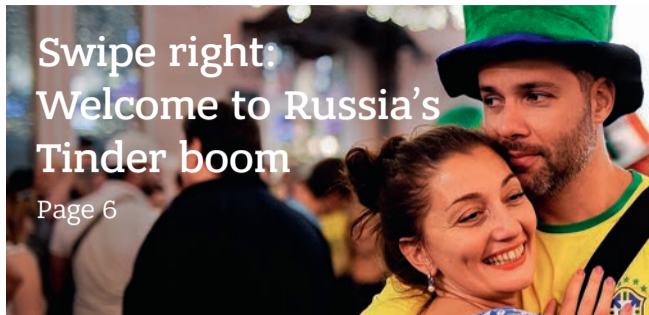


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Swipe right: Welcome to Russia's Tinder boom
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The Moscow Times

SINCE 1992

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JULY 11 – 12, 2018

Conspiracy Cup



Page 6

‘Smelling Salts Are Legal’

Medical staff with Russia's national team have denied allegations that the country's players took substances to increase their fitness levels during the World Cup.

After Russia's loss to Croatia on Saturday, Germany's Bild tabloid published an article alleging that the team had inhaled smelling salts in the dugout of Sochi's Fisht Stadium during the game. The ammonia inhalants, which are not illegal, could have helped the Russian players increase their "respiratory stimulation" and "improve oxygen supply," Bild reported.

The Russia team's head doctor, Eduard Bezuglov, told the Sport-Express newspaper

that the players had used the ammonia-based inhalants "to perk up."

He added that the mixture has been used for decades by "thousands of athletes" around the world and could be purchased at pharmacies.

Pualino Granero, a fitness coach for Russia's team, said the allegations "could only have been thought up by an idiot."

"Ammonia is not on the list of banned substances," he was cited as saying by Marca.

Russia's surprising run into the quarterfinals sparked the allegations. Russian players showed impressive physical stamina, with midfielder Roman Zobnin having covered the

greatest distance in the tournament — 63 kilometers.

"Extraordinary performances demand additional tests," the head of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency said last month, while a Saudi newspaper alleged doping after their country's shock 5-0 defeat to the hosts.

Meanwhile, Bild said in its report that "it is absurd that the Russians pretend that [smelling salts] are as common as shampooing while showering," pointing to Russia's history of doping.

After the Sochi Winter Olympics, more than a dozen Russian athletes were stripped of medals over an alleged state-sponsored doping program.

Kremlin Says Mafia Comparison ‘Russophobic’

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Tuesday said he found a U.S. senator's statement comparing the Russian leadership to the mafia "difficult to understand."

Senator John Kennedy traveled to Moscow as part of a congressional delegation earlier this month. The group met with high-ranking Russian officials and reportedly discussed the conflict in Syria, Ukraine and alleged elections meddling.

In comments to the press, Kennedy described Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov as "a bully."

"We didn't call each other an 'ignorant s-l-t' or anything, but we exchanged words," he was cited as saying by the Associated Press. "There is no political philosophy in Russia. It's sort of like saying, what's the political philosophy of the mafia?"


In a response to the comments on Tuesday,


Peskov said "the American political establishment is a) full of stereotypes b) under huge Russophobic pressure," Interfax reported.

The harsh words come a week before U.S. President Donald Trump is set to meet President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki on July 16.

Asked by White House reporters to say whether Russia was a friend or foe, Trump responded he couldn't say. "As far as I'm concerned, a competitor," he said.

Wednesday  25°C

Thursday  26°C

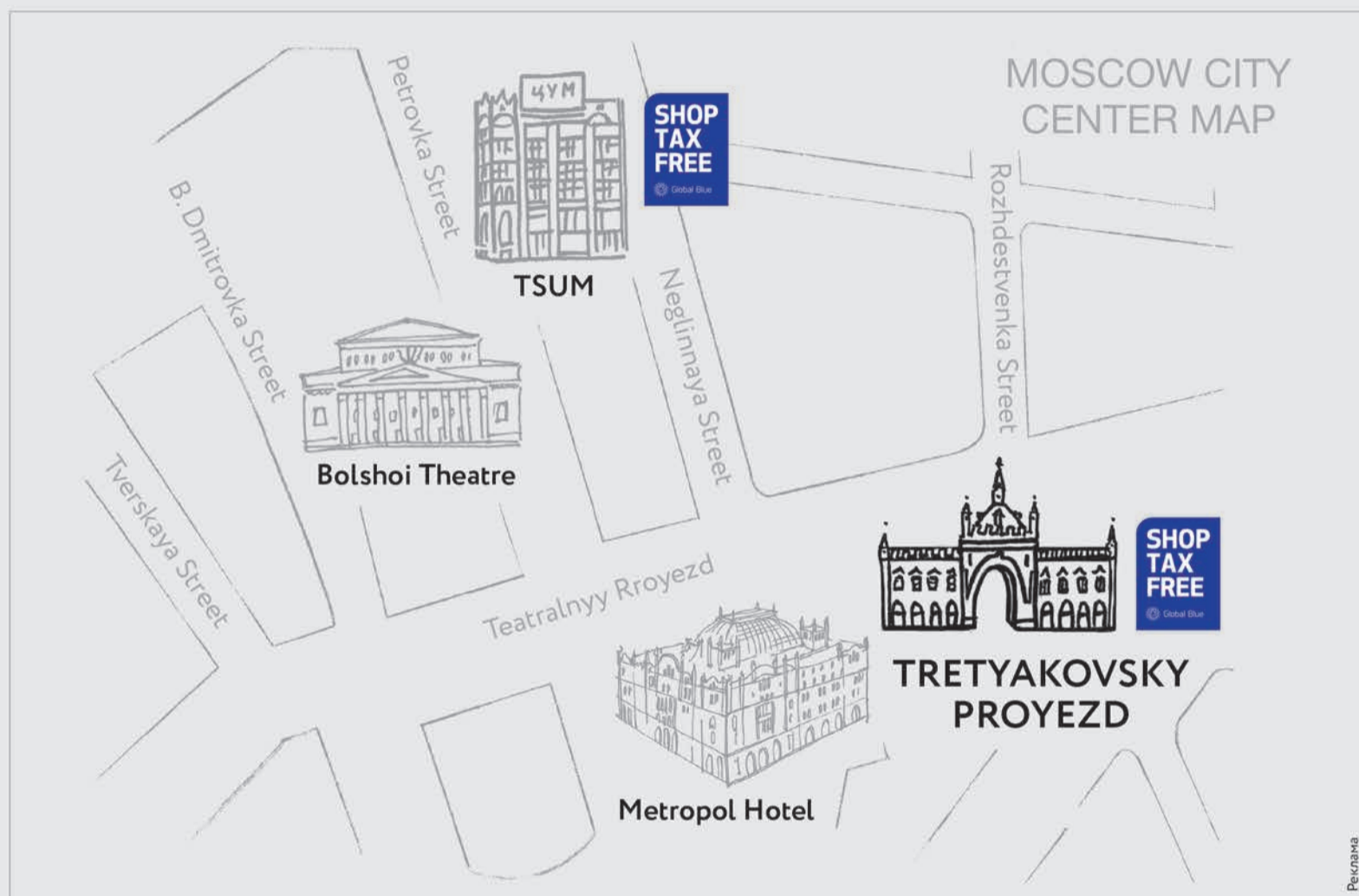
Friday  27°C

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Credit Agency: Sanctions Are Hurting the Economy

The possibility of more Western sanctions against Moscow is the key risk for the Russian economy, as much of 21 percent of which has already felt the impact of existing sanctions, Russia's Analytical Credit Ratings Agency said in a report on Tuesday.

Western sanctions are expected to weigh on Russia's oil-dependent economy in the longer run, having dented incomes of Russian households, the Kremlin-backed ACRA said.

The West first imposed economic and financial sanctions against Moscow in 2014 for its annexation of Crimea and its role in the Ukraine conflict.

Russia has responded with counter-sanctions, banning imports of a wide range of food from countries that had targeted Moscow. Later, sanctions against Russia were expanded, putting extra pressure on Russia's economy and the ruble.

"The risk of widening of anti-Russian sanctions remains one of the key risks that the Russian economy could face this year," ACRA said.

New sanctions might target more companies, Russian state debt or even disconnect Russia from the international SWIFT payment system.

For now, Russia's international reserves, which stood at nearly \$456 billion as of late June, "fully cover external debt, which is vulnerable to wider sanctions," ACRA said.

"Sanctions should not be named the key factor that limits economic growth in Russia in the mid-term ... The impact of sanctions on the growth rate could turn to be more pronounced in the long-term for both companies and the economy in general."



NASA / FLICKR

Western sanctions have hit Russian companies that account for 95 percent of the country's oil and gas industry revenues.

Restrictions imposed on Russian oil and gas companies in 2014 will affect their oil output in the 2020s, ACRA said.

Sanctions have also hit Russia's major state-owned banks, which account for 54 percent of banking assets. But the sanctions' impact on the financial health of companies and banks has been less pronounced than that of the country's economic policies, ACRA said.

Moscow's response to the sanctions has inflated prices for a number of goods.

"Counter-sanctions have resulted in price growth and a decline in households' incomes by 2-3 percentage points in 2014-2018," ACRA said.

(Reuters)

Western sanctions have mostly targeted Russia's banking and energy sector, cutting the country off from technology and financing.

OPINION

By Vladimir Frolov



What to Expect From The Helsinki Summit

Ahead of the summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki on July 16, the Kremlin's expectations are high – too high, given the limited scope of the discussion.

Moscow's first goal, which is already partially achieved by the very fact of the summit, is to clear the air. It is in Putin's interests to ease tensions and reset the relationship on his terms, especially if he doesn't have to yield any ground on Ukraine, U.S. election meddling or Syria.

Moscow will probably seek a joint statement announcing that full contacts between the governments are being reinstated. (They were suspended by the Obama administration in 2014 in response to the annexation of Crimea.) For Putin, this would be a powerful reaffirmation that his strategy of staring down the United States is working.

Moscow is not necessarily focused on tangible deliverables from the summit. Rather, it would like to create a narrative that would allow Trump to tout the meeting as a triumph for U.S. interests, a triumph that justifies his taking further steps to repair the relationship, even though the U.S. would get little in return.

The Kremlin does not really expect sanctions relief. It knows that Trump's hands are tied by Congress. Plus, it has adjusted to the current level of sanctions. What it wants to prevent is an escalation of U.S. pressure, or a repeat of what happened in April, when U.S. Treasury sanctions started to dictate the ownership structure of major Russian companies. This undermines Putin's claim of Russia's full sovereignty. Moscow's main aim, which was derived after carefully observing Trump's summit with Kim Jong Un in Singapore, is to create momentum that would make it politically painful and personally humiliating for Trump to revert to confrontation.

Moscow wants to keep Trump so deeply invested in dialogue that he becomes reticent to admit the whole endeavor is a failure. The idea is to lock Trump into a policy and propaganda framework that would eventually force

him into major U.S. concessions on issues of interest to Russia. Putin sees how easily Kim Jong Un has forced the United States to soften its negotiating demands.

Three possible deliverables are likely in Helsinki. One would be an aspirational, vaguely worded statement committing Russia and the United States

to working toward the withdrawal of "foreign forces" from Syria. The United States would take that as a Russian pledge to push out Iran; Russia would insist it means a complete U.S. withdrawal from northeastern Syria, as well as U.S. consent to Bashar Assad's continued rule. Both countries will spin this as a major triumph for diplomacy, which would later lead to disappointment. Russia cannot force Iran out of Syria, nor does it want to – Putin may want to insert himself as an intermediary between Tehran and Washington to raise his value to Trump and to keep the U.S. and Iran in conflict, but not at war.

There could be an attempt to get closure on election meddling. Moscow will deny "government responsibility," but keep open the possibility that "patriotic hackers" were involved. Trump will eagerly buy it. They may issue a meaningless statement saying that both states promise not to meddle in elections in the future. This gives Trump a "WIN!" – he prevented Russian meddling in the 2018 midterm elections. Putin, on the other hand, will take it as a U.S. commitment not to use internet platforms in Russia to promote democracy.

Finally, there could be some agreement to extend the New START Treaty till 2026, as a low-cost fix. Neither side is interested in reductions or in new arms control treaties. Both are pursuing strategic modernization programs for their nuclear arsenals.

There will be some discussion of Ukraine in the one-on-one meeting. Trump has three possible offers. First, the "Baltic solution" in which he doesn't recognize Russian sovereignty over Crimea, but normalizes ties anyway. Second is the "Finland solution" – recognition in exchange for full Russian withdrawal from Donbass. The third would be to demand a Russian pledge to never again change borders by force in Europe, in exchange for NATO steering clear of Ukraine and Georgia. What Putin would bring to this discussion will be the most closely watched part of the meeting.

Vladimir Frolov is a Russian columnist and political scientist.

Twitter: @vfroloff

Black Sea: Hot or Cold?



INTERIOR MINISTRY

They've waited all winter for this.

Beach lovers hoping to cool off with a quick dip in Russia's south will be disappointed after several Black Sea resorts imposed a swimming ban.

Holidaymakers have been instructed not to swim in water described as abnormally cold for the summer, even as regional authorities asked residents to stay indoors to avoid the dangerously hot weather.

A swimming ban has been imposed on all beaches in the resort town of Anapa, on the northern shore of the Black Sea, after water temperatures there dipped below 15 degrees Celsius, Interfax cited local authorities as saying on Monday.

"Temperatures this low are an anomaly for July," the press office of Anapa's City Hall told Interfax.

At the same time, emergency officials in the Krasnodar region, where the city is located, warned residents to avoid open spaces on Tuesday because of temperatures nearing 40 degrees C.

The swimming ban has been in effect since Friday, the town's head of public safety Sergei Semerkov told the RBC business portal.

Two bulletins on the Anapa administration's website dated July 6 informed readers that swimming would not be allowed at any of the town's beaches due to the excessively cold water.

The coastal city of Gelendzhik has also introduced swimming restrictions, Interfax reported on Tuesday.

Journalist Stabbed

An unnamed American journalist was allegedly stabbed during an altercation at a bar in central Moscow over the weekend, an anonymous law enforcement source told the state-run TASS news agency on Monday.

A criminal investigation has been launched into the incident and the suspected attacker has been detained, the agency reported.

News about the fight first surfaced over the weekend, when a police spokesperson was cited by TASS as saying that a man had been detained after wounding a foreign citizen with a knife near a bar on Rochdelskaya Ulitsa.

The man had reportedly approached a police patrol to report the conflict and ask for medical assistance, after which he was accompanied by police officers to a hospital to be treated for stab wounds.

Driver Pays Victims

A Kyrgyz taxi driver who plowed into a crowd of pedestrians near the Kremlin in the first week of the World Cup has reportedly begun to financially compensate the victims of the incident.

Seven people, including two Mexican fans, were injured when a taxi swerved onto the sidewalk in central Moscow on June 16 and hit a group of pedestrians. The driver, Chingiz Anarbek, told police that he lost control after a 20-hour shift on two hours of sleep and had mixed up the accelerator and brake pedals.

"My client has partly compensated the victims for material and other damages," Anarbek's attorney Pavel Berezin was cited as saying by Interfax on Monday.

Anarbek faces up to five years behind bars. A Moscow district court later rejected an appeal to place him under house arrest.

Croatian Player Sparks War of Words

FIFA has sanctioned a Croatian football player and coach for making pro-Ukrainian statements after their team's victory over Russia in the World Cup on Saturday.

In a video published on social media after the game, Croatia defender Domagoj Vida shouts "glory to Ukraine," while coach Ognjen Vukojevic adds "this win is for Dynamo [Kiev] and Ukraine."

FIFA prohibits the tournament's participants from making political statements or gestures. It previously fined three Swiss players for a hand gesture in the shape of the Albanian flag during a match against Serbia in the group stage.

The "glory to Ukraine" phrase also elicited the ire of Russian politicians and internet users, some of whom linked the slogan to Ukrainian nationalism. Russia has been at odds with Kiev since the ousting of pro-Moscow President Viktor Yanukovich.

"It was a challenge, it was a provocation and it was deliberate," Federation Council deputy Franz Klintsevich was cited as saying by the state-run RIA Novosti news agency, before demanding an official response and calling Croatians "the traitors of the Slavic world."

"The 'glory to Ukraine' slogan is seen as being highly reactionary and unpleasant for what is likely

to be the vast majority of Ukrainian citizens," Sergei Tsekov, a Federation Council deputy from Crimea, was cited as saying by the RBC news website on Monday. Tsekov went on to call the slogan "fascist."

Vida, who scored Croatia's second goal against Russia on Saturday, has been issued a warning over the video by FIFA, Interfax reported Sunday.

Meanwhile, Vukojevic was relieved of his duties as a member of the Croatian national team by the country's football federation on Monday. He was also given a \$15,000-fine from FIFA's disciplinary committee for "unsportsmanlike behavior."

The two members of the Croatian delegation, who both played for Ukraine's Dynamo Kiev football club in the past, have since apologized and said they had not intended for their words to be interpreted in a political context.

"It was definitely not a political message, but a simple thank you for all the support from Ukraine," Vida was cited as saying in a statement published on the website of Croatia's football federation.

The federation also apologized "to the Russian public" over the incident and noted its "long-term friendly relationship" with its Russian counterpart.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's Football Federation issued a letter to FIFA on Monday in support of Vida. It also offered to pay the footballer's fine.

"The 'glory to Ukraine' slogan is a greeting, a celebration of the fallen and a patriotic symbol of the independence, liberty and freedom-loving nature of the Ukrainian people," the statement said.

"[It] is a commonly used greeting in Ukraine ... [and] is not a discriminatory or far-right sign or symbol that can be negatively interpreted," the federation added.

Since the incident, social media users have left over 158,000 comments on FIFA's Facebook page, many of which repeated the Ukrainian slogan, in protest of the punishment.



Vida's "Glory to Ukraine" sparked ire in Russia.

Relief in Defeat

Semyon Slepakov, a famous Russian singer-songwriter who wrote a parody song about the country's dismal chances in the World Cup, has now released a statement thanking the team and apologizing for his earlier skepticism.

"This is a post of thanks and support for Russia's national football team," Slepakov wrote on Instagram with a photo of himself making an army salute, in the style of Russian striker Artyom Dzyuba.

"If I offended you with my work, I regret it... It was from a feeling of hopelessness, which had filled everything before the tournament," he added.

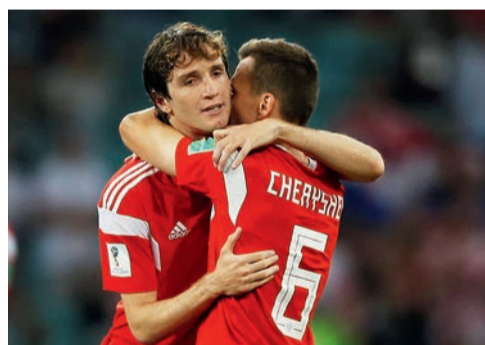
Slepakov still left room for wit when speaking about Russia's loss against Croatia.

"In my opinion, you didn't lose but you gracefully stepped to the side, as gracious hosts that leave the best for their guests," he said.

MEET THE FANS

Moscow is very clean and the people are charming. They want to help us all the time, whether we are taking the underground or walking the street or searching for a restaurant. Russians are very nice people.

Tibo from Belgium



Forget about Ronaldo or Messi.

Best Defensive Team

FIFA has named Russia the best defending team of the World Cup in the 60 games that were played before Tuesday.

Russia was knocked out of the competition by Croatia on Saturday, leaving the country disappointed but inspired by their team's unexpected success at making the quarterfinals for the first time since 1970.

Before the start of the semifinals, FIFA named Russia the best defending team with 259 clearances, tackles and saves in its five matches.

The team, led by coach Stanislav Cherchesov, scored 11 goals — the third largest number of goals in the tournament (including one own goal).

FIFA also named Russian midfielder Roman Zobnin the player who, at 62 kilometers, has covered the biggest distance during games.

With four goals each, Denis Cheryshev is tied as the third-top scorer with Belgian striker Romelu Lukaku.

FIFA will award the titles for the tournament's top scorer, best player, best goalkeeper, most disciplined team and best young footballer after the final on July 15.



LGBT activists staged a walking protest against Russia's "gay propaganda" law on the weekend.

Spartak Fan Zone Closes in Moscow

Moscow's fan zone near the Spartak Stadium, which opened last week in time for Russia's quarterfinal game with Croatia, will not be showing the remainder of the tournament, the press service of the city's sports and tourism department told Interfax on Tuesday.

"Fans can watch broadcasts of the semifinal, the match for third place, and the final of the World Cup at the FIFA fan zone at Vorobyovy Gory," a spokesperson told the news agency.

The Vorobyovy Gory fan zone will open at 6 p.m. on July 11, three hours before England plays Croatia.

"Guests will be treated to a three-hour concert with popular artists, interactive stands



Fans will have to go to Vorobyovy Gory to catch the final.

and other events by FIFA partners," the press service said.

The fan zone will be closed on July 12-13 and will reopen on July 14 at 2 p.m. before the match for third place.

On July 15, the day of the final, the location will open at 2:45 p.m., in time for the closing ceremony of the tournament scheduled for 5 p.m. and the final match at 6 p.m.

Red Carpet Semifinal

France's semifinal match against Belgium on Tuesday was attended by a host of high-profile guests from the two countries, including politicians, royalty and movie stars.

French President Emmanuel Macron attended the semifinal in St. Petersburg in what pundits have said was an attempt to win political capital amid a plummeting approval rating, the Guardian reported. Others criticized the leader for choosing to travel to Russia instead of unveiling a plan to fight poverty that had been scheduled for Tuesday, the Local news website reported.

Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel, who had previously said he would attend the semifinal, reportedly had to change his plans because of a NATO summit taking place in Brussels on July 11-12.

Belgium's royal couple, King Philippe and Queen Mathilde, attended the match in his place, along with the country's Foreign Minister Didier Reynders.

Meanwhile, renowned actress Pamela Anderson attended the match in support of the French national team.

"My love, which has moved mountains, made me come here ... I feel like a little girl," Anderson wrote in Russian on Instagram, in what appeared to be an allusion to her relationship with France's defender Adil Rami. Anderson was reportedly invited by the French Football Federation.

Local Brazilian Hero

Russia's Brazilian-born defender Mario Fernandes thanked fans for their support in an emotional Instagram post on Sunday.

"I thank God for having brought me to Russia," he wrote. "I'm thankful for the honor of defending [the country's] colors as part of the national team. I'm really very happy here," he wrote.

The 27-year-old accepted Russian citizenship in 2016 after spending four seasons at CSKA Moscow, becoming one of the best players in the Russian Premier League.

Fernandes, who was Russia's only foreign-born player in the tournament, scored a crucial goal in overtime against Croatia on Saturday, forcing the game into a penalty shootout. He was one of two players who missed a spot kick, costing Russia a ticket to the semifinals, but has nonetheless been lauded as one of the heroes of the squad.

UPCOMING GAMES

SEMIFINAL

Wednesday 9 p.m.		Moscow, Luzhniki Stadium
	-	
CROATIA		ENGLAND

Russian Fans Ask: Where Is President Putin?

As Russia's World Cup dream ended with defeat to Croatia, some football fans noted the absence from the stadium of President Vladimir Putin, who has attended only one match in Russia's best World Cup run since the Soviet collapse in 1991.

Putin was at Russia's opening game against Saudi Arabia but skipped the following four – despite the national side defying expectations and reaching the quarterfinals.

"Where has the president gone?" asked Nezygar, a popular news channel on the Telegram messaging service. Online news site Znak.com wrote that Russians were "tying themselves up in knots trying to guess where Putin might have got to."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday that Putin had only ever been scheduled to attend the opening and closing games of the tournament. He was minimizing attendance because matches "happen when he is at the height of his working day."

"He doesn't play football himself, but naturally like the overwhelming majority of Russians he is a fan. Of course he isn't obsessive – because he can't permit himself this – but he likes interesting football," Peskov said.

Competing theories in Moscow swirled as to why Putin appeared to have stayed away. Putin, a



MARIANA BAZO / REUTERS

black belt in judo, is an avid ice-hockey fan. The Bell cited a high-ranking official as saying the reason for his absence was a simple lack of interest in football.

One Moscow-based political analyst speculated the real explanation was the wish not to be associated with a Russian defeat, the prospect of which loomed larger as the side faced higher-caliber opponents in the knockout stages.

"Vladimir Putin likes to be associated with victories and triumphs, but doesn't like to be associated with defeats and losses," political analyst Valery Solovei said. (Reuters)

Competing theories say Putin is either uninterested in football or was afraid of Russia losing.



ANTON VAGANOV / REUTERS

Belgium fans celebrated before their team's semifinal against France on Tuesday.

England Fans Rush to Moscow

Dozens of English football fans began heading for Moscow in a last-minute rush on Tuesday in an effort to be part of a potentially historic sporting moment as England take on Croatia in the World Cup semifinals.

Taking advantage of extra match tickets released by FIFA and additional seats provided on Moscow-bound flights from Britain, they converged on London's Heathrow Airport with hope in their hearts.

"It's been crazy here in En-

gland, really exciting. Now I want to go and see what's going on in Russia," said one fan, Michael Roberts, 27, as he waited for his flight.

Another fan, Bradley Goldenberg, 46, was taking his son to share the moment.

"Whether we win or lose, we're creating history," he said. "We'll be there and it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity seeing them in the World Cup."

Saturday's 2-0 victory over Sweden took manager Gareth Southgate's team into a World

Cup semifinal for the first time in 28 years, raising the prospect of England possibly winning the tournament for the first time since 1966.

England supporters have been notably sparse in Russia so far, deterred by warnings of possible violence and logistical difficulties.

But British Airways, which has seen a 700-percent increase in searches for flights to Russia on its website since last week, has now released hundreds more seats on Moscow flights by using bigger planes.

"If we win, if we beat Croatia, I'll probably cry, because to see England in a World Cup final is like a lifelong dream," England fan Alex Klein, 28, said. (Reuters)

OPINION

By Loretta Perera



Russian Enough, But For How Long?

A few months after I moved to Russia, I was stopped by a police officer just outside the Moscow metro. "You!" he barked. "Come this way."

I was new to the country, and given his stern tone and my weak language skills, I didn't see much scope for asking what I had done or why I was being led away.

At the police station, I was taken to a small room where the issue became clear: My fellow detainees were all people of color. Perhaps more to the point, none of us looked Russian.

After 30 minutes of questioning and having our documents inspected – mine were all valid – I was released. But it wasn't the last time I would have an encounter with the police because of my skin color.

There are hundreds of thousands of football fans from all over the world in Russia for the World Cup this summer. In general, they are singing the praises of Russian hospitality, charm and friendliness. To visiting fans, concerns of racist attacks might seem unfounded. But the World Cup version of Russia is not the Russia I moved to two years ago.

How frequently, for instance, have I been held up by security guards for "random" bag checks and passport inspections? (I recently asked my American, blond-haired, blue-eyed partner how often he has been approached by police in the metro. "The only time I've ever been stopped by the police in Russia was with you," he replied sheepishly.)

Russia's xenophobia isn't just about skin color. It's about understanding how the country works.

Then there's the Russian stereotype of being frowned at on public transport – which is especially alarming when you're the only one in the entire carriage who looks like you, or when the frown comes from someone who could pass as a skinhead.

In the two years since I arrived in Russia, however, I've noticed a gradual change. It's not so much that the police checks have stopped, or even that people are no longer glowering at me on public transport. It just seems to be happening less often than it used to.

Russia's brutal winters have made my skin the fairest it can possibly be, but I don't think that has anything to do with it. I'm starting to realize that Russia's open and unapologetic xenophobia isn't just about skin color. It's also about understanding how Russia works.

My friend Adewole Opeyemi Dele, 27, moved to Russia from Nigeria in 2008. Although he said racism is rampant in Russia, there were two options: dwell on it or figure out how to integrate. "I felt that the only way to understand Russian people was to learn the language and learn the culture," he recently told me.

Ten years later, Adewole says, racism is especially prevalent in the older generation, but "Russians under 40 are more and more exposed to foreigners and less and less racist." Having said that, when he speaks to older Russians in fluent, grammatically correct Russian, "They fall in love with you immediately."

Adewole's encounters rang true of my experience, too. While skin color is apparent immediately, it is not being able to fit in that seems to offend most. It is not knowing how to acclimatize that is most jarring to Russians. Perhaps the reason I get fewer glares on the metro and on the streets now is because I've learned how Russians behave and I know how to act accordingly.

Halfway through the World Cup, two white American fans were talking loudly on an otherwise quiet metro, annoying both me and an old Russian man, who looked on resentfully. I recognized that look. But usually I've been on the receiving end of it. I shrugged, he shook his head in response. Damn foreigners, we silently agreed.

In that exchange, I realized that after two years I have, for now at least, achieved a level of acceptance – brown skin and all.

Adewole told me he believes that the World Cup will have a lasting impact on Russia's attitude toward foreigners. "[The majority] of people here are really, really nice to foreigners at the moment," he says. "If five, even 10 percent keep that welcoming spirit, that's good news for Russia."

I'm hopeful too, but let's see how long this lasts.

Loretta Perera is the social media editor at The Moscow Times.

@rettperera

Some Wins Are Beyond Belief

A lucky draw, a freak handball, strange VAR decisions – the World Cup has been fodder for conspiracy theorists, many of whom suspect President Vladimir Putin is pulling the strings.

Few Russians believed their side had any hope against Spain. The hosts were the lowest-ranked team playing in the World Cup, after all.

For most of the first half, Russia lagged 1-0. Then, relief came in the form of Gerard Pique's hand. In the 41st minute of the game, the Spaniard raised his arm to block the ball and Russia was awarded a much-needed penalty. The rest is history: Russia scored and went on to win after a penalty shootout.

Spectators were aghast. "That's absolutely idiotic from Pique," a Newsweek journalist wrote on Twitter. "Gerard Pique gives the host country a hand," the Peruvian Libero's tongue-in-cheek headline read. On social media, many suspected money had changed hands.

Since Russia won its bid to host the World Cup, conspiracy theories have never been far away. A glimpse at social media paints a picture of a World Cup rife with match-fixing, substance abuse and, in some cases, even supernatural forces. In many tellings, Putin is personally pulling the strings.

Money woes

At the draw in December, Russia was pooled with Uruguay, Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the World Cup's weakest group. A social media storm ensued: "Group A is the biggest fix in World Cup history," one Twitter user wrote.

The rumor mill did not stop there, particularly after Russia breezed through the group stage. While much of the country was cheering, a large part of the Rунet was trying to find answers to the team's success.

"Why did we wipe out Saudi Arabia? Putin personally asked the top Saudi to help [Russia] get off to a strong start. Why did we beat Egypt 3-0? It's simple – the Egyptians lost so that Russians would start flying to Sharm el-Sheikh again," a Sportbox.ru blogger summarized, fed up with the rumors.

Seen through the prism of the Cup, business deals struck off-pitch took on a new meaning. Shortly after Russia's game against Saudi Arabia, attended by Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman and Putin, the countries agreed to increase oil production.

And the week of the host's semifinal against



Putin is at the center of hundreds of World Cup conspiracy theories and online memes.

Croatia, Russian state banks struck a deal with Agrokor, a giant Croatian food and retail manufacturer – payment for a Russia win, commenters predicted. (Never mind that Russia lost.)

Rooted in truth

Some of the theories verge on science fiction. "This is how it works: A nano-magnetic grid is pulled over the ball. It is invisible to the naked eye," a user called Lui Vega wrote on Facebook in a post shared almost a hundred times.

There was also a magnetic field around the goal area, operated directly by the Kremlin, the author argued. "Then no matter how often you aim, the ball will always fly past the goal – or, in the case of a positive field, you just need to kick it with enough strength and the field will draw it in."

Some of the theories that circulated, however, tapped into truths. "Conspiracy theories are based on facts," Ilya Yablokov, who researches Russian conspiracies at the University of Leeds, told The Moscow Times. "But these facts are heavily distorted."

FIFA has been embroiled in multiple corruption scandals, and its denials have not been able to shake suspicions of widespread match-fixing. Meanwhile, allegations by the World Anti-Doping Agency of a state-sponsored doping program around the Sochi Olympics, combined with re-

ports that Russian football players are running longer and faster than their rivals, have raised eyebrows.

This week, Süddeutsche Zeitung reported that Russian players could have been sniffing ammonia to enhance their performance. (Russia's fitness coach Paulino Grano said in comments cited by Championat.ru that the theory was made up by "some idiot.")

All-powerful

Many of the conspiracies involve the Russian president, including memes that show Putin controlling the VAR room. Or, in the words of the magnetic field blogger: "It's clear: Putin lets those he likes win."

The prominent role given to the Russian president reflects how he is perceived in society, says Alexei Levinson, a senior researcher at the independent Levada Center. "Russians both completely trust and distrust the authorities," he told The Moscow Times. "Nothing can be

believed, and yet on the other hand, everything must have an explanation."

The Soviet education system fostered a world view that encouraged conspiratorial thinking, Levinson added. "The idea was that we see one thing, but in reality there are forces and interests at play that are really influencing events that we cannot see with our eyes."

Consequently, alternate theories surrounding the death of Tsar Nicholas II, the Soviet collapse or worries over "foreign agents" doing the West's bidding in Russian society are rife. A poll conducted by the state-funded VTsIOM pollster in 2014, for example, showed that 45 percent of Russians believe the world is controlled by a global government.

Ironically, the conspiracy theories explaining Russia's success have now themselves become the object of suspicion among Russians worried about foreign interference.

"I don't know why people are surprised that the Russian team got this far, because at the end of the day we were playing very easy teams," Andrei Kanchelskis, a former Manchester United player and now a coach, told The Moscow Times.

"I think for some countries it is convenient to spread these rumors about Russia for people to question the legitimacy of the World Cup."

Anton Muratov contributed reporting.



Russia's win against Spain was met with skepticism online.



Russian telecom operators registered an uptick in Tinder use at the beginning of the World Cup.

In the World Cup Friend Zone

A surge in Tinder matches during the World Cup has some Russians unusually spoiled for choice

BY ARON OUZILEVSKI @ARONOUZIL

On a Wednesday night midway through the World Cup, Dasha Petrova was enjoying a glass of wine with her sister when the large blue "Super Like" notification appeared on her iPhone.

It was accompanied by a short message that went straight to the point: "Your place, my place, or hotel?"

The virtual cat-caller, who Petrova recalls was a young European football fan, was holding out hope for a one-night stand. Instead, he got a reply in all caps: "Not all Russian women are wh-res!"

Petrova, 26, is one of thousands of Tinder users who have boosted traffic to the dating app since the World Cup kicked off. The Mega-fon provider told The Moscow Times it had registered an almost four-fold increase in traffic to Tinder on July 1 compared to early June, before

People were dressed up like freaks, guzzling vodka and screaming along to 90s Russian pop hits.

the start of the tournament.

But not everyone using the app during the tournament is looking for the love of their lives. Many, like Petrova, who had only recently reinstalled the app, were on it “for fun” and to meet some of the foreigners flocking to Russia.

Cultural exchange

Alexandra Belyayeva, a 26-year-old journalist, told The Moscow Times that because so few Russians travel abroad, being active on Tinder during the World Cup’s influx of football supporters from abroad was a fast track to meeting foreigners.



Not everyone is looking for their soul mate.

According to a 2018 survey published by the independent Levada Center pollster, 76 percent of Russians don’t own travel documents that allow them to leave the country and 68 percent have never traveled abroad.

Belyayeva told The Moscow Times she had created her Tinder account one week into the World Cup for friendship, not romance.

“I’ve been to Europe many times, and there people take pleasure in showing me all the quirks of their culture,” she said.

Now, for the first time, Belyayeva had the opportunity to flaunt her own country.

Her first night using Tinder, Belyayeva decided to invite a trio of Australian fans to accompany her and her friend to a trashy 90s-themed disco.

“It was a bold move on our part, because this was no ordinary club,” Belyayeva said. “People were dressed up like freaks, guzzling vodka and screaming along to 90s Russian pop hits.”

But what should have been a catastrophe in the making turned out to be a very pleasant night.

“We translated all the songs for them, and at a certain point they even started to sing along,” she recalled. The Australians particularly enjoyed a song about the despair in realizing that there’s only one glass of vodka left, she said.

“They were very caring: When we told them we didn’t want to drink anymore, they brought water for us, and didn’t expect anything in return,” Belyayeva added. “[Russian men] buy you a drink, but then always expect something in return, and if you don’t give them what they want, they swear at you and leave.”

Asked why Russian men behave this way, Belyayeva said there is a lack of competition for feminine affection in the country. “[Unlike in Russia], European men are all in good shape because there are fewer beautiful women there.”

Shy guys

Many Tinder users who spoke to The Moscow Times also complained that Russian men are just as difficult behind the touchscreen as they are on the dance floor.

“Russian men are spoiled with attention, so they’re very passive on Tinder,” Masha Karparova, 29, said. “Before the World Cup I’d have to boost my page, and would still only get five to 10 likes a week,” Masha explained. With the influx of foreign tourists, Masha now gets up to 100 likes a day.

Through Tinder, Karparova, who works in marketing, formed a fast friendship with a young man from Mexico. A Frenchman who she never met because she overslept their scheduled date is now promising to return to Russia just to meet her.

“I wish the World Cup would never end and these foreign men with their energy and exuberance wouldn’t leave,” Karparova told The Moscow Times. “Or I wish our men would stop being so passive.”

Not everyone’s experience has been positive, however. Mikhail Zakharov, a young, openly gay Muscovite, had high hopes for his World Cup Tinder experience.

“My conversations with Russian guys often feel strained: There’s just no culture of small talk here,” Zakharov, 21, said.

But Zakharov’s Tinder experience did not live up to his expectations.

“I matched with a young American student and immediately thought that he’d be super interesting.”

Unfortunately, the American student spent the whole three-hour date asking Zakharov where he could find illegal drugs in Moscow.

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Реклама



Russian women say their men are spoiled for attention and too passive on Tinder.



SAID TSARNAYEV / REUTERS

In a village in Chechnya, football is a balancing act.



SERGEI KARPUKHIN / REUTERS

A dog plays goalkeeper in Ryazantsevo near Yaroslavl.



EDUARD KORNIVENKO / REUTERS

A man on horseback gallops past goalposts in Bolshaya Dzharga.



Children and a young husky play tag in the Siberian village of Novosyolovo.



PAVEL REBROV / REUTERS

Goats roam through a pastoral football pitch in Pervomaiskoye, Crimea.



PAVEL REBROV / REUTERS

This football field in Pribrezhnoye, Crimea, stretches far and wide.



ILYA NAYMUSHIN / REUTERS

An Orthodox church looks over these uprights in the Siberian village of Tyulkovo.

and Wide



Who says football pitches are flat and green, that goalposts are made out of metal and fields are for playing football?



In Divnogorsk on the Yenisei River, a boy plays with his gyro-scooter.

ILYA NAYMUSHIN / REUTERS



Boys gather during traditional Cossack games outside the Arkhonskaya village.

EDUARD KORNIYENKO / REUTERS



Lush fields in Stavropol provide a pleasant setting for a morning run.

ILYA NAYMUSHIN / REUTERS



This goalpost doubles as monkey bars in St. Petersburg.

ANTON VAGANOV / REUTERS



Humans and their furry friends get some exercise on the sidelines in Krasnoyarsk.

ILYA NAYMUSHIN / REUTERS



One of the Stalin-era "Seven Sisters" skyscrapers looms over this Moscow football pitch.

MAXIM SHEMETOV / REUTERS



The Old English Court, which housed English merchants during Elizabethan times, is one of the oldest surviving secular buildings in Moscow.

The English Stamp on Moscow's History

By Emma Friedlander | [@emmacfried](#)

Anglo-Russian relations date back to the time of Ivan the Terrible and Elizabeth I

The English national team has beaten the odds and made it to the semifinals of the World Cup. Their success comes at one of the tensest moments in Russian-British relations in living memory. Any England fan may feel a little out of place donning St. George's cross and singing "God Save the Queen" amid the onion domes and Cyrillic lettering of the Russian capital.

But the fact is that England has been a significant part of Moscow's history since the 16th century. The historical saga involves a spurned marriage proposal, the swankiest gentleman's club in Moscow and the invention of art nouveau. Three architectural spots spanning four centuries represent the long history of England in Moscow and may leave England fans feeling more at home than they expected.

Old English Court, 1550s-1640s

Nestled under the Kremlin's shadow on Varvarka Ulitsa, the Old English Court is one of the oldest surviving buildings in Moscow. The 16th-century Tudor mansion with its thatched roof seems out of place on a street otherwise crowded with onion-domed churches. Passers-by may feel as if they have time-traveled into a hybrid of Elizabethan England and Tsarist Russia.

This isn't far from the truth. In 1553, English navigator Richard Chancellor blundered while searching for a naval passage to China and India, and instead arrived smack dab in an entirely different country: Russia. When Tsar Ivan IV, known as Ivan the Terrible, learned of the Englishman's arrival, he enthusiastically invited him to his court in Moscow for a formal reception.

Chancellor made his way through 1000 kilometers of ice and snow to reach the tsar's court. When he finally arrived, Ivan made sure the journey was worth it. Chancellor wrote that the tsar's palace was literally dripping with pre-

cious stones and that the feasts on offer were ambrosial. Chancellor also found it odd that outside the tsar's golden palace, the enormous city of Moscow (much larger than London) was constructed almost entirely out of rudimentary wooden houses.

The visit was a success, resulting in the establishment of trading routes between the countries. In 1555, the Muscovy Company was founded and the Old English Court was subsequently built as a trading post, home and embassy for English merchants. England traded wool, metal and Mediterranean goods in exchange for Russian hemp, tallow and rope.

Relations between England and Muscovy were sweltering, making Ivan IV so bold as to ask for Queen Elizabeth I's hand in marriage. He hoped that the marriage would provide him political asylum in case surrounding countries encroached on Russian territory. The Virgin

Queen coolly declined his proposal. She told him that he could come to England if he wanted, but would have to pay his own passage. Ivan never made it to England.

The Muscovy Company continued to flourish throughout the first half of the 17th century. However, when British Parliamentarians executed King Charles I in 1649, Russia cut off connections and threw all the merchants out. Regicide was a deal-breaker for the tsars.

Today the Old English Court is a museum, offering exhibitions and excursions about the first Englishmen in Moscow.

The English Club, 1770s-1910s

English and Scottish merchants trickled their way back into Russia in the 18th century, when Peter the Great founded his long-desired seaport in St. Petersburg. Eventually they made their way to Moscow. By 1771, the English mer-

chant community was flourishing enough to found its own social club.

The English Club rented out various houses before permanently moving into a classical mansion (at 21 Tverskaya Ulitsa today) in 1831. Any aspiring Russian dandy coveted membership. Alexander Pushkin, Nikolai Gogol and Leo Tolstoy were among its members. As Russia's elite craved European culture throughout the 19th century, the English Club provided succor.

The English Club didn't factor into the new Bolshevik order after 1917. The mansion on Tverskaya was repurposed as a military hospital and then a museum. Today, the imposing brick structure houses the State Central Museum of Contemporary Russian History.

The Walcot houses, 1910s

Before the revolution halted English influence, architect William Walcot put his stamp on Moscow with some of the city's earliest art nouveau architecture.

Walcot was actually born in Odessa and trained in St. Petersburg and Paris, then settling in Moscow to help develop art nouveau. He channeled his English roots when building a series of houses in the first decade of the 20th century. He designed the stunning pink art nouveau mansion at 8 Prechistensky Pereulok, and a geometric brick English-modernist home next door at number 10. These houses were fashionable "turnkey" mansions, meaning they were rented out by various wealthy occupants on a seasonal basis.

The city's elite clamored for Walcot's English designs. He also constructed a boarding house for English governesses at 9 Spiridonievsky Pereulok, responding to the demand for education and culture from the British Isles.

Walcot moved to England permanently in 1908, and later the Soviet government turned his houses on Prechistensky Pereulok into office buildings. Now 8 Prechistensky Pereulok serves as the embassy of Morocco.



Once home of the elite English Club, 21 Tverskaya Ulitsa is now a history museum.

Some Great Belgian, English and French Joints in Moscow (Waiting on Croatian)

As the World Cup moves into the semifinals, we thought it would be helpful to produce a guide to some of the best pubs and restaurants in Moscow that correspond to the national teams. Take heart, fans of Croatian football and food! We couldn't find any Croatian-themed places in town—a glaring hole in Moscow's culinary and social landscape—but this deficit offers a brilliant opportunity for aspiring entrepreneurs and trendsetters.



LA BOULE

BELGIAN Brugge

Find yourself in a 12th-century Belgian town as you enter Brugge, a pub that brings the culinary and cultural traditions of its namesake into the heart of Moscow. With live music on the weekends and a menu sporting all the classics from Belgian waffles to grilled sausages, the pub's warm and welcoming atmosphere channels historic Belgian hospitality. Naturally, no meal is complete without a pint of beer, and at Brugge even the most choosy will find something to their liking: There are over 150 varieties on offer, and you'll want to come back again and again. 48/13 Baumanskaya Ulitsa. Metro Baumanskaya. bruggepub.com



LAMBIC

Lambic

At Brasserie LAMBIC, beer is a philosophy and a way of life. Offering a dizzying variety of ales—light, dark, fruity, wheat, you name it—LAMBIC won't just hand you a menu and leave you in the lurch. Their expert sommelier and wait staff are always on hand to advise you on labels, flavors and the perfect dishes to go with every drink. Fans can get the quadruple Kasteel Barista Chocolate Quad or the fruity Mongozo Mango, and even enter a lottery to win a real World Cup football fresh from the playoffs. Multiple locations, including 40a Myasnitskaya Ulitsa. Metro Chistiye Prudy. lambicbar.ru

Kelya

From its stained glass windows and domed ceilings to the habit-clad waiters and quiet, calming atmosphere, every aspect of Kelya (in English, "monastic cell") is styled after a Belgian monastery from ages past. The first Belgian restaurant to open in Moscow, Kelya has long been a haven

for expats and beer lovers eager for a respite from life in the capital and a pint of quality ale. Follow centuries of tradition as you try a Westmalle or Chimay, brewed by the monks of the abbey of Van Scourmount, or take a bit of Belgium with you as you get a Kwak to go. 3 Sivtsev Vrazhek Pereulok. Metro Kropotkinskaya. kelyabar.ru



BRUXELLES GASTROPUB

Bruxelles Gastropub

Putting a modern spin on all the usual recipes, Bruxelles brings the concept of the Belgian pub into the 21st century. Serving delicate beef tartare with potato waffle, cheese croquettes with raspberry-pepper sauce and mussels with everything from hops to garlic cream sauce, this gastropub prides itself on having an original and creative approach to every one of its dishes. So get a snack, settle down with one of Bruxelles' 20 on-tap beers and join the regulars for some good cheer. 18a/3 Malaya Dmitrovka. Metro Tverskaya. italy-group.ru/en/restaurants/bruxelles-moscow

FRENCH La Boule

As the World Cup nears its final stages, for fans of a different game La Boule is the place to be. An open-air café in Gorky Park not far from the New Tretyakov Gallery, this Provence-style restaurant is the hub of Moscow's small but active petanque crowd. Supporting sport in all its forms, at match time they step off the lines, turn on the feeds and serve dishes from the competing countries. Where else can you go from playing one favorite game to watching another and have a mood-setting snack along the way? 9 Krymsky Val. Metro Oktyabrskaya. facebook.com/La-Boule-petanque-cafe-233072093411786



BRASSERIE MOST

Brasserie Most

Floor-to-ceiling windows, huge mirrors that reflect the light of the chandeliers, tasteful art-deco styling—at Brasserie Most, visitors find an elegant, upscale take on French cuisine. In the hands of Bordeaux-born chef Jean-Luc Molle, traditional recipes gain an artisanal twist. You can try cucumber and avocado gazpacho with Kamchatka crab and cucumber sorbet alongside the usual Burgundy escargot or pear chutney and foie-gras. End the meal with vanilla mille-feuille or the timeless creme brulee for a truly unforgettable evening. 6/3 Kuznetsky Most. Metro Lubyanka. en.brasseriemost.ru



GERALDINE

Geraldine

Moving with the times, Geraldine combines casual comfort with ambitious cuisine to create the neo-bistro, where the mood is light, the wine is plentiful and chefs think outside the box, infusing classic French recipes with Spanish, Italian, Thai and Chinese overtones. The 1950s Paris bistro set-up, complete with French books and magazines on the shelves, creates a cozy environment perfect for savoring the universally beloved onion soup or taking a chance on one of Geraldine's original dishes. The veggie caramelized carrot with goat cheese, perhaps? 27 Ulitsa Ostozhenka, Bldg. 2. Metro Kropotkinskaya. geraldine.ru

Café Provence

True to its name, Café Provence transports you, body and soul, into the south of France with its vintage French posters and chairs straight from a Nice casino. There's Cannes salad with tiger shrimp and spinach, duck leg confit stewed in port and orange juice, passion fruit panna cotta and much more. The café is alcohol free, but that's only a bonus: Instead, you get to sample one of their fortifying herbal teas or a breezy fresh lemonade. Ranging from raspberry to lime and ginger, they set the mood for an evening on the Cote d'Azur. 9/12 1st Obyednsky Pereulok. Metro Kropotkinskaya. provence-co.ru

ENGLISH Smith's English Pub

If you're used to grabbing a pint at your local pub whenever the fancy strikes you, Smith's is the place to go. Full of good cheer and even better food and drink, the pub serves fish and chips, shepherd's pie and over 20 kinds of on-tap beer and ale. From Oyster Stout and Boddingtons

Pub Ale to the Scottish Twisted Thistle and even Kelvish cider, Smith's has just the pint you need to toast your team's success. If you want to cheer for Team England in Wednesday's semifinal, there's a whole room dedicated to football—come, watch the match and know you're among friends.

1 Taganskaya, Bldg. 1. Metro Marksistskaya. smithspub.ru/en



CHELSEA GASTROPUB

Chelsea Gastropub

Once you see Chelsea Gastropub's extensive menu, you'll want to try everything and never leave again. No worries: The pub's open 24/7, so you can stay as long as you like. With over 100 types of whiskey and a magnificent selection of beers, Chelsea might surprise even the savviest connoisseur. The food is an eclectic mix of British and international, English sausages appearing side-by-side with aromatic paella, but in spite of the diverse menu the vibe echoes a true Chelsea pub. You'll get a full sense of that on game night: The whole pub becomes a sea of Union Jacks.

Multiple locations chelsea-pub.ru/en

Pie Point

Outside the British Isles, pie point is one of the best places to get a taste of real English pie. Whether you're in the mood for Sheffield rabbit pie with coriander, peas and gravy; a veggie spinach, tomato and mozzarella pie with a side of fresh green salad; or a rich duck-in-cider pie with apples, thyme and oranges, Pie Point is ready to serve you with the pie of your life. They also serve beer and cider, as well as summer-light mimosas. The simple interior and friendly atmosphere ensure that every visitor feels like they belong. 27/4 Bolshaya Bronnaya. Metro Pushkinskaya. piepoint.ru



CROSS KEYS PUB

Cross Keys Pub

As you step through the doors of Cross Keys Pub, you are transported directly to an English local tavern. At this atmospheric joint, where the dark wooden furniture recalls its British counterparts, every detail, from the food to the decor, adds to the atmosphere of home and comfort. The full English breakfast is offered all day long, and typical dishes are supplemented with Mexican chili con carne and quesadillas. With a pint of English ale and a beer basket full of snacks, you will be all set to have a jolly evening. 3 Malaya Dmitrovka. Metro Pushkinskaya. crosskeyspub.ru

Insider Shopping in St. Petersburg

Traditional souvenir shops selling *matryoshka* dolls, amber jewelry and fur hats are easy to spot in St. Petersburg. But where do St. Petersburg locals go when they need to find a special gift? Here are some of our favorite insider shops.



LEGION MEDIA

Imperial Porcelain Factory

Most locals have an item from the Imperial Porcelain Factory in their cupboard. Founded in 1744 by the decree of Empress Elizabeth, the manufacturer became Russia's first and Europe's third porcelain factory, and one of the city's legends. The company's iconic and most famous pattern, cobalt net, was created in 1944 by Anna Yatskevich, who was awarded a gold medal at the World EXPO exhibition in Brussels in 1958. The design is regarded as a symbol of the Siege of Leningrad during World War II. It was inspired by the image of cross-taped windows of buildings and cross spotlights illuminating the sky during the siege. 92 Nevsky Prospekt; 7 Vladimirsky Prospekt; 10 Bolshaya Konyushennaya Ulitsa imp.ru



KRESTETSKAYA STROCHKA FACTORY

Krestetskaya Strochka Factory

Russian embroidery is almost an extinct art form these days. This means it is all the more precious to see the revival of the Krestetskaya Strochka factory, which produces handmade tablecloths, napkins and bed linens using a unique technique developed in the late 18th century in northwest Russia and exclusive to the manufacturer. Some of the factory's products are recognized as the cultural heritage of Russia and are preserved in

the collections of the State Hermitage Museum and other galleries.

2 Bolshaya Konyushennaya Ulitsa



RUSSKIYE SAMOTSVETY

Ruskiye Samotsvety

As a former imperial capital, St. Petersburg had its own fine jewelry producers. The Ruskiye Samotsvety jewelry factory was founded in 1912 by Tsar Nicholas II and followed in the footsteps of the Imperial Lapidary Works established in 1712. Today, this is still one of Russia's finest jewelry-makers and the only company in Russia that has preserved the centuries-old craft of filigree enamel on silver—a type of cloisonné enameling where the cloisons are made of twisted wire soldered to the base and filled with opaque enamel. The factory makes popular enamel pendants in the style of Faberge eggs.

30A Ligovsky Prospekt; 3 Ulitsa Yefimova; 3-5 Pervaya Krasnoarmeiskaya Ulitsa; 8 Karl Faberge Square russam.ru



RAZGULYAEV & BLAGONRAVOVA

Razgulyaev & Blagonravova

The young and exciting St. Petersburg brand Razgulyaev & Blagonravova, which makes hand-made shoes, is the favorite shopping spot for the city's culture vultures. The company's signature collections include home slippers decorated with motifs from the paintings of Kazimir Malevich, Vassily Kandinsky and Raphael. "From the very start we really wanted to connect with the arts: Living in St. Petersburg, it is impossible not to relate to its amazing, vast museum collections," said Lyudmila Razgulyaeva, the brand's founder and director. "The State Russian Museum got very interested in our collection inspired by paintings of Kazimir Malevich, and for the Faberge Museum we made special models with a print referring to one of Carl Faberge's earliest jeweled eggs, the First Hen egg."

4 Stolyarny Pereulok
home-shoes.business.site



DEKART GALLERY

DekArt

The DekArt gallery is one of St. Petersburg's best-kept secrets for authentic and inspired

presents. The venue sells paintings, ceramics, glass, textiles and other crafts made by some of the most creative local artists. These works are connected to St. Petersburg both emotionally and aesthetically.

8 Karl Faberge Square
dekartgallery.ru



STATE RUSSIAN MUSEUM

The Shops of the State Russian Museum

If you love Russian art, do not miss the Russian Museum shops, located in the main building and its branches, including the Stroganov Palace (17 Nevsky Prospekt). On offer are scarves and T-shirts, dishes, toys, umbrellas and puzzles, all inspired by the museum's collections.

2-4 Inzhenernaya Ulitsa
en.rusmuseum.ru



VARVARA SKRIPKINA

Varvara Skripkina Gallery of Dolls

Another local gallery with a distinct St. Petersburg feel and a favorite of locals is the Varvara Skripkina Gallery of Dolls. You are sure to enjoy their permanent exhibition of dolls and puppets made by around 60 local artists over the past few decades. Skripkina brings warmth and humor to her artfully made creatures from Russian books, films and cartoons, as well as historical and fictitious characters.

53/3 Bolshaya Morskaya Ulitsa

INFO FOR U.S. CITIZENS TRAVELING TO THE WORLD CUP IN RUSSIA

EMBASSY MOSCOW

Bolshoy Deviatinsky Pereulok 8
+ (7) (495) 728-5577 or + (7) (495) 728-5000 (after hours)
moscowacs@state.gov

CONSULATE GENERAL YEKATERINBURG

Ulitsa Gogolya 15
+ (7) (343) 379-3001 or + (7) 917-569-3549 (after hours)
consulekatakacs@state.gov

CONSULATE GENERAL VLADIVOSTOK

Pushkinskaya Ulitsa 32
+ (7) (4232) 300-070 or + (7) (914) 791-0067 (after hours)
vladcons@state.gov

SERVICES FOR U.S. CITIZENS DURING THE WORLD CUP

- Replacing lost or stolen passports (only at a U.S. embassy or consulate)
- Providing information on medical resources
- Helping victims of crime
- Assisting after an arrest or detention
- Locating a lost U.S. citizen
- Helping after the death of a U.S. citizen

EMERGENCY SERVICES IN RUSSIA

- All Emergency Services: Call 112 or 101
- Police: Call 102 or 112 if using a mobile phone
- Fire: Call 101
- Medical: Call 103

USEFUL LINKS

- Official FIFA World Cup Russia 2018 Website
www.fifa.com/worldcup/index.html
- Fan Guide Information
welcome2018.com/en/fan_guide
- Official ticket reseller
www.fifa.com/worldcup/organisation/ticketing/index.html

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ru.usembassy.gov

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twitter.com/USEmbRu
travel.state.gov/WorldCup

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twitter.com/travelgov

Sign up for the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at step.state.gov to receive important safety and security information.



pevriana



ARVO PÄRT CENTRE

Arvo Pärt, Rehabilitated in Moscow

By Alexander Feinberg

Exhibition celebrates the famous Estonian composer

The Sergei Prokofiev Museum is presenting a new exhibition focusing on the life and music of Arvo Pärt, the Estonian giant of classical and choral music. The exhibition comprises photographs, memorabilia and interactive displays about the composer.

Pärt's music has earned, by the standards of contemporary classical music, enormous and even mainstream popularity. Born in 1935 in the village of Paide, Estonia, Pärt came into the public eye with his 1960 composition "Nekrolog," the first piece in Estonia composed using Arnold Schoenberg's 12-tone technique. Denounced as formalistic by the Soviet authorities, "Nekrolog" was soon banned from being performed in the Soviet Union.

Until 1968, Pärt continued writing using Schoenberg's atonal method, though he would often combine it with earlier styles of music to juxtapose atonal and more tonal melodies. He called the method "collage," and used it to create his "Collage sur B-A-C-H" in 1964, and "Credo" in 1968. This theme of dualism in his music would continue into his later compositions.

Silence and study

The revolutionary "Credo" was a critical juncture for Pärt, coming at a time of the composer's spiritual and creative transformation. It hinted at Pärt's turn from Lutheranism to Orthodox Christianity and his eventual break with

the orderly 12-tone technique of his youth.

After this piece, he would go silent for eight years, writing only one work, Symphony No. 3, in 1971. During this period, he reconsidered his approach to composition, ending his earlier method in favor of something entirely new. He engaged in a deep study of Gregorian chant and the music of the Middle Ages, embracing its spiritual polyphony and religiosity. Pärt compared his reclusive period to "learning how to walk all over again."

The composer re-emerged in 1976 with a three-minute piano piece entitled "Für Alina." Simple and meditative, it debuted Pärt's new Tintinnabuli technique, which he developed using ideas from medieval chants. It was a departure from his earlier work, far removed from the atonality of "Nekrolog" and "Credo."

His music was disapproved of by the Soviet authorities, especially due to its religious themes.

It is as the inventor of Tintinnabuli and a pioneer of holy minimalism that Pärt would capture the hearts and minds of the Western audience.

Tintinnabuli is characterized by having two voices that are intertwined, and Pärt, now a devout Russian-Orthodox Christian, thought of it as an analog for his religious struggles. In an interview with the musician Björk in 2017, the composer commented that "one line is my sins, the other line is forgiveness for my sins."

Pärt put the idea into greater effect with the 1977 orchestral composition "Tabula Rasa" — one of the first of his works to reach a Western audience. It is meditative, spiritual, melancholy and, as the music critic Alex Ross notes, it has even been "a vehicle of solace" for the terminally ill and dying.

World fame

His music met with the disapproval of Soviet authorities, especially due to its religious themes. In 1980 Pärt left the country. He, his wife Nora and their two sons moved to Vienna and then to Berlin, where they lived for 30 years and where he continued to find success. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, his music exploded in Estonia. In 2010 he returned.

Now, as in the Soviet Era, Pärt does not shy away from the political in his work. After the 2006 murder of journalist Anna Politkovskaya, the composer dedicated a year of his concerts to her memory. Then, in 2008, Pärt dedicated

his Symphony No. 4 to Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who was then imprisoned in Russia on what were widely condemned as politically motivated charges.

Pärt's international standing has also steadily grown over the last decades, and his music is believed to be the most played among any living classical composer in the world. It has appeared in over 40 films, ranging from the show "The Young Pope" to — astonishingly — "Avengers: Age of Ultron." In fact, Pärt's music has been in so many movies that in 2008 The Guardian published an article titled "Is It Time to Give Pärt a Rest?"

Pärt has received many commissions, including from the Vatican, the International Olympic Committee (for 2006) and many of the world's major orchestras. At 82, he continues to compose and fill concert halls.

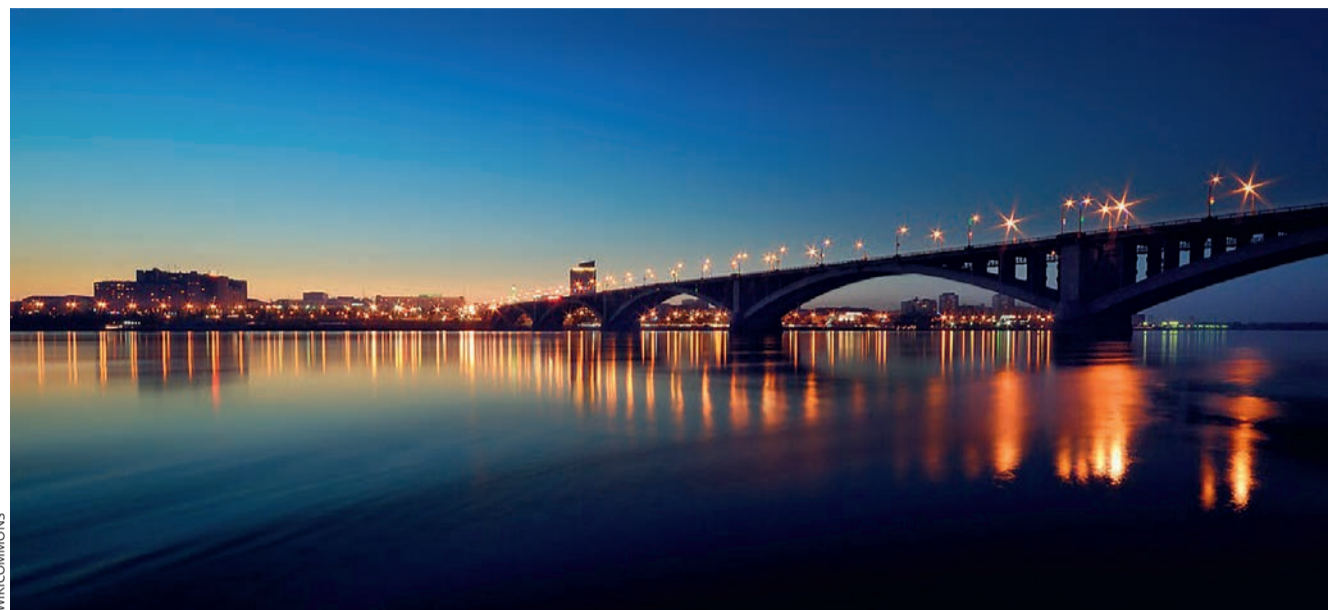
Where to hear Pärt

The Satirikon theater is showing a "movement play" titled #NEBALET, which sets contemporary choreography to the music of Bizet, Mozart and Pärt. It will be performed on July 27, Sept. 10 and Oct. 15.

The exhibition at the Prokofiev Museum runs through Aug. 31.

Sergei Prokofiev Museum, 6 Kamergersky Pereulok. Metro Teatralnaya. glinka.museum/en/contacts/muzey-s-s-prokofeva-.php

Get Out of Town: Some Recommended Travel Spots



WIKICOMMONS

Krasnoyarsk

Krasnoyarsk is usually considered the capital of central-eastern Siberia. Founded in the early 17th century, it gradually grew into a large industrial center. After a rough period in the 1990s, the city has cleaned up nicely, with restored parks, churches and an interesting mix of wooden architecture, art nouveau, constructivism and Soviet modernist buildings. It has also become an important center of contemporary art, with its own biennale.

Painter Vasily Surikov, famous for his large-scale historical paintings, was born in Krasnoyarsk and there is a street, a square and a museum named after him. Located

in a splendid art nouveau mansion, the Surikov Museum has a strong collection of local icons, paintings and sketches by the artist.

The Paraskeva Pyatnitsa chapel was built in 1855 in place of a wooden watchtower. Located at the top of the Karaulnaya (Sentinel) hill, it is one of the main symbols of the city with great views of the city center.

If you are interested in culinary tourism, try Siberian specialties and great cocktails at the Bulgakov restaurant (12 Ulitsa Surikova). For an outing, go to the right bank of Yenisei River to the “Stolby” (Pillars) nature reserve.

Khabarovsk

Khabarovsk is Russia's farthest east outpost, just 30 kilometers from China. In fact, the area was controlled by China until 1858, when it was ceded to Russia. Named after one of the first explorers of the Amur River region, Yefrei Khabarov, the town was founded as a military outpost, but quickly grew into a major industrial center.

The city center is set snugly along the curve of the Amur River. Both the main street and park are named after Nikolai Muravyov-Amursky, the statesman and diplomat responsible for founding Khabarovsk.

Ulitsa Muravyova-Amurskogo is lined with beautiful buildings designed in many styles. Don't miss the Far Eastern Library, which combines regular red and grey Manchurian brick in what became a local style, and the city's art



PIVABAY

nouveau buildings.

For street art, go to Park Dynamo. Learn about Far Eastern history at the Khabarovsk Territorial Museum, and check out local art at the Fedotov Gallery. There are plenty of good Chinese, Japanese and Korean restaurants all over the city, but if you are looking for excellent coffee and baked goods, go to Muskatny Kit (82 Ulitsa Kalinina).

Yaroslavl

Yaroslavl is the largest city in the Golden Ring. Founded by the legendary Kievan Rus prince Yaroslav the Wise around 1010, it is also the oldest city on the Volga River, with a historic center listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. A beautiful park now covers the “Strelka” where the Volga and Kotorosl rivers meet, once the site of a fortress.

Be sure to visit the 16th-century Monastery of the Transfiguration of the Savior and enjoy the best views of the center from its bell tower. Two other architectural must-sees are two 17th-century churches: the Church of Elijah the Prophet and the 15-domed John the Baptist Church in the neighborhood of Tolchovo.

Yaroslavl is famous for its beer. Check out Pivovar, which resembles a Bavarian Biergarten and serves the local beer brand Durdin (14 Revolyutsionny Proyezd). If you prefer art to beer, there is the Yaroslavl Art Museum, which has an especially fine collection of works by impressionist Konstantin Korovin.



ALEX MALEV / FLICKR



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Saratov

Saratov was founded in 1590 near the spot formerly occupied by Uvek, a major Golden Horde city. In the 18th and 19th centuries Saratov became an important shipping port and the center of the Volga German population; it then became a “closed city” during the Soviet period due to its military importance.

The pedestrian street Prospekt Kirova runs through the center of the city with all the main sights clustered around it. Don't miss the beautiful Reineke mansion (now a hospital) designed by art nouveau architect Fyodor Schekhtel, whose parents were Volga Germans. Walk around the *lipki* (linden trees) and catch a concert at the pseudo-gothic Saratov Conservatory. Get your caffeine fix at Coffee 3 (34 Ulitsa Nekrasova) or Trista Barista (15 Ulitsa Kirova).

The Radishchev Museum is one of the first public museums in Russia with a fine collection of 19th century Russian art and interesting temporary exhibitions. Come in the summer to stroll along the Volga embankment, take a boat ride to an island or bask in the sun on one of the city's beaches.

Kaluga

If you are tired of Moscow's hustle and bustle, get on an express train at Kievsky Station and visit Kaluga, a quaint old town with vibrant artistry, gastronomy and nightlife. Founded in the mid-14th century, it became a major trading city on the Oka River during the reign of Catherine II. In the 20th century Kaluga became a major industrial center while managing to keep its small town appeal.

Wealthy merchants filled the city with architectural masterpieces. The former estate of merchant Pyotr Zolotaryov now houses a regional history museum, while the mansion of Ivan Bilibin is the now local fine arts museum.

The recently restored pseudo-gothic market arcade on Stary Torg (Old Market Square) is the hub of the city, with souvenir shops and Gastronom, a great gastropub offering traditional Russian dishes “with a twist.” On the other side of the square is the city park with the magnificent Trinity Cathedral.

Moskovskaya and Voskresenskaya streets preserve the provincial atmosphere of past centuries and are great to walk around.

Cafe 1554 has the best coffee and breakfasts in the city (18 Ulitsa Moskovskaya).



WIKICOMMONS

Chapayev and Void

July 12-15
“Chapayev and Void” is probably the most popular production at Praktika, one of Moscow’s most experimental theaters. It’s based on a novel by Viktor Pelevin, also known as “Buddha’s Little Finger” in the English translation. Whether you have read this modern Russian literary classic or not, this production by Maxim Didenko will leave you spellbound. The first and longest act is a bona fide musical with a live band on stage. Ivan Kushnir, Didenko’s longtime collaborator, wrote the music. The second act is devoted to one of the scenes of the novel and the third is a contemporary dance performance.
Praktika
30 Bolshoi Kozikhinsky Pereulok. Metro Mayakovskaya.
praktikatheatre.ru



ly 1940s (with Stepanova supplying sketches for sports uniforms).
The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts
12 Ulitsa Volkhonka. Metro Kropotkinskaya.
pushkinmuseum.art



Opera Jenufa
July 11
“Jenufa” is one of this season’s biggest premieres at the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Music Theater. An opera by Leos Janacek, “Jenufa” is popular in Europe but seldom performed in Russia. It was first produced in Brno in 1904 and is often called the “Moravian national opera.” “Jenufa” is a drama of Greek tragedy proportions placed in a turn-of-the-century Moravian village. The opera made Janacek a world-famous composer.
Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Music Theater
17 Ulitsa Bolshaya Dmitrovka. Metro Chekhovskaya.
stanmus.com

Concerts On-The-Go
July 12
On-The-Go, one of Moscow’s leading English language indie bands, will play a concert at 16 tons on Thursday. With four albums under their collective belt, they are veterans of Russia’s indie scene. Additionally, they released an acoustic album last year and are working on some new material now. On-The-Go’s music can be best described as indie-pop with elements of R&B that is easy to dance to.
16 Tons
6/1 Ulitsa Presnensky Val. Metro Ulitsa 1905 Goda.
16tons.ru

Exhibition Test of Strength
Through Sept. 9
“Test of Strength” is the first “Resident” project at VDNKh, during which various museums present parts of their collections. Located at the Rabochoy i Kolkhoznitsa museum, itself an extraordinary monument with the giant “Worker and Collective Farm Girl” by sculptor Vera Mukhina, “Test of Strength” brings to Moscow some 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 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 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 Kasli Cast Iron Pavilion, which won an award at the Paris Expo in 1900.
The Rabochoy i Kolkhoznitsa Pavilion
123B Propekt Mira. Metro VDNKh.
vdmh.ru



Opera Prose
July 12
The Stanislavsky Electrotheater is famous for its post-modernist productions, but “Prose” is truly unusual. Officially an “opera” by one of Russia’s foremost academic composers, Vladimir Rannev, it consists of two parts played simultaneously

on stage. One is Anton Chekhov’s prose from his novella “Steppe,” which is not read but sung by an a capella group. The other is the short story “Groom” by Yury Mamleyev, a prominent fiction writer from the second half of the 20th century. The text of “Groom” is projected in comic-strip format on a screen superimposed over the stage. The comic-strip bubbles are dubbed in English.
Stanislavsky Electrotheater
23 Tverskaya Ulitsa. Metro Tverskaya.
electrotheatre.com

Exhibition General Rehearsal, Act Two
Through July 22
“General Rehearsal” at MMOMA is literally a rehearsal for the grand opening of a new museum in Moscow – V-A-C Foundation’s space at the revamped GES-2 power plant in the heart of Moscow, slated for 2019. “General Rehearsal” combines masterpieces from three art collections – V-A-C, KADIST and the Moscow Museum of Modern Art. It’s also a rehearsal in a different sense, as it follows the structure of a theatrical production and will be divided into three acts. Act One, based on Chekhov’s “Seagull,” has already taken place, and Act Two has been launched. It is based not on a play, but rather a series of questions and answers by Austrian philosopher Armen Avanessian, entitled “A Philosophical Play in 11 Thought-images.” The questions range from metaphysical to futuristic, and the answers are played out by the artworks on display.
Moscow Museum of Modern Art
25 Ulitsa Petrovka. Metro Pushkinskaya, Chekhovskaya.
mmoma.ru

Exhibition Rodchenko and Stepanova. Football
Through July 15
This small exhibition includes paintings, graphic artworks and photographs related to football and sports by the great Soviet avant-garde constructivist artists Alexander Rodchenko and Varvara Stepanova. Both were advocates of the cult of athleticism, with sport motifs recurring in their works from the late 1920s until the ear-



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