good chance," he said. "We both have hope."

And if, or likely when, Egypt loses, would Nufal be cycling back to Cairo, or was he all pedaled out? "I'm hoping I'll be able to return in Egypt's private plane," Nufal said. "I also hope that this will be after the final."



Sports Etiquette

President Vladimir Putin wasn't apologizing for Russia's 5-0 victory, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has said

Photos of Putin apparently shrugging towards the Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman were widely interpreted on social media as Putin apologizing for Russia's win.

"It's emotions," Peskov said told Govorit Moskva. "You don't apologize for victory in sport."

Giant Birthday Cake

Muhammad Salah's team lost to Uruguay on Friday, but a group of fans from Chechnya brought a smile to his face with a 100-kilogram cake decorated with a golden boot for his 26th birthday.

Salah smiled and hugged his teammates as they sang "Happy Birthday" in English and Arabic before blowing out the candles and heading to his room.

Forced Optimism

Russia's 5-0 win against Saudi Arabia last week has made some politicians giddy with dreams of future success.

Head of the State Duma's sports committee Mikhail Degtyaryov went as far as suggesting Russia, which ranked 70th at the start of the World Cup, could win the entire tournament.

"After the first goal, it felt as if they got a taste for the game," he told the Interfax news agency. "If they have this attitude until the end, they could even win the tournament."

For the cynics, Russian lawmaker Vitaly Milonov — infamous for being the brain behind



Vitaly Milonov

the so-called gay propaganda bill

— has suggested more draconic
measures

"To mock and to criticize are two different things," Milonov was cited as saying by the Komsomolskaya Pravda tabloid. "Our players have barely run onto the field and already they're being doused with dirt."

Milonov has proposed a fine of 10,000 rubles (\$160) for critics so that naysayers won't have money "for beer or chips."

A word of caution from former Russia coach Anatoly Byshovets, however.

"A reason for the victory could have been Ramadan," he told the Interfax news agency. "It must have impacted the Saudis' preparation."

"A victory over Egypt and a draw with Uruguay will be a good beginning to exiting the group stage."

U.S. Fears World Cup Terrorism

The U.S. State Department warned Americans on Friday that terrorists could target World Cup venues in Russia.

"Large-scale international events such as the World Cup present an attractive target for terrorists," the department said in a travel advisory.

"Although security for the World Cup will be extensive, terrorists may seek to attack event locations such as stadiums and Fan Fest viewing areas, tourist sites, transportation hubs and other public venues," it said.

As with previous advisories, the State Department urged Americans to reconsider travel to Russia in general due to the threat of terrorism, and because of possible harassment and extortion from law enforcement and other officials.

(Reuters).

No Chickens Allowed

Nigerian fans at Saturday's World Cup match against Croatia were missing an important item in their supporter's toolkit: chickens.

Chickens are sometimes seen at soccer matches in Nigeria, where fans paint them in the green and white colors of their national flag. But officials in Kaliningrad said animals would not be allowed in the stadium.

"It was explained to the fans that according to safety regulations, it is not permitted to enter the stadium with live animals," Andrei Yermak, Kaliningrad's minister for culture and tourism, said. "We will of course advise them where to buy a chicken," he told Interfax.

(Reuters)



"Great country, great people.

they love Egyptians. And the organization of the World Cup is amazing. Good job!"

Muhammad from Egypt

They are very

friendly and

WORLD CUP June 18-19, 2018 The Moscow Times



Can Rowdy Football Fans Tame Russia?

s the Russian and Saudi teams warmed up for the opening match of the 2018 World Cup, there was a carnival-like atmosphere outside Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium. Russian and Saudi fans exchanged handshakes and hugs, and Mexican supporters in national costume posed for photos. Groups of smiling Russian volunteers were on hand to offer directions and

assistance. One volunteer's sole function seemed to be to hold up a giant artificial hand with which to offer passing fans high-fives.

Moscow was always going to put on its most welcoming face for the World Cup, a showcase event for President Vladimir Putin's Russia. But amid warnings of racism, hooligan violence and whip-wielding Cossacks, no one really knew exactly what that face

would look like. So far, defying many expectations, it's been dominated by one

Even the country's feared football hooligans have apparently been feeling the love. "I want to shake the hands of fans from all over the world," said Yakov, a Lokomotiv Moscow fan who is one of almost 500 alleged hooligans barred from attending World Cup matches, to The Moscow Times. "I want people to stop thinking of my homeland as an aggressive nation."

Russia's national side, dubbed the country's worst-ever team by state-funded television ahead of the tournament, has also been doing its best to win friends, surprising everyone with a 5-0 win over Saudi Arabia. Russians greeted the victory — the largest in a World Cup opener since 1938 – in remarkably reserved fashion. True, there were some celebrations in central Moscow, but this was nothing like the scale of the impromptu street party after Russia's famous victory over the Netherlands at Euro 2008. Perhaps Russian fans were just too stunned to rejoice properly?

There have been plenty of other surprises. Not least the transformation of Moscow's notoriously no-nonsense police force. As I strolled near Red Square last week, I saw an exuberant group of Uruguayan supporters unfold a large banner reading "Rey de América" (King of America). In an adjacent street, Peruvian fans danced and chanted, oblivious to the curious stares of locals, including smiling police officers. The feel-good factor soared.

Nothing unusual in all that, you might think. Yet amid all the World Cup joy, it's worth noting that anti-Putin activists have been dragged away from these very same spots for staging public gatherings without permission. Others have been arrested for holding up, as a civil liberties experiment, blank pieces of paper to see if they would be arrested. They were.

These are no ordinary times in Moscow. The city has been scrubbed and polished for FIFA's festival of football and state employees have apparently been ordered to be polite and smile at foreign fans. No surprise then that so many people were fooled when Alexei Navalny, the opposition leader, quipped on social media that even the city's jails had been spruced up with painted bars, goalposts in the exercise yards and food "better than in restaurants" – just in case any English fans were locked up. His comments were reported by a number of media outlets before he confessed he'd been joking.

It's not only the authorities in Moscow who are anxious to exploit the World Cup's massive PR potential. Ramzan Kadyrov, the strongman leader of Chechnya, lost no time in posing for photographs with Muhammad Salah, the Liverpool star, when his Egypt side arrived at their training camp in the southern Russian republic. It later emerged that Salah, who is recovering from a shoulder injury, had been given permission to skip Egypt's first training session, but had been woken up at his hotel by Kadyrov who then drove him to the stadium. If Salah didn't know much about Kadyrov, who denies multiple allegations of murder and torture, before the photo, the resulting media storm means he almost certainly does now. And we all know a little bit more about how determined Russia is to use the World Cup to polish its tarnished international image.

Marc Bennetts is a journalist and author of "Football Dynamo: Modern Russia and the People's Game." 🄰 @marcbennetts1



Saturday's match in Yekaterinburg was surprisingly sparse considering the high ticket prices.

Completely Sold Out

Russian fans took to social media on Saturday to demand why whole rows of prime pitch-side seats were empty during the match between Egypt and Uruguay, while locals paid nearly a third of an average monthly salary for a poorer view.

The World Cup has even

transformed Moscow's

police force.

notoriously no-nonsense

The official attendance for Friday's game at Yekaterinburg Arena was just 27,015, according to FIFA, at a stadium which has had its capacity expanded to 33,061.

"FIFA has looked into this and we can confirm that the

matter related to the match was mainly linked to 'no-shows," said a FIFA spokesperson. "There were no problems with FIFA's ticketing operations onsite that would have prevented ticket holders from attending the match and, as already mentioned, 32,278 tickets had been allocated.

Regardless, there was no shortage of scathing comments from locals. One man, Vlad Chekhomov, posted on social media: "My friend was sitting in the top rows of the main stand,

right under the roof, for 12,600 rubles (\$200). He would have been better off outside."

The average monthly salary in Yekaterinburg is about 40,000 rubles, and a typical pension around 12,000.

A Russian fan, Viktor Smirnov, complained on social media he had ended up in the outside stands despite originally buying what he thought was a pitch-side seat, and said the unfilled seats were a scandal "on an international scale."

Beastly Predictions

Who doesn't remember Paul the Octopus who rose to fame after correctly predicting the outcome of the 2010 World Cup?

Not to be outdone, at least 11 Russian animals have been enlisted to pick winners during this summer's tournament, the Interfax news agency reports. After all, it is always wise to get a second, third or even 11th opinion.

The most famous oracle of the tournament is Achilles, a deaf cat from St. Petersburg. Achilles lives in the city's Hermitage Museum and was also enlisted during the Confederations Cup, picking favorites by choosing between two bowls of food, each bearing a team flag.

In Sochi, fans will be watching an otter named Garik, a resident of the Black Sea city's aquarium. For each match, Garik is thrown several balls marked with countries' respective flags. He then chooses a winner. Sochi has also recruited a bunny, Pushok – just in case.

Not a host city, but equally enthusiastic, Irkutsk in Russia's Far East has put forward a raccoon called Nathan. Nathan is not a newbie: In 2015 he was involved in predicting the outcome of the Ice Hockey World Championship.

Some of the more exotic oracles include a tapir named Cleopatra in Nizhny Novgorod's zoo – who, unsurprisingly considering its South American origins, predicted that the winner of the World Cup would be Argentina, with Spain coming in second - hippos Milya and Glyasik in Kaliningrad, a lemur called Spartak in Yekaterinburg, a wolf in Barnaul and reindeer Yasha in Khimki.

But the undisputed winner is Puziryok, a Beluga whale in Anapa, who predicted Russia's win against Saudi Arabia – even when no one else would.



(Reuters) ₹ Achilles the cat is likely the most photogenic of Russia's 11 World Cup oracles.

The Moscow Times IN-DEPTH June 18-19, 2018



Ahead of the World Cup in Russia, police began to crack down on sex workers in well-known locations throughout the 11 host citites.

When Football Meets Human Trafficking

Activists are bracing for an uptick in sex trafficking to Russia during the World Cup

BY EVAN GERSHKOVICH 🔰 @EVANGERSHKOVICH

he women dotting the side of Leningradskoye Shosse, the main artery between Moscow and St. Petersburg, are nicknamed *mayachki*, or "little beacons." Holding flashlights and dressed in neon-yellow vests, they signal to drivers in passing cars.

Behind them, down dirt paths just off the side of the highway, women in skin-tight dresses and stiletto heels wait for clients.

On a Thursday night in late May, the women waiting were on edge. The police had stopped by earlier, and there was a risk that they could return. The *zachistki* — mop-up operations — had been becoming more frequent.

Even though prostitution is illegal in Russia, there are around three million regular sex workers in the country, according to activist group Silver Rose. Until recently, the group says, the police had turned a blind eye to the practice or taken kickbacks.

But with hundreds of thousands of tour-

ists descending on Russia for the World Cup, the authorities are cracking down on anything that could tarnish their prestige project. For sex workers in the 11 World Cup host cities, this means frequent raids on well-known prostitution sites.

Despite the authorities' efforts, though, activists warn that the relaxed visa regime introduced to simplify travel to Russia during the tournament is encouraging illegal trafficking of women. As Yulia Siluyanova of Alternativa, a Moscow-based anti-slavery organization, put it, "The World Cup is a gift for traffickers."

Held captive

On a recent afternoon at Alternativa's offices near the Kremlin, Siluyanova, an endlessly upbeat woman, outlined her concerns to The Moscow Times.

Between taking phone calls and barking orders at her staff, Siluyanova explained that Russia is relaxing its infamously strict visa regime during the World Cup. For ten days on either side of the tournament, which runs from June 14 to July 15, foreigners will be allowed into the country with just a single match ticket.

Siluyanova, who works mostly with Nigerians, says that several thousand are brought into Russia every year. But during last summer's FIFA Confederations Cup tournament, when the new visa system was trialed, Alternativa recorded an uptick in trafficking.



Precious at Alternativa's offices in Moscow

"Half are told that they will be sex workers, the other half that they will be working jobs like babysitting," Siluyanova said, noting that most of the women (and some men) brought to Russia are from West Africa, post-Soviet states and Southeast Asia.

"But neither group knows that when they arrive, their passports will be taken away and they'll have to hand over on average \$50,000 before they get their papers back."

The women are kept in apartments in small groups, activists have reported, allowed to leave only when they are called by clients over the phone or internet. Those who resist are physically and verbally abused and told that their families back home will be hurt. According to Siluyanova, one woman reported that she was kept locked in a bathroom for three days without food or water. Since the beginning of this year, Siluyanova said, Alternativa has helped to free more than 20 Nigerian women brought to Russia during last year's Confederations Cup.

One freed woman, named Precious, told The Moscow Times that she came to Russia in September 2016. A woman she met in the Nigerian capital Lagos told her that in Russia she could earn a college degree while paying off the fees through six months of prostitution.

Having dropped out of college several years earlier to support her single mother and four younger siblings, Precious, now 26, thought she had hit the jackpot. "I was too eager for a quick solution," she said, looking at the floor. "I recognize that now."

Visibly upset, Precious recounted how after touching down in Moscow, the woman took away her passport. Then she brought Precious to an apartment with six other women, where she was told she'd have to earn \$45,000 before her passport would be returned.

Even though she was beaten regularly by the woman who trafficked her, Precious said she

7 June 18-19, 2018 **IN-DEPTH** The Moscow Times

feared her clients more. They often hit her, she said, refused to wear condoms, molested her and, on occasion, took their money back afterwards. Once, she built up the courage to protest. In response, she recalled, "The client stole all my clothes and threw me outside in the middle of

Toothless legislation

Nigerian officials have already expressed concern that traffickers will take advantage of the World Cup and are taking measures to prevent potential victims from leaving Nigeria's borders. Last week, anti-trafficking authorities reported that they rescued 10 Nigerian children from human traffickers who planned to fly them to Russia

Still, a spokesman for the Nigerian Embassy in Russia said that "the onus is on the Russian government because they are the ones who screen the people who come here.'

Russia's Foreign Ministry did not respond to requests for comment for this article. Activists also say that they have had difficulty getting authorities to work with them on the issue.

Veronika Antimonik, programs coordinator of the Moscow-based anti-trafficking SafeHouse Foundation, said that, because Russia lacks a law against human trafficking, there are no government programs directed at the problem. (Although there are two statutes in the Criminal Code, activists say they are toothless.)

Antimonik, who has been running seminars on sex trafficking and exploitation in five of the World Cup host cities ahead of the tournament, said that in Russia, dealing with the issue is generally thornier because of how society views

"Mostly, Russians blame women in these cases - trafficking, prostitution, rape," she said during a seminar in Moscow. "They think these girls know what they're getting into."

Irina Maslova, 54, who founded the Silver Rose group, explained that sex workers are "blamed a priori for any trouble they get into." At turns cheerful, exasperated and angry, Maslova, who has spearheaded the movement to decriminalize prostitution in Russia for the past 15 years, said that women who turn to sex work are the most vulnerable members of Russian society.

"The first thing you have to understand about this country is we do not have a rights-oriented government," Maslova said. Whatever one thinks of prostitution as a profession, Maslova argues, the way the women are treated is a problem that filters up to all levels of society, including law en-

She pointed to a case in 2016 when several

Russians blame women for prostitution and rape. They think they know what they're getting into.

men broke into a brothel and forced 10 sex workers to march nude through the streets to a local police station. Maslova, who advised the women in a court case against the men, says police kept them for more than 36 hours without food, water or clothing. (At the time, local news site Fontanka. ru reported that officers "urgently sought" clothes for the women and one man.)

In addition to society's treatment of the women, Maslova said that because sex work is unregulated, there is a lack of health services for the workers. And because clients cannot be prosecuted for refusing to wear condoms, HIV rates among Russian sex workers are 10 to 14 times higher than for the rest of society, Maslova said. In the government's absence, she added, volunteers serve as sex workers' last resort.

Holding out hope

On Leningradskoye Shosse, accompanied by the sound of jets from the nearby Sheremetyevo Airport landing and taking off, volunteers from the Moscow-based anti-sex exploitation group Nevoli.net pulled up to one of the mayachki. She let them pass down the dirt path behind her.

Between shifts, the sex workers visited the volunteers who had brought them basic necessities: condoms, on-the-spot STD tests and coffee for the long nights. Most were familiar with the volunteers and chatted freely; others spoke tentatively, if at all.

Two of these women stood behind an older one, like children, as they waited for coffee. The elder woman, Nelly, said she was in her late 30s, but wouldn't share the ages of the others, who didn't speak Russian. All three had traveled from Uzbekistan a few weeks earlier to work during the World Cup. "Maybe we'll go home after," Nelly said. "If the work pays well, maybe we'll stay."

Another sex worker, Irina, 28, had been working in the industry ever since she moved to Moscow from the southern city of Tambov, eight years earlier. While she said the work paid adequately, she also said that it came with risks.



Activists noted an uptick in sex trafficking during the Confederations Cup last year.

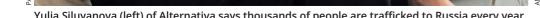
"Sometimes a client will get really drunk and violent," she said. "Often, they'll try to not use condoms." Asked if there was anyone she could call when that happened, Irina said only her friends. And what, if anything, could improve the situation? "It would be better if prostitution was decriminalized," she replied. "It would be

Earlier, Maslova had said that because of the

police raids, many regular sex workers have left or are planning to leave the World Cup host cities to avoid being picked up by the police. Once the tournament is over they will return, and Maslova said she will continue working to protect their rights.

"I'm an old lady," she said. "But I am sure that in my lifetime we will see women treated well in my country."





Yulia Siluyanova (left) of Alternativa says thousands of people are trafficked to Russia every year. Sex workers abused by clients say their work would be made safer if it were decriminalized.

Three Station Square

More Than Just Train Platforms

By Michele A. Berdy m.berdy@themoscowtimes.com | Illustration by Oleg Borodin

Instead of jumping from taxi to train, walk around the amazing Komsomolskaya Ploshchad, featuring some of Moscow's most extraordinary architecture



6. Hotel Leningrad

The tallest landmark of Komsomolskaya Ploshchad is actually just outside the square. Follow the sidewalk under the train overpass to see the Hotel Leningrad, one of what English speakers call the "Seven Sisters" of Stalinist skyscrapers. This one was built after the war, from 1949 to 1954, and is considered rather modest in height (a mere 136 meters) and decoration. But stop to admire the red and white ceramic tiles and marble of the façade and elaborate entrance ornamentation. Inside, this "modest" hotel has a spectacular foyer that somehow mixes baroque, Gothic and ancient Russian styles. Gawp at marble columns, bronze and crystal light fixtures, a palatial electric blue and gold ceiling and a 12-meter bronze and crystal light fixture that floats down five stories in the stairwell. It is impossible to remember when this was a rundown and seedy train station hotel. Now part of the Hilton chain, it has hidden updates (pool, fitness center, meeting rooms). Stop in for a drink; stay for a week.

21/40 Kalanchyovskaya Ulitsa



7. Leningradsky Station

After your sojourn at the Leningrad Hotel, wend your way back to the square, this time on the left side, and head for the Leningradsky Station. This is the oldest train station in the city (completed in 1849) and the station with the most name changes. It was originally called Peterburgsky, since trains departed here for the northern capital. The railway was the pet project of Tsar Nicholas I, and after he died in 1855, the station was renamed in his honor as Nikolayevsky Station. That lasted until 1924 when it was renamed Oktyabrsky. And then in 1937 it became Leningradsky. And so it has remained Leningradsky Station, although the destination is once more St. Petersburg. Designed by Konstantin Ton in a delicate Italianate style with a central clock tower, it is a smaller replica of the Moscow Train Station in St. Petersburg where travelers arrive, and so again — a glance at the station tells you where its trains go. After buying tickets for your next trip, head back to the metro and home.

3 Komsomolskaya Ploshchad



5. Kazansky Station

Walk to the right past the House of Culture to the second of three railway train stations: Kazansky Station, named for one of its most important destinations. Also designed by Shchusev, it was intended to blend in with the workers' club next to it. It is a curious building: long and asymmetrical, with sections in various shapes from squares to triangles to round arches. The corner section is topped with a tower that is very similar to the Soyembika Tower in the Kazan Kremlin—so you just glance at it and know where the trains are going. Some of the ornamentation around the windows and on the façade continues the pseudo-baroque style of the House of Culture next door, while other ornamentation is what Russians perceive as "eastern." Inside, most of the charm has been eschewed for the sake of functionality. Depart here for points east, including into Central Asia.

2 Komsomolskaya Ploshchad

1. Komsomolskaya Metro Station

This walk begins at the Komsomolskaya metro station on the circle line. Built in 1952 from a design by the great architect Alexei Shchusev, the exterior of the station is "Stalinist classical," with an unusually light and slightly whimsical cupola topped by a star – giving the station the perfect blend of straight and curved lines to fit in among its neighbors. Inside, it is yellow and white baroque, with some spectacular mosaics done by Pavel Korin. Inspired by Josef Stalin's speech at the Nov. 7, 1941 parade, the panels are meant to show Russia's historical path to freedom, starting with Alexander Nevsky's battle of 1242 and ending with the victory over Nazi Germany in 1945. Over time, however, various personages had to be removed from the 20th century mosaics as they fell out of favor or were executed. For example, a panel that once depicted Stalin receiving the troops in 1945 was changed to Lenin addressing a meeting on Red Square right after the revolution. In-between the panels are crests, weapons and other fantastic ornamentation. Pick a quiet time to study these magnificent historical and artistic masterpieces.



3

5a Komsomolskaya Ploshchad

2

2. Yaroslavsky Station

Even though the square is called Komsomolskaya, people call it Three Station Square because, well, that's what it is. The station to the left of the metro (with your back to the metro station) is Yaroslavsky Station, a magnificent style moderne building done in 1904 by the architect Fyodor Schechtel. It replaced an earlier, much smaller and more modest station built in 1862. This one is anything but modest with its sharply pitched roofs, asymmetry, turrets, towers, ceramic tiles and other fantastic ornamentation. The curved and jutting forms are very much in the style of international art nouveau. But Russians will tell you the shapes and decorative elements bring to mind the old northern cities of Pskov, Novgorod and Yaroslavl — so the station's appearance tells you where its trains go. Inside it is more functional than ornate, always bustling with more than 600 trains a day. 5 Komsomolskaya Ploshchad





4. Central House of Culture for Railway Workers

To the right is perhaps the most famous, and most beautiful, of the "workers' clubs" that were built after the 1917 Revolution. This one is, appropriately enough, for railway workers. It was built in 1927 by Alexei Shchusev in a curious style: 17th century Moscow Baroque church ornamentation on a 20th century secular building with a vast curving corner. The interior is equally ornate with multi-wood parquet floors, columns, marble and lots of red velvet. It has spaces for all kinds of concerts, meetings, clubs, parties and theatrical productions, with a famous 700-seat theater where a certain red-haired singer named Alla Pugachyova had her solo debut in 1974. Check the schedule for concerts and other events; it is an extraordinary hall and building.

2 Komsomolskaya Ploshchad, Bldg. 1

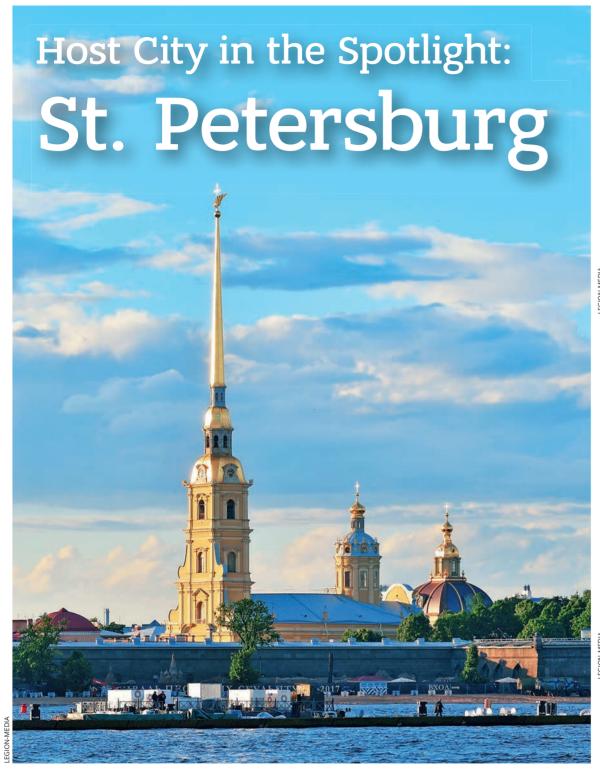
3. Moskovsky Department Store

Make your way across the square and then look to the left. You'll see a big hulk of a department store, called the Moskovsky, with a blinding array of garish signs advertising the stores within. It might not look like much, but pause to look past the signs to the building itself. Constructed from 1979 to 1983 at the very end of the Soviet period, it has the boxy "modern" shape of the era. But notice the straight columns and arches? The architects created a kind of modern version of traditional Russian shopping arcades. The name on top is written in the 1980s version of edgy sign lettering. As much a representation of its time as the other buildings on the square, today it is a classic Moscow department store that carries everything from soap to furniture. 6 Komsomolskaya Ploshchad, Bldg.





TRAVEL 10 The Moscow Times June 18-19, 2018



The northern and cultural capital of Russia, St. Petersburg is entirely unique, a beautiful and soulful city that will thrill World Cup visitors

hile it might not be obvious from looking at the finished product, the brand-new St. Petersburg Stadium was, in many ways, a disaster. It ran more than five times over budget and years behind schedule. At a rumored cost of \$1.5 billion, it is likely the most expensive football

Nevertheless, the 2017 Confederations Cup passed without any major problems, and now visitors will be able to enjoy the admittedly beautiful stadium. Zenit fans have certainly learned to love their new home since 2017, when it was leased to the team for the next 49 years at the cost of one ruble (less than two cents)

The structure itself is a marvel. It was designed by the late Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa and is affectionately called the "spaceship." Indeed, this 67,000-seat arena looks ready to rocket off into space. And it is just the newest addition to a city that is - by Russian standards - quite new itself, though recognized internationally as among the most beautiful cities in the

St. Petersburg was founded in 1703 by Pe-

ter the Great. Its beginnings were humble: only the Peter and Paul Fortress on the swampy land of Zavachy (Hare) Island near the mouth of the Neva River. The tsar himself helped to build the

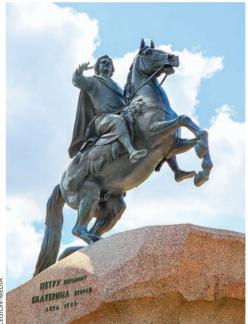
As any Russian textbook would have you know, Peter the Great wanted to "hack a window to Europe," which meant not just a port and a navy on the Baltic Sea, but also a city that looked an standards. The area around St. Petersburg was previously known as Ingria or Ingermanland and was largely populated by Finns.

There was never an official decree about moving the capital to St. Petersburg, but by 1713 the court settled there and Peter himself started spending all of his time in the new city. Building a new capital turned out to be the most costly of Peter the Great's many initiatives. Between 20,000 and 40,000 people worked on the construction of the city, and many of them died there. Peter called St. Petersburg a "paradise," but for many it became a cemetery.

A number of people were forced to move to St. Petersburg as each Russian province was required to supply future residents for the new city. By 1725 the population reached 40,000, which



The State Hermitage exemplifies St. Petersburg's luxurious royal history.



made St. Petersburg the second-largest city in the country.

In the late 1720s and under Peter II, Peter the Great's grandson, the court moved back to Moscow. But the teenage tsar died at the age of 14. By the time new empress Anna Ioannovna decided to move the capital back to St. Petersburg, the main thoroughfare, Nevsky Prospekt, was already overgrown with grass.

During the reign of Catherine the Great, who famously said "I do not like Moscow at all, but I do not have any prejudice against Petersburg," St. Petersburg's population grew to 160,000. More palaces were built in the city and its suburbs, and the empress started an art collection,

which would later turn into the Hermitage Museum.

Under Catherine the Great, St. Petersburg's embankments were all clad in granite, although this unfortunately did not prevent regular flooding. In 1824 St. Petersburg suffered an enormous flood, depicted in the well-known poem "The Bronze Horseman" by Alexander Pushkin

St. Petersburg saw its fair share of revolutions, starting with the failed Decembrist revolt in 1825 and ending with the February and October revolutions of 1917, the first of which overthrew the monarchy while the second handed power over to the Bolsheviks.

St. Petersburg enjoyed the status of capital for a little over 200 years. In 1918, Vladimir Lenin moved the capital back to

Moscow. After his death in 1924, the city was renamed Leningrad.

During World War II, Leningrad withstood a 900-day Nazi blockade, which decimated the city's population and greatly damaged the buildings and infrastructure. Leningrad managed to recover and rebuild quickly and became unofficially known as "the northern capital" or "the cultural capital" of the U.S.S.R.

It went back to being St. Petersburg after the Soviet Union's collapse. President Vladimir Putin hails from St. Petersburg and pays special attention to his hometown. The city got a complete facelift for its 300th anniversary in 2003 and its many mansions and palaces are constantly being restored. St. Petersburg today spans 44 islands and is connected by over 300 bridges. With a population of over 5 million people, it remains the second-largest city in Russia.

HOST TO: June 26 June 15 **MOROCCO NIGERIA ARGENTINA** July 3 **ROUND OF 16 RUSSIA** July 10 **SEMIFINAL** June 22 July 14 3rd PLACE **BRAZIL**

June 18-19, 2018 DRINKS & BITES The Moscow Times 11

Russian Cuisine: An Evolving Story of Tastes, Techniques and Traditions

By Jennifer Eremeeva | 🔰 @jweremeeva

ussian cuisine defies pigeonholing. Is it the unchanging diet of the peasants: cabbage soup and kasha? Or is it the mountains of caviar and ice-cold vodka served in the marble palaces of the tsars? Where does the ascetic simplicity of the Soviet diet fit in, and how can the vibrant culinary renaissance in today's Russia be explained?

The truth, of course, is that Russian cuisine has been formed over hundreds of years by factors often more intangible than practical, in a landmass that spans vastly diverse agricultural, climatic and cultural regions. History and politics, too, have played their part. The result is an evolving story of techniques, tastes and traditions.

Modern methods of refrigeration and food preservation were introduced to Russia in the first half of the 20th century and made it possible to defy climate, the primary influence on pre-revolutionary cuisine. The short, intense summers and long cold winters of this overwhelmingly agricultural society dictated the staples of the diet: root vegetables, which could be kept throughout the winter, grains, pulses, salted and smoked meat and fish from Russia's abundant rivers and forests, and all manner of preserved and pickled fruits and vegetables.

Centuries of contrasting seasons fostered a "feast or famine" mentality that is still extant to-day. Relishing a seasonal glut is a firmly ingrained characteristic. The Orthodox Church shaped its liturgical traditions to the contours of the agricultural cycle. Great Lent, which proceeds Easter, is the handiest example; observant Christians forego dairy, meat, fish, eggs, oil and alcohol during a 40-day period. During the pre-revolutionary era, this period coincided with dwindling winter stores and the annual dearth of fresh meat and dairy.

The food the peasants consumed differed little from that of their boyar masters until Peter the Great ascended the throne and, in 1703, founded the new Russian capital of St. Petersburg. Each elegant St. Petersburg mansion boasted a French



Harsh climates fostered a reliance on root vegetables and preserving fruits and vegetables.

for Russia today, these innovations never entirely replaced traditional Russian cooking, which was handed down intact through the generations by dedicated home cooks.

The fall of the Berlin Wall ignited a culinary renaissance which continues today. Russians began to travel more outside their own country in the 1990s, developing a taste for foreign cuisines and flavors. Then came a heightened appreciation for organic food, and an exciting locavore movement developed. Small organic food cooperatives and companies such as LavkaLavka, Farmers' Bazaar and Bio Market led the way in reintroducing traditional Russian food to an appreciative domestic audience.

The resulting federal cuisine fuses all of the traditions of its predecessors: the hearty low and slow braises of traditional Russian peasant fare, the imported French, Italian and Belgian flavors of the complex imperial cuisine and the comfort food of the more pragmatic Soviet" cuisine. Mod-

ern Moscow chefs have reintroduced updated versions of Russia's time-honored pickles, preserves, offal, stews, marinated and salted fish, and endless riffs on Russia's delectable dairy using modern methods of preparation and innovative flavor pairings such as horseradish-spiked berry syrup or caraway-seed infused egg white foam.

Russia's food sector continues to innovate, despite sanctions and a flat economy. Food markets such as Danilovsky and Dorogomilovsky showcase the growing number of local artisan cheese makers, organic Angus beef farmers and craft beer brewers. The café and food truck scenes continue to develop alongside fine dining, making Russia a veritable smorgasbord for devoted foodies.

Jennifer Eremeeva is an American expatriate who writes about Russian food, travel, history and culture.

or Belgian chef, who introduced Western cooking methods and ingredients and left a legacy of the elegant dishes of "imperial cuisine" we still enjoy today: Beef Stroganoff, Veal Orloff and Hussar-style meat.

The pragmatic Soviet canteen

Assuming power in 1917, the Bolsheviks set out to usher in an entirely new collective and communal way of life. Food was at a premium during the hectic days of the Civil War, and by placing it in workplace canteens, the authorities hoped to chip away at the integrity of the family unit. These efforts were largely unsuccessful but industrial innovations such as canned food, refrigeration and chemical additives changed the way Russians cooked and ate. Paging through the seminal cookbook of the Soviet era, "The Encyclopedia of Tasty and Healthy Food," it is clear that the complicated imperial dishes gave way to more basic canned ingredients and simple cooking methods. Happily

RECOMMENDED



SibirSibir

A transplant to Moscow from Novosibirsk, Sibir-Sibir specializes in traditional and contemporary Siberian cuisine. For its menu, the restaurant delved into the culinary archives and the depths of the Siberian taiga, discovering hundred-year-old methods of cooking that had been forgotten. The ingredients are just as unusual, even sending Russians to their smartphones to Google muksun, capercaillie and agaric. You'll enjoy salted fish, Siberian dumplings and pine-cone jams. Don't miss the wide selection of infused vodkas. 8 Ulitsa Smolenskaya. Metro Smolenskaya. sibirsibir.ru



Mixing pre-revolutionary aesthetics with a hint of steampunk, this restaurant will make you feel like you've stepped back 100 years in time. In fact, it mimics some of Moscow's great restaurants from the turn of the century—in style as well as in its menu. Here you can dine like Tolstoy's heroes on caviar and *blini*, Beef Stroganoff and *borshch*, as well as a number of creative meat and fish dishes, all inspired by classic Russian recipes.

2/1 Kutuzovsky Prospekt, Bldg. 6. Metro Kievskaya. matryoshka-rest.ru



Voskhod

A step into the retro-future, Voskhod is a new restaurant by one of Moscow's most prominent restaurateurs, Alexander Rappoport. Located in the newly built Zaryadye Park, Voskhod focuses on dishes from all fifteen former Soviet Union republics. Its interior looks like a Soviet-made spaceship with great views of the Moscow River. We recommend the Azeri homemade pasta or trout from Lake Sevan in Armenia, all while listening to a live band playing retro music.

6 Ulitsa Varvarka. Metro Kitai-Gorod, Okhotny

voshodrest.ru



Grand Café Dr. Zhivago

The name is misleading because this place has little or nothing to do with the novel. Still, it is one of Moscow's trendiest restaurants. Located in the Hotel National with its huge open windows looking onto the Kremlin, it's difficult to beat. The menu selection is rich, featuring traditional Russian gourmet dishes with a contemporary flair, including cold smoked fish, different types of caviar, dumplings with fish, crab or duck and lavish soups and salads. Dr. Zhivago is a gourmand's delight and very reasonably priced. 15/1 Mokhovaya Ulitsa. Metro Okhotny Ryad. drzhivago.ru/en/

12 The Moscow Times OUT & ABOUT June 18-19, 2018



A few hours north of Moscow, tours include visits to abandoned sites and to a winery in Vesyegonsk.

Unusual Tours and New Perspectives

By Guy Archer

Travel guides offer imaginative packages and fresh ways to see Russia

ollapsing churches, forgotten railway tracks overgrown with grass, abandoned factories and warehouses, monstrous and dilapidated Soviet apartment blocks, derelict ruins — all are part of a not-so-distant past that many Russians are happy to forget. These things are ugly, the thinking goes, and maybe even a bit unsettling and haunting. They're hardly the stuff for tours and excursions.

Fortunately, there has been a colossal shift among many young Russians — and certainly a new generation of Muscovites — over the last decade in how they view their country's architectural and cultural heritage. Instead of viewing these things as relics of a past that they would just as soon forget, they see a haunting beauty in them, as well as mystery. There are stories in these buildings and among these abandoned railway tracks — rich stories about

how people lived and worked in Russia's past.

Three years ago, Mikhail Konchits initiated the Russian Heritage Railways program with some friends through a successful crowdfunding campaign. The company now offers highly original tours and tour packages around Moscow and throughout Russia. Many of the tours involve riding on old trains or following old train routes, but they all involve a unique perspective on Russia's past.

For example, Russian Heritage Railways regularly organizes tours of the industrial Elektrozavodskaya line, a series of abandoned tracks in northeast Moscow — a far cry from Red Square. The group spends a few hours walking along the tracks, admiring the beauty of the arching trees that form a tunnel over the tracks. They discuss the history of this line of industrial railway and what it meant to the life of the city. They look at nearby factories, some still functioning and some not. They take in the rich and intricate mix of natural and industrial beauty.

Konchits, a former student of geography, was drawn to the old railway lines and lamented that they were not preserved for history as in other European countries. In fact, they were in danger of being pulled up. "I wanted to raise the interest of the people here and to save the tracks from being scrapped," he said. He marveled at the railways and the stations from the late 19th century and early 20th century. "They keep their atmosphere from that era. There's no interest in them because nobody knows about them."

In its year-and-a-half of full operation, Russian Heritage Railways has enjoyed growing interest and participation. The scope of its excursions has broadened while trying to keep railways as a central focus. There are unusual tours of industrial Moscow on 40-year-old buses. You can visit Soviet cookie or perfume factories, for example. There are also longer trips that take several days. You can go the Voronezh region to enjoy the nature along its rail lines and visit a business that makes Russia's traditional







Groups can travel along railways in the Tver region (right) and in the Russian Caucasus (below).



felt boots. Or you can spend a few days visiting towns and villages in the Kostroma area that are undergoing unique revivals, such as Astashovo, Chukhloma, Soligalich and Galich. Or you can go about two hours north of Moscow and explore the region's gorgeous wooden houses, the solitary belfry of Kalyazin, Kashin, Bezhetsk and an old winery in Vesyegonsk.

Constructivism and preservation

Only a little over a decade ago, Moscow's architectural preservationists were in a near state of disrepair. City Hall was overtly contemptuous of such efforts, and the concept of "preservation" among city officials was basically tearing down an old building and replacing it with a replica. Moreover, Muscovites seemed generally disinterested in the subject. Even the decaying constructivist masterpiece Narkomfin (completed in 1930) sat abandoned and rotting, apparently moribund like so many great Moscow buildings. City Hall joked that putting up a huge shopping mall beside it shielded residents from seeing the

Because of the new generation of Muscovites deeply interested in the city's constructivist past, however, Narkomfin is now well-known and celebrated - and, most importantly, in the process of massive renovations.

Four years ago, a young engineer, Airat Bagautdinov, decided to mesh his love of research and history with his professional interests. This meant leading a new kind of tour through Moscow. He founded a tour group called Moscow Through an Engineer's

"I was figuring out what was going to be the most interesting subject for me," he said. "I have a degree in civil engineering. I told myself, why don't you do the history of civil engineering and the history of structural engineering in Moscow?"

He began offering tours of Narkomfin and other monuments of Russian avant-garde architecture and Soviet utopian buildings. He focused on how the buildings were constructed, offering their history in the context of engineering. The organization now offers guided

tours with special virtual reality glasses.

As the Engineer's Eyes tours grew more popular, Bagautdinov branched out into English-language tours and co-founded Archigeek. Archigeek offers a variety of tours in and around Moscow by foot or bus or even bicycle. More traditional tours are available – the Kremlin, Red Square, the metros — but it also offers more unusual ones highlighting Moscow's avant-garde and art nouveau: tours of Narkomfin, VDNKh, the Metropol Hotel and the Pertsova House, for example. One tour highlights the work of the legendary Russian engineer Vladimir Shukhov (1853-1939), whose pioneering advances assisted the constructions of the Melnikov House. GUM and the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts.

Stalinist architecture has very visibly left its mark on the city. The era's skyscrapers are internationally recognized symbols of Moscow, subsequent only to the Kremlin and St. Basil's. But the stories behind their constructions are incredible, and a tour of these skyscrapers is well worth the time. Tours that focus on Stalin-era buildings include looks at the Foreign Ministry, Tverskaya Ulitsa, Moscow City Hall, the Crimean Bridge, Gorky Park, the Vorobyovy







Tour groups study Shukhov's engineering (top) and details of Moscow art nouveau (bottom).

Gory Panorama and Moscow State University.

Archigeek also offers trips outside of Moscow. Groups can enjoy the "dacha experience" or a trip to the Pines, a sanatorium built in 1934 in the avant-garde style. There are excursions to the Shukhov Water Tower in Polibino, built in 1927 and the world's first hyperboloid structure - you will need an engineer to tell you what that means. (You can even climb to the top.)

Part of Bagautdinov's mission is to develop wider Russian and international appreciation for a more diverse scope of the city's rich architectural heritage. For those who want to see more of the variety of this heritage, he recommends

visiting the Ivanovskaya Hill and Khitrovka area near the Kitai-Gorod metro, or the Zamoskvorechye neighborhood and the area around Patriarchs' Ponds.

Russian Heritage Railways rusbestrailways.ru Moscow Through the Engineer's Eyes engineer-history.ru Archigeek archigeek.ru

Guy Archer is a co-founder of the Moscow Architecture Preservation Society (MAPS).





14 The Moscow Times ON THE PAGE June 18-19, 2018

Book Prize Winner Announced

By Michele Berdy | > @MicheleBerdy

Pushkin House gives top honor to book on Leningrad Siege

he sixth annual Pushkin House
Book Prize winner was announced
in early June at a standing-room-only awards ceremony in London.
The £5,000 prize for the best English-language non-fiction book
published in 2017 about Russia was given to "The
War Within: Diaries from the Siege of Leningrad"
(Harvard University Press), written by Alexis Peri,
assistant professor of history at Boston University. A second book, "Other Russias" (Penguin)
written and illustrated by Victoria Lomasko and
translated by Thomas Campbell, was given a special commendation and an award of £2,000.

The prizes were awarded by a jury of five distinguished readers and writers - by tradition, four native English speakers and one English-speaking Russian citizen. This year's panel of judges was chaired by former deputy prime minister Sir Nick Clegg and included Rosalind Blakesley, head of the department of the History of Art at Cambridge University and winner of last year's prize; Oleg Budnitsky, professor at the National Research University Higher School of Economics in Moscow; Dervla Murphy, celebrated author of travel books; and John Thornhill, innovation editor of Financial Times. In the spring the jury narrowed the first list of more than 70 books down to six volumes. It was a diverse set of books varying in length from under 200 pages to more than 1,100, and in genre from classic biography to a collection of letters and drawings sent from the gulag.

Witnesses to history

Speaking on behalf of the jury and Pushkin House, Clegg called "The War Within" a "remarkable book. To have unearthed such searing, and hitherto unpublished, testimonies of the agony of the Leningrad Siege is achievement enough ... The book offers a genuinely new way of looking at, and understanding, a pivotal moment of Russian modern history."

"The War Within" began as a different book altogether. Peri told The Moscow Times that she had been doing research in St. Petersburg on the Leningrad Siege, the 900-day Nazi blockade of the city that resulted in the deaths of 1.5 million people.

Peri had begun recording oral histories of survivors and their children, but soon learned from librarians, archivists, scholars and families about unpublished diaries. They were held in public libraries, small archives and, in some cases, descendants' homes. "The biggest tip I got was to look in the former party archive, now the Central State Archive of Historical-Political Documents in St. Petersburg," Peri said. "I learned that there had been a campaign coming from the local Leningrad party organization to encourage Leningraders to keep diaries during the siege."

In the end, she found 125 diaries written by a diverse group of chroniclers. Although they varied significantly in age, education and profession, they were united, Peri found, in their attempts to come to "intellectual grips with the siege and in where they looked for touchstones to make sense of their circumstances."

"The War Within" brings new dimensions to what seemed to be a thoroughly studied history. "What is well known about the siege is all of the hardships, the extreme hunger, the starvation, the cold, the bombardment," Peri said. "I wanted to add to that a discussion of how these devastating circumstances became a source of creativity and discovery, and sparked extraordinary insights not just about being a Soviet citizen or a Leningrader, but about being a human being and the human condition more generally."



Alexis Peri's award-winning book gives a human face to witnesses of the Leningrad Siege.

Peri finished the book with a sense of "awe, tremendous respect for the dignity, humanity and insight of these diarists ... staggered by their heroic resilience, their humanity and their courage to record such personal and difficult experiences"

A witness with sketches

The second book honored this year is also about the human condition, but in contemporary Russia. "Other Russias" was given a special commendation by the judges, who cited not only its innovative form, but also its accessibility to the general reader. "Viktoria Lomasko's powerful use of words and sketches provides an unvarnished insight into the life of ordinary Russians living in such an extraordinary country," Clegg said.

"Other Russias" is a new genre. Author and artist Lomasko told The Moscow Times that she doesn't work in the genre of "documentary comics or graphic novellas, but in the genre of graphic reporting. It is a matter of principle for me not to

draw at home from a photo or sketch, but to immediately make a finished drawing on site."

Her reports have the good fortune of being translated by Thomas Campbell, who knows both Lomasko and the varied "Russias" she draws and writes about. These reports show the lives of hipsters and religious zealots, skinheads and intellectuals, resigned middle-aged women and priests and dozens of other citizens of urban and rural Russia.

While only in its sixth year, the prize is becoming one of the organization's most popular and important events. Clementine Cecil, the executive director of Pushkin House, told The Moscow Times that the competition "demonstrates to both Russia and the West the sheer extent of English-language scholarship on Russia, and the extent of serious, intelligent and balanced discussion of Russia in the English-speaking world." In addition to supporting scholars, it "aims to bring about an increased exchange in writing about Russia, more mutual recognition and interaction,



The Moscow Times

June 18-19, 2018

Founder and publisher: TMT LLC

Founder's, publisher's and editorial address

39 Leningradsky Prospekt, Bldg. 80, BC Sky Light, Moscow, 125167 Tel. +7 (495) 139-2556 themoscowtimes com

The views expressed in the opinion columns do not necessarily reflect the position of The Moscow Times.

Issue produced by Eva Hartog, Jonathan Brown, Guy Archer, Daniel Kozin, Michel Berdy, Igor Grishin, Emma Friedlander, Anna Savchenko.

ADVERTISING

Irina Buryakova irinabur@korsamedia.ru

Head of hotels, restaurants, clubs, medical centers, education categories
Tatyana Nosova
t.nosova@themoscowtimes.com

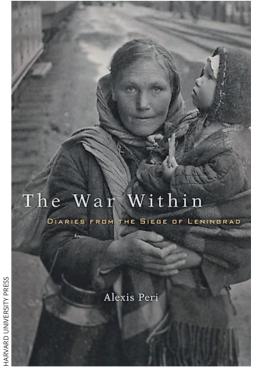
Advertising sales manager Kamilla Magomedova k.magomedova@themoscowtimes.com

Любое воспроизведение материалов или их фрагментов на любом языке возможно только с письменного разрешения редакции.

Заказ № 181202

— Тираж 50 000

Отпечатано в ООО «Первый полиграфический комбинат», 143405, Московская область, Красногорский район, п/о «Красногорск-5», Ильинское шоссе, 4 км



including translations into both Russian and English," she said.

Translators and readers will be busy. In addition to the winning books, there are four other worthy contenders: "Armageddon and Paranoia: The Nuclear Confrontation" by Rodric Braithwaite (Profile Books); "Stalin's Meteorologist: One Man's Untold Story of Love, Life, and Death" by Olivier Rolin (Penguin) translated from the French by Ros Schwartz; "The House of Government: A Saga of the Russian Revolution" by Yuri Slezkine (Princeton University Press); and "Gorbachev: His Life and Times" by William Taubman (Simon & Schuster).

June 18-19, 2018 WHAT'S ON The ⊕ Moscow Times 15

Test of Strength

Until Sept. 9

"Test of Strength" is the first "Resident" project at VDNKh, during which various museums present parts of their collections. Located at the Rabochy i Kolkhoznitsa Pavilion—itself an extraordinary monument with the giant "Worker and Collective Farm Girl" by sculptor Vera Mukhina—"Test of Strength" brings to Moscow some of the masterpieces from the collection of the Yekaterinburg Museum of Fine Arts. Yekaterinburg developed as the industrial powerhouse of the Urals, and many local artists depicted everyday life at the steel mills and factories. There are also paintings by such renowned artists as Yury Pimenov and Alexander Labas, as well as works from the Yekaterinburg non-conformist scene of the 1970s and 80s, including some by Misha Brusilovsky. There's also a section devoted to the famous Nevyansk icons, produced by "old believers," an ancient branch of the Russian Orthodox Church. The courtyard hall houses a replica of the elaborate "Kasli" Iron Pavilion, which won an award at the Paris Expo in 1900.

The Rabochy i Kolkhoznitsa Pavilion.

123B Propekt Mira. Metro VDNKh. vdnh.ru



Theater Little Tragedies

June 18-19

Gogol Center's Kirill Serebrennikov is still under house arrest, while his latest production "Little Tragedies" is back on stage. Based on four short dramas in verse by Alexander Pushkin, "Little Tragedies" stays true to the words of the classic while updating and sometimes revolutionizing the meaning. Thus, Baron's son Alber takes part in motorcycle competitions instead of knight tournaments, while Don Guan (as Pushkin called Don Juan) reminisces about his trysts with the help of a tape recorder. The production features music by Husky, one of today's most popular rappers in Russia.

Gogol Center

8 Ulitsa Kazakova. Metro Kurskaya. en.gogolcenter.com



Exhibition Impressionism in the Avant-Garde

Until Sept. 19

The Museum of Russian Impressionism just launched another potential blockbuster exhibition on the heels of "The Wives," a highly successful exhibition about the wives of the greatest Russian painters of the 20th century. The new exhibition's title is a bit misleading: You won't actually see avant-garde works here, except for reproductions. What you will find are early paintings by Mikhail Larionov, Kazimir

Malevich, Natalia Goncharova, Aristarkh Lentulov, Olga Rozanova and many others before they developed a style that became known as Russian avant-garde.

The Museum of Russian Impressionism

15 Leningradsky Prospekt, Bldg. 11. Metro Belorusskaya. rusimp.su



Theater Hypnosis

June 18-19

Praktika, one of Moscow's most experimental theaters, presents another production by Oleg Glushkov, a choreographer turned avant-garde director. The performance is hypnotic, resembling a vivid dream or a hallucinatory trip. There's no plot and practically no words. The props transform into something entirely different all the time. The wallpaper becomes a podium, which in turn becomes a canvas for a painting. Vasily Mirolyubov's soundtrack can be more aptly described as sound art, except for when actors join together in singing a Nirvana song to an accordion's accompaniment.

30 Bolshoi Kozikhinsky Pereulok. Metro

Mayakovskaya. praktikatheatre.ru



MOSCOW LIFEHACK

Can I Drink Alcohol in Public On Moscow Streets and in Parks?

You could, but it might not be your wisest decision. Although it's relatively common to see people enjoying a cold one in a park, according to the law, it's a big no-no.

Currently, drinking in places "prohibited by federal law" carries a fine. Places prohibited by law include courtyards and the stairwells of apartment buildings, along with playgrounds and public parks.

As for trains, don't let Venedikt Yerofeyev's

"Moscow-Petushki" fool you. While philosophizing on trains is still allowed, drinking certainly isn't. That goes for the metro, too, if you're a nighttime reveler.

And note that since March 2013 the sale of alcohol in stores between 11 p.m. and 8 a.m. is prohibited throughout Russia. Buy yourself some juice instead and save yourself some trouble, and the hangover. Or don't. Just keep it off the streets.



TSUM DEPARTMENT STORE LUXURY SHOPPING IN MOSCOW NEXT TO THE BOLSHOI THEATRE

BEST CHOICE BEST PRICES





Moscow • 2 Petrovka St.

