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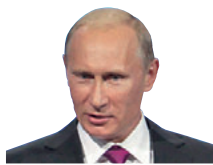
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"We are constantly ... looking for market-based measures to influence this process" - Vladimir Putin

56.29

value of one dollar in rubles on April 26.

\$52.53

price per barrel of Brent crude on April 26.



November 2014 – Russian Central Bank floats the ruble as currency reserves, spent propping up the currency, dwindle.

Keeping Afloat

By **Matthew Bodner** m.bodner@imedia.ru

As the free-floating ruble appreciates, Russia worries about the bottom line

On April 25, Russian President Vladimir Putin publicly backed the Central Bank's November 2014 decision to float the ruble. This policy leaves the currency's value at the mercy of market forces, which currently are conspiring to push the ruble higher vis-a-vis the dollar.

Combined with low oil prices, that trend threatens the government's ability to balance its budget.

The ruble has experienced a steady appreciation against the dollar over the past six months. At the end of November, it was valued at about 60 rubles to the dollar. By the end of March, it had strengthened to around 55 rubles. Meanwhile, oil prices are again dropping after climbing above the \$50-per-barrel mark, putting additional pressure on the state budget.

A rising ruble may be a concern for the government down the line — especially if oil prices fall far below \$50, the minimum Russia needs for a balanced budget.

Putin said the main concern for the government is maintaining a stable currency.

An appreciating ruble causes problems not only for the government's budget, but for business as well. Export-oriented firms benefit from a weaker ruble, as their foreign currency revenues are stronger at home. If the ruble's growth were to continue unchecked, it would actually harm Russia's economy,



Despite pressures on the budget, Russia is not ready to abandon a free-floating ruble.

which is heavily dependent on oil exports.

"The current strength of the ruble is one of the main factors slowing growth in export industries and boosting imports, which has a negative impact on growth," says Rodion Lomivorotov, senior economist at Sberbank CIB. Households and the retail segment of the economy benefit from the currency appreciation, but "this trend is not sustainable," he said.

There seems little immediate prospect that the Russian government will return to currency pegging. "Non-market" efforts to regulate the currency would jeopardize stability, Putin was quoted as saying by the TASS news agency.

"We are not prepared to abandon [free floating the ruble], I want that to be clear," he said.

Still, the authorities are trying to address business worries. The government and the Central Bank constantly discuss market-based means to control the ruble's growth. Buying and selling foreign currencies is one way to do this. Last month, the Finance Ministry announced it would buy up to 69.9 billion rubles (\$1.2 billion) worth of U.S. dollars by May 5th.

In the medium term most economists expect the ruble to correct, reaching 62-63 to the dollar later the year.

Until then, foreigners in Moscow will need to make adjustments. A strong ruble most obviously benefits those whose salaries are paid in rubles — though not entirely. It is unlikely a stronger ruble can will lead to many price decreases in Russia. Meanwhile, those who earn money in foreign currencies are at a clear disadvantage, as their income will be worth less in ruble terms.

"Looking at the euro to ruble exchange rate, I am a little nervous about the recent comeback," one foreign teacher working in Moscow tells The Moscow Times. "But since I was working a different job paying me in rubles during the 2014 crash, and I lost half my dollar salary, I am trying to keep everything in perspective now." **TMT**



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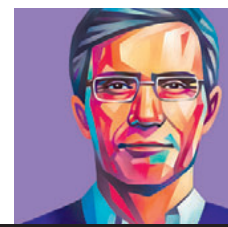
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READING THE KREMLIN

Moscow's Failed French Election Gambit Didn't Have to Be This Way

By **Vladimir Frolov**
Political analyst



With centrist Emmanuel Macron poised to win the French presidency on May 7, the Kremlin is bracing for a tense relationship with France. It sees its hopes for weakening the EU and undermining Russian sanctions dashed.

Following Macron's first round victory, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov issued a cautious statement of respect for the 39-year-old leader. But during the campaign, Moscow did not exactly hide its preferences among the candidates. Macron was not one of them.

In February, Richard Ferrand, secretary-general of Macron's En Marche party, claimed that Russian state-controlled media Russia Today and Sputnik had spread false reports with the aim of swinging public opinion against Macron. The campaign also accused Russia of hacking its computer network. In early April, Sputnik even published a story suggesting that Macron was "a U.S. agent" and possibly "acting in the interests of the U.S. financial market in France."

Moscow's effort to use a social media campaign and a deluge of fake news to slow Macron's surge in the polls since January has created bad blood between Russia and the likely French leader.

But it did not have to be this way. In November 2016, when he declared his candidacy, Macron outlined foreign policy positions that were not hostile to Moscow. He argued that Russia must play a decisive role in ending the conflict in Syria and said ousting Syrian President Bashar Assad cannot be a prior condition for taking action to end the war. He favored

renewed peace talks to stabilize the situation in eastern Ukraine and the gradual lifting of sanctions against Russia.

Moscow ignored Macron at the time because he was still considered a long shot. Besides, Vladimir Putin's personal friend Francois Fillon had just won the primaries for Les Republicains, the major center-right party. Fillon was the most likely winner of the election, followed by Marine Le Pen, the Kremlin's second choice.

With at least three strong candidates — Le Pen, Fillon, and ultra-left populist Jean-Luc Melenchon — mirroring Russia's positions on Crimea, eastern Ukraine, NATO and Syria, it seemed the Kremlin could not lose.

Moscow was relaxed, but that changed in early 2017, when Fillon found himself engulfed in a corruption scandal involving his wife. His ratings tanked and Macron began surging in the polls.

Macron's political outlook is something of a cross between Obama and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, the two Western leaders whose company never made Vladimir Putin comfortable. The decision to use the full power of the Russian media to influence France was as obvious as it was mistaken. Another error was for Putin to directly embrace Le Pen — polls showed she was slated to lose to any other candidate in the runoff. The miscalculation was that relations with Russia would be a central issue in the French elections. They were not.

Macron toughened his stance on Russia after Moscow made it clear it wanted him to lose the election. In an inter-

view with Jeune Afrique magazine a week before the election, he outlined a clear-eyed view of Russia's policies and argued for a French policy of push-back.

But he also left the door open for Moscow to re-engage: "I say to Vladimir Putin in a very direct and determined way that I am ready to revive a demanding dialogue to resolve the crises in which Russia is involved."

The Kremlin is at a crossroads. It might continue the anti-Macron campaign to try and sway the vote in favor of Le Pen — a very tall order. But it might also chose a more strategic tactic and focus on the French parliamentary election in June.

Macron needs a parliamentary majority to govern effectively. But he does not really have a party to field candidates in the election. The center-right Les Republicains (led by another one of Putin's friends, former French president Nicolas Sarkozy) and Marine Le Pen's Front National have a good chance of winning a majority. In the French system, that would result in a "cohabitation," with the government run by the political opposition. This would give Moscow some room for maneuver, checkmating Macron.

But it is still a far-fetched scenario. Common sense would dictate winding down the anti-Macron hysteria in the Russian media, while opening a back-door channel of communication with his advisors through Russia's extensive and powerful business lobby in France.

It will be difficult, but certainly not impossible, to turn the page and move forward. **TMT**



“These corrupt satans have to apologize on their knees” – Kadyrov turns on Novaya Gazeta reporters

2 times

Putin has met with Kadyrov since Nemtsov murder.



Insurgent attacks in Chechnya have been on the rise since December 2016, according to analyst Grigory Shvedov.

3 men

reportedly tortured and killed in Chechen anti-gay crackdown.



Putin's meeting with Kadyrov was interpreted as a show of support — but it wasn't without caveats.

Ramzan Comes to Moscow

By **Matthew Kupfer** and **Mikhail Fishman** newsreporter@imedia.ru

Putin still supports the Chechen strongman — but he's getting nervous

All eyes were on the meeting. Chechnya's mercurial leader, Ramzan Kadyrov, had come to the Kremlin for a rare face-to-face chat with President Vladimir Putin.

In recent weeks, the Chechen strongman had found himself embroiled in several controversies, any one of which could merit a powwow with the president.

In early April, the independent Novaya Gazeta newspaper reported that Kadyrov's security forces were kidnapping, torturing and killing gay men in a mass anti-gay purge. The news had sent shockwaves through the international press, drawing criticism from around the world.

The security situation in Chechnya had deteriorated. Insurgent attacks were on the rise.

And Kadyrov was publicly entangled in a disagreement with Rosneft, Russia's state-controlled oil conglomerate, about the ownership of a Chechnya-based oil firm. A recent report in the Financial Times suggested the business disagreement was spilling over into conflict between both sides.

Such in-person meetings are generally interpreted as a show of support for Kadyrov. That was probably true this time, too. But many believe Moscow's patience for its Chechen proxy is waning.

Struggle for resources

Much about the April 19 meeting was unclear. But Putin made one thing explicit: He was trying to resolve the disagreement between Kadyrov and Rosneft.

Kadyrov informed Putin that he had met with Sechin, but that “certain misunderstandings” persisted.

The issue was money. Energy analysts say that Rosneft faces serious challenges in Chechnya. Although the oil conglomerate owns a majority share of Grozneftgaz, a company that operates oil assets in Chechnya, its day-to-day operations are controlled by Kadyrov's team. It has largely mismanaged the company, says Vladimir Milov, president of the Institute of Energy Policy.

“Oil doesn't extract itself with funding alone. You have to work,” he says. “Chechen authorities don't see it this way.”

With little opportunity to gain complete control over its oil assets in Chechnya, Rosneft would prefer to sell them off — but Kadyrov found their price too high to negotiate.

Then, on April 11, the Financial Times reported that “the clash had escalated so much that there was a need to investigate whether there was ‘a Chechen connection’” in the April 3 bombing of the St. Petersburg metro.

That claim sounded outlandish to many, but the negative public attention was too much for Putin. He apparently or-

dered the two sides to make peace. Kadyrov and Rosneft released a joint statement on the Rosneft website in which they called the newspaper's assertions “deceitful fabrications.”

But Kadyrov understands his power. He clearly took his grievance with Rosneft to Putin. In the wake of the April 19 meeting, energy experts surveyed by The Moscow Times said they believed Rosneft would give the Chechen authorities a discount.

Hidden reality

That prediction was not without its merits. In public, it appears that Kadyrov enjoys Putin's full endorsement. Putin knows that Kadyrov has enemies among the Russian elite and human rights defenders, says Maxim Shevchenko, a journalist who serves as a state representative to the North Caucasus. As a result, the president demonstrates that he considers an attack on Kadyrov as an attack on himself.

This bromance is built on an implicit contract: Kadyrov enforces stability in Chechnya, while Putin closes his eyes to human rights violations in the region.

Technically, Kadyrov's Chechnya is the safest and most developed part of Russia's North Caucasus. “Roads, schools, hospitals — they've got it all,” says Shevchenko, “which distinguishes Chechnya from neighboring Dagestan or North Ossetia.” According to the Chechen leader's standard message, terrorism has been defeated and the region's future is bright.

But reality is hardly so rosy. Starting in Dec. 2016, the picture began changing significantly, says Grigory Shvedov, editor of the Caucasian Knot online news agency and an expert on the Caucasus.

“Over the last four months, terror and insurgent attacks have already exceeded the numbers for last year,” he says.

And during the April 19 meeting, Putin appeared to imply criticism of Kadyrov's rule. He raised the issue of a late March attack on a Russian National Guard regiment in Chechnya, which took the lives of two guardsmen.

“There is no serious terror threat,” Kadyrov told Putin.

“There clearly is some [threat],” the president replied.

Old methods, bad results

Traditionally, Chechen authorities have responded to terror attacks with broad sweep operations. They have been known to take relatives of suspected terrorists hostage, and to burn down suspects' homes.

Lately, however, these harsh methods of enforcing collective responsibility have stopped working, Shvedov says. What's more, they are yielding serious side effects.

According to Shvedov, Chechnya's crackdown on gays was the consequence of a wider crackdown.

To fight resurgent terrorism, the authorities cast a broad net, detaining many people with no direct connection to terror. As is standard practice, the security forces searched through the detainees' mobile phones. On one of these phones, they discovered gay pornography and the contact information of local gay men. Based on these contacts, the authorities launched a wave of mass detentions of gays.

According to Tanya Lokshina, senior researcher for Human Rights Watch, the crackdown began in late February and lasted several weeks before stopping. In mid-March, it picked up again, and attracted the attention of Novaya Gazeta, which brought the shocking story to public attention.

In the April 19 meeting, Kadyrov brushed off the accusations of an anti-gay crackdown as false. Putin appeared interested, but seemingly unaware of the situation.

Insiders say he knows a lot more than he was letting on. While he might not be worried about rights violations in Chechnya, he is concerned about the negative attention this scandal has attracted, a source close to the Russian government told The Moscow Times. Putin also fears declining stability on the ground in Chechnya. Kadyrov is increasingly failing to deliver his side of their tacit agreement.

“That's why the tone of the meeting was critical,” says Shvedov.

With Chechnya heavily armed and completely under the control of Kadyrov, Putin can hardly afford to remove or even openly scold the Chechen leader. Airing his grievances with Kadyrov in public is the last thing Putin wants to do.

But the situation inside the republic is growing more volatile. Russia's economic crisis is delivering a major blow to the region, which is dependant on subsidies. And the children of Kadyrov's repressed political enemies are on the warpath, a source close to the government told The Moscow Times.

Putin may be trying to show Kadyrov that his power is not limitless, and he cannot have everything he wants.

On April 25, the RBC business news site reported that Kadyrov and Rosneft's Sechin had finally come to an agreement. Kadyrov's oil dream would not come true. In contradiction to energy experts' predictions, however, Rosneft would continue its work in Chechnya, and the Chechen authorities would not receive the company's local oil and gas assets.

But, par for the course, Putin made sure to throw Kadyrov a bone: Rosneft would invest in Chechnya's social infrastructure, building housing for the local population.

Even Putin doesn't change horses midstream. **TMT**

4 Looking Forward

April 27 – May 3, 2017



*"We will be able to provide for 100 percent of those people who want to stay in the district where they live now" – Moscow Mayor **Sergei Sobyenin***

1.6Mln

people could be affected.

125 yrs

lifespan of some buildings slated for demolition.



Russia's construction industry has been stagnating since 2014 and real estate sales have plummeted.



ANDREI MAKHONIN / TASS

The Great Leveler

By **Daria Litvinova** d.litvinova@imedia.ru

A government program to demolish residential buildings has brought Muscovites together in protest

As 300 angry voices drowned out Gennady Tokanov's pleas, he retreated into a nearby police van to address the crowd from the loudspeaker inside.

"Don't worry," the deputy head of Moscow's Akademicheskiy district said. "Your homes will not be demolished unless you approve of it." His improvised speech, however, failed to calm the assembled crowd.

The meeting between municipal representatives and the district's anxious residents whose apartments are slated for demolition was turning sour. An audacious renovation program which could see some 8,000 five-story buildings across the city reduced to rubble had many in the crowd worried for the future of their homes.

"This is violating the Constitution!" meeting participants shouted. "You're disrespecting our property rights!"

Dozens of similar confrontations took place across Moscow on April 19. Many looked much like the one in Akademicheskiy, with hundreds of concerned homeowners mobbing their local officials, anxious to learn the fate of their homes.

Moscow's Mayor Sergei Sobyenin unexpectedly announced the program in February as an effort to upgrade rickety, five-story Khrushchevki buildings. The pre-fab buildings, named after the 1950s Soviet leader, were only supposed to last 50 years. Many had become dangerous to live in, Sobyenin said, and investing in renovation just wouldn't make sense.

But it soon became clear that the scale of the program was much more ambitious. Not only would the renovations include all five-story buildings, authorities revealed, it could see whole districts torn down — regardless of their age or height.

Ahead of presidential and mayoral elections next year — and with core details of the program still to be made public

— the plans have agitated thousands of Muscovites, including those who might otherwise abstain from politics.

Before and after

Muscovites are no strangers to urban development. In 1999, then Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov pledged to tear down 500 outdated Khrushchevki within 10 years. Most of those were in poor condition. Some residents feared for their safety.

Eighteen years on, the former mayor's program is still not finished (68 buildings have still to be demolished). But in those years, Luzhkov's plan never sparked criticism. The fact it wasn't implemented more quickly was the only point of contention.

The terms of the new program are much worse by comparison, explains Margarita Shefer, an activist in the Akademicheskiy district, during a courtyard meeting.

"If you don't like the apartment they offer you, they'll

get a court order and evict you," she tells a crowd of frowning pensioners. "You'll be warned 60 days in advance and not given alternatives to choose from."

"They're not offering you property of the same market value. They're offering property — in your district or a neighboring district — of the same size," she continued. "This will be the only thing you'll be able to contest in court — square footage."

This is how the program was outlined in a bill that passed its first reading in parliament on April 20. And it includes more than dubious apartment exchange protocol: The legislation allows Moscow authorities to declare whole blocks of buildings "renovation zones," where existing construction standards and regulations would no longer apply.

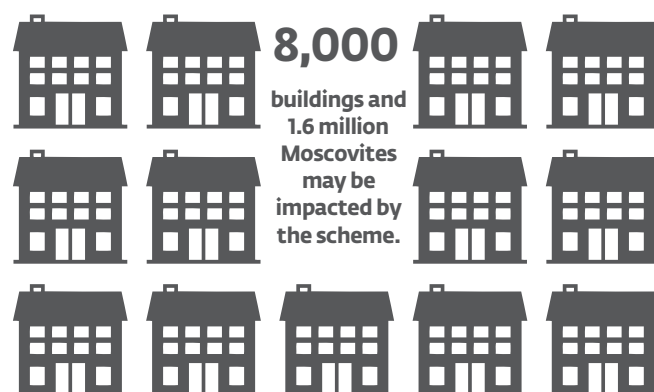
In reality, the bill will make it possible for any piece of real estate to be demolished or built within the renovation zone, Pyotr Ivanov, a sociologist studying urbanism, wrote in a recent column.

"Talk of five-story buildings, Khrushchevki and outdated housing is just a pretext," he writes.

Ivanov says the program is designed to benefit real estate developers. Russia's construction industry has been stagnating since the 2014 economic crisis and real estate sales have plummeted.

The renovation bill offers simplified regulations for construction companies. More importantly, it outlines giving residents new apartments that would be paid for from the city budget, and "that would boost the demand for economy class housing," Ivanov writes.

Several large construction companies have already expressed their willingness to participate in the program. Some, according to news reports, are even dropping their existing projects to free resources for the lucrative scheme.



Looking Forward

The Moscow Times
No. 5801

5



Khrushchevki were named after the 1950s Soviet leader Nikita Krushchev

8,000

buildings at risk of demolition.



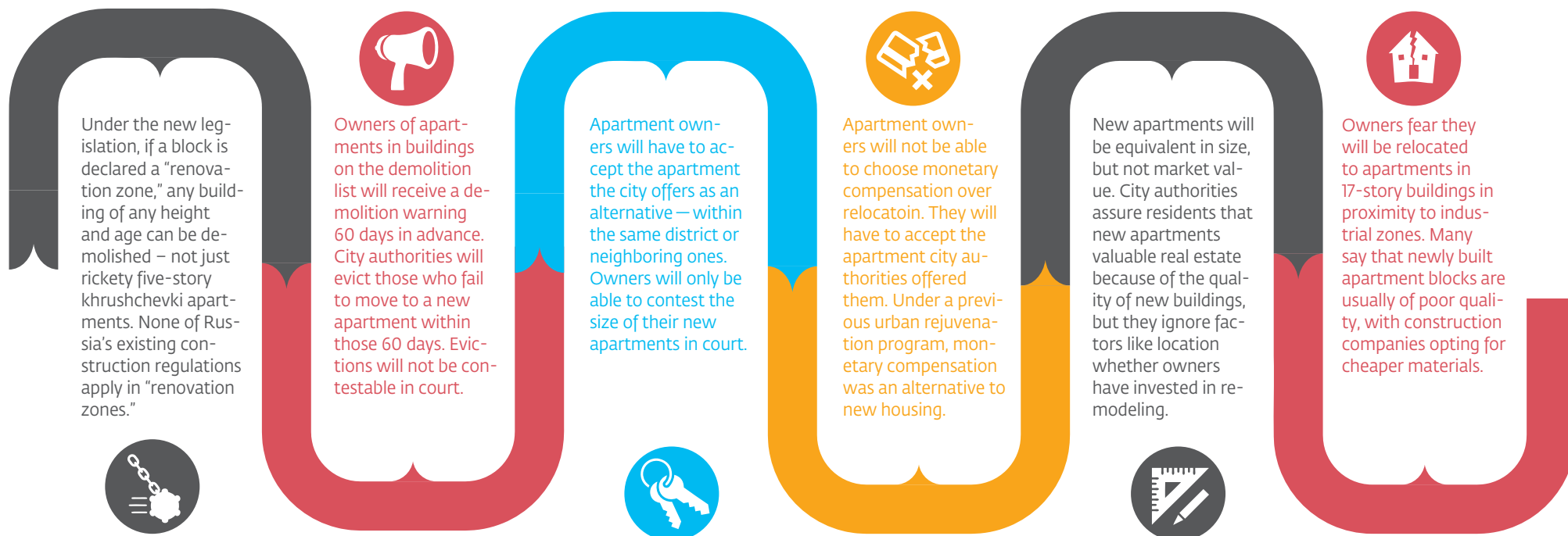
"It's their home, something they want to pass on to their children, something they associate with family." - political scientist **Yekaterina Schulmann**

May 10

preliminary demolition lists to be released.

Why Muscovites are up in arms

The terms of Sobyenin's urban renovation program has agitated many Muscovites who fear for the future of their homes.



Source: Draft bill of urban renovation program

Cons outweigh pros

For ordinary Muscovites — whether they want new apartments or not — the plan is unpopular.

"I went out on a limb and remodeled my apartment," says Olga, a Muscovite in her 30s who owns a flat in the Akademichesky district. "And now they essentially want me to go back to square one, throw all this away and start afresh in a new, empty apartment."

Others don't want to give up their views, proximity to the metro, quiet neighbourhoods, or nearby parks. "Why do I have to throw the dice and risk giving all of this up?" says Tatyana who lives in the same district.

Neither woman knows whether their buildings will be demolished because definitive lists have not been made available yet. But the head of the Akademichesky municipality, Elvira Shigabetdinova, told the district's residents that every four and five-story building in Moscow is on the preliminary demolition list.

When residents of dilapidated buildings in the area ask Shigabetdinova when they will finally get new apartments — where floors are not rotting and pipes are not leaking — she frowns. "Sorry, your building probably won't be torn down after all," she says. "The plot of land is too small for new construction. It's just not interesting for developers."

Some residents of aging *Khrushchevki* who do want to move into new apartments worry their replacements won't actually be better. Economy-class buildings that are being put together now have lower ceilings, thinner walls and are usually made of cheaper materials.

"Moscow officials promise us better apartments," says Sher. "But the bill just says 'equivalent [in size].' If these promises are true, we want them in writing."

The good fight

In the meantime, residents of five-story buildings are organizing. Many are sending letters to President Putin, Mayor Sobyenin and the State Duma. Neighborhoods gather in their courtyards to discuss the future of their homes and how they can save them.

"We realized we had to join forces with other buildings in our block to be heard," says Vladimir, a resident of the Akademichesky district who leads an activist group in his building. "A whole block of buildings is a force to be reckoned with."

Moscow authorities have been caught off guard by the pushback and hope it will be short-lived. Deputy Mayor Anastasia Rakova reportedly said during a recent city hall meeting that it was important to "avoid scandal" when the demolition lists are revealed. "By late July the renovation topic should die down; people should focus on who's moving where."

State television channels are airing segments about how happy Muscovites are about the prospect of moving from their houses to better apartments.

Residents of some five-story buildings told The Moscow Times that they received calls from municipalities, warning them about "crazy activists" attempting to sabotage the program.

But Muscovites are sceptical. And some who say they were never interested in politics are becoming frustrated by the

new legislation — and the authorities implementing it.

"I could have never imagined that something like this was possible until I started reading the bill," says Olga. "This opened my eyes to how much corruption and lawlessness there is. I am never voting for [the ruling politicians] ever again."

The reaction to the program is not unexpected, says political analyst Yekaterina Schulmann: for Russians, real estate is sacred. It was only after the fall of the Soviet Union that Russians took ownership of their homes, which have since soared in value. "It's their home, something they want to pass on to their children, something they associate with their family," Schulmann told The Moscow Times. "Impinging on this is far from smart."

The pushback is just the beginning, Schulmann adds. Upcoming 2018 elections — both mayoral and presidential — may force authorities to cave and start bargaining. And starting May 15, Muscovites will be asked to vote whether they want their buildings to be excluded from demolition lists to be released on May 10. "Making decisions without conferring with the people is not possible anymore," Schulmann says.

Authorities are already making concessions. Mayor Sobyenin promised Muscovites he would amend the bill to guarantee new apartments in the same district. President Putin threatened not to sign the bill if it violates rights. But Muscovites are wary. "I don't trust statements, I trust laws," says Alexei who lives in the Akademichesky district. "Right now authorities are lobbying for a law that violates my constitutional property rights. If they amend it, we can talk about trust." **TMT**

Renovations that irked Moscow

1 Replacing Sidewalk Tiles

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin's first big project after taking office in 2010 was replacing the plating of sidewalks from asphalt to concrete tiles. Due to a lack of transparency in the tendering process, and rumours (proven wrong) that the mayor's wife was the sole supplier of the new tiles, opposition activists accused the mayor of embezzlement. The city administration argued that, besides the fact that the tiles would look better, they would be cheaper to maintain and more durable. This year however, the tiles are being replaced again.

2 "My Street" Renovation Program

Launched in 2015, the My Street program was described by Moscow's city administration as "the

biggest renovation program in Moscow's modern history." Between 2015 and 2016, Moscow authorities renovated 106 streets in the city center. This year, City Hall plans on remaking another 87 streets, squares and public spaces in central Moscow. The My Street works are usually conducted in summer months and elicit complaints from Muscovites.

3 Paid Parking

The introduction of paid parking in some of Moscow's most congested streets in 2013 was intended to combat the city's notorious traffic jams. In the years since, paid parking zones have expanded over the entirety of Moscow's city center and beyond. Initially, the new regulation sparked criticism and provoked several thousand Muscovites

to take part in protests, with drivers accusing the government of unjustly obstructing access to parking spaces and setting rates too high.

4 Kiosk Demolition

In February 2016, city authorities demolished 97 kiosks and small retail pavilions in areas surrounding Moscow metro stations. Authorities justified the move, saying the buildings were set up illegally, or obtained the necessary permits illegally. Owners of the pavilions argued there was nothing illegal about them and even tried to fight in court for compensation — to no avail. The demolitions continued throughout the year, with hundreds of buildings destroyed



"They put an atom bomb under the building called Russia, which then exploded," Putin about the Bolsheviks in January 2016.

10%

of Russians vote for the Communist Party.

20,000

number Communist youth group members Komsomol counts across Russia.



May 1 (Labor Day) became an official holiday after the Bolshevik revolution. It lost its national significance after the collapse of the Soviet system.

Young, Hipster and Red

By [Ola Cichowlas](#) and [Bradley Jardine](#) newsreporter@imedia.ru

A new generation of sharp and savvy left-wing politicians is emerging from the crusty shell of the Russian Communist Party



VIKTOR BEREZKIN / TASS

Russian communists have always been accused of aging. But last year, 20 percent of newcomers were under 30, argues young and ambitious communist Andrei Klychkov.

When the creaking, bureaucratic Soviet state suddenly collapsed in 1991, Andrei Klychkov was just a schoolboy in Kaliningrad, Russia's exclave in northern Europe.

Now, twenty-six years on, Klychkov is a lawyer — with crisp presentation and sharp suits. He's also the Communist candidate in Moscow's mayoral elections.

"Anyone who says socialism did not work simply does not know their history," he tells *The Moscow Times* from his office in the Moscow City Duma, the local parliament.

For some, it may come as a surprise to learn that a young cosmopolitan with memories of socialism's decline would join Russia's Communist Party. After all, most of the organization's primary support comes from those generations who properly remember the Soviet Union.

Over and above the retro imagery, the party is headed by a political relic. Gennady Zyuganov, 73, has been its leader since 1993. Barring an unexpected change, he will lead the party in his fifth presidential election next year. Few expect a breakthrough. His electoral support has been in clear decline since 1996 and the closely fought campaign against Yeltsin. Back then, his support was so strong that the entire Western-supported government machine was unleashed to stop him.

Earlier this year, rumours abounded that Zyuganov would stand down as party leader to make way for a younger generation of Russian Communists. Klychkov was among the favourites to replace him.

He also caught the eye of Moscow's liberals. The capital's political circles were astounded when Alexey Navalny, the face of Russia's opposition movement, expressed support for Klychkov's bid for the mayoral office.

Some Navalny supporters were outraged. How could Navalny back a Communist who recently laid flowers at Stalin's grave? They asked.

"I felt like I was at the centre of a liberal family feud," Klychkov laughs, adding that he has always laid flowers at Stalin's grave without any problems in the past.

For the young communist, the Soviet leader is a hero who won the Second World War, industrialized the country and "made it great again."

Not your grandmother's party

But since the Soviet collapse, the communists have mostly been out to win the pensioner vote and have struggled to shake off their image as the movement for babushkas.

"The communists have a stable electorate, the majority of whom are elderly people who support Soviet ideology," says Alexei Grazhdankin, deputy director of the independent Levada pollster.

Klychkov, along with other Communist Party deputies, wants the organization to modernize. "I realize that you can't force a young Russian to read Pravda," he says.

To achieve this, the party recruited Igor Petrygin-Rodionov to revamp its propaganda leaflets. New images feature a vaping Stalin, and another echoes the Terminator franchise with a leather-clad Karl Marx declaring "I'll be back!"

The party has also benefitted from some star power, employing American UFC fighter Jeff Monson to be the face of their flagship sports program.

Klychkov believes the party is succeeding. He argues that 20 percent of Russians who joined the party last year were under 30.

One of the organizations hoping to boost the party's younger vote is the Komsomol, a Soviet-era youth group which continues to exist today. The Komsomol's current leader, Yaroslav Listov, says it's a myth that only older Russians are inclined toward socialism. "Young Russians want to work for the good of their country, not for some oligarch or businessman," he says.

Today, the Komsomol counts around 20,000 members between the age of 18 and 35 nationwide. "We are the biggest opposition youth group in the country," claims Listov.

But whether the Communists are really in the opposition is questionable. The party belongs to Russia's so-called "systemic opposition," which offers symbolic resistance to select policies, but reliably supports Putin's course. Klychkov says the party supports Putin's foreign policy, but is unhappy with the policies implemented by the current United Russia government.

Ilya Budraitskis, editor of *Openleft.ru*, a leftist website, sees the party as an empty electoral structure representing Putin's

interests. He believes the party's youth outreach program is not genuine. "The party is wary of any activism beyond its control. This has been evident over the years, with the party purging its ranks of members who showed grassroots engagement," he says.

Yet Russia's endemic corruption has attracted many under-40s to the party.

"Young Russians are angry when they see officials in their villas and driving such nice cars," says 34 year-old communist deputy Pavel Tarasov.

Burying the past

Corruption has become the key campaign issue for Russia's young socialists. The Communist Party was, for example, the only faction in the Duma to demand an investigation into corruption allegations against Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev.

Klychkov claims the Soviet Union was free of corruption: "Stalin died with just one suit and a pair of boots in his wardrobe. That's why people trusted him," he says.

The young Communists may have support from Russian society over Stalin's role as the man who won the war, but the nation is divided over the mastermind of the Bolshevik revolution. This year, the centennial of the Russian revolution, a poll found that over half of Russians polled believe Lenin should be taken out of the mausoleum on Red Square and finally be laid to rest.

Asked if he thinks the Bolshevik leader should be put into the ground, Klychkov gets irritated. "He is buried — both in the eyes of the law and the church — because he is below ground level."

Listov, the Komsomol leader, is equally unhappy with this question. Nobody, he says, questions why the body of prominent physicist Nikolay Pirogov is held in a mausoleum and visible to the public in Vinnytsia, a city in central Ukraine.

So why the fuss about Lenin? According to Listov, the famous Bolshevik was the only Russian who truly changed the world and for this reason his opponents are still wary of him.

"They want to bury his ideas, not his body," he says. **TMT**

Rosneft vs. RBC: 3.179 Billion Rubles in Reputational Damages?

GOLTSBLAT **BLP**

The Russian practice of Berwin Leighton Paisner (BLP)



Evgeny Oreshin
Dispute Resolution / IP
Goltsblat BLP

Recent high profile cases include the Rosneft vs RBC libel case triggered by the article “Sechin Asked Government to Protect Rosneft from BP.” The case was brought by Rosneft, claiming 3.179 billion rubles in compensation for reputational (intangible) harm, which Russian case law saw as unprecedented compensation.

In December, the claim was partially awarded by the Moscow Commercial Court, which held that the damages claimed constituted compensation for “intangible losses,” to which the term “loss of profit” could not be applied. The court reduced the damages to a symbolic 390,000 rubles “given the nature of the offence, the level of the offender’s guilt, the lack of proof of potential losses and proceeding from the principles of reasonableness, fairness and proportionality of compensation to the consequences of the offence.”

In March 2017, a court of appeal rejected recovery of compensation in full, holding that the claimant had neither proved that its reputation had been well established nor that it had been adversely affected by dissemination of defamatory information. The publication at issue was itself recognised as illegal.

In the press, the case was predominantly discussed from the angle of freedom of the media but, from the legal perspective, it provides yet another reason to consider whether or not the Russian legal system needs such a remedy as recovery for reputational harm, given that damages may be sought. Would it not be too dangerous as a weapon that could be used in bad faith?

Even though this remedy is not expressly specified by legislation, courts have always tried to apply it. In 2003, the Constitutional Court confirmed that it may be used as a kind of equivalent to moral damages to individuals. The remedy has subsequently been widely applied by commercial courts. For instance, in one landmark case, Alfa Bank sought to recover 300 million rubles from Kommersant in compensation for reputational harm following a press publication alleging it was short of cash. The publication caused panic among the bank’s depositors and a run on deposits of more than 6 billion rubles. Eventually, the bank was awarded 30 million rubles in compensation for reputational harm.

Even so, since 2013, when the Russian Civil Code was supplemented

So what makes such a remedy, unspecified by law, so resilient?

On the one hand, in both the current legislation and judicial practice, the standards of proof for damages, including loss of profit, have been eased significantly. The guidelines provided by the Civil Code and the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation indicate that damages should not necessarily be proved with mathematical precision. For instance, they may be calculated as the difference between earnings before and after the offence; in other words, they may be proven by a “rule of thumb.” So perhaps a damages claim for disseminating false information would be an obvious solution in this case?

Yet even this lower standard of proof does not always work in protecting

To some extent, reimbursement for reputational injury is similar to the compensation specified by the Russian Civil Code for breach of IP rights (such as copyrights, trade marks, etc.) totalling 10,000 — 5 million rubles (or double the value of counterfeit goods or the relevant rights). Alongside such compensation, reimbursement for reputational injury has been introduced because it is so difficult to prove damages. That reimbursement is consequently determined by the court with reference to the nature of the offence. Even so, in contrast to the above compensation, reputational damages may be recovered in addition to compensation for losses. Moreover, the law specifies no recovery cap.

It was the problem of reputational damages being uncapped, given that specific damages do not need to be proven, that arose in the Rosneft vs. RBC case, in which the sum claimed in reputational damages totalled 3.179 billion rubles. On the one hand, it might be argued that a court may reduce this sum after considering all the circumstances of the case. Yet there are no clear criteria for forecasting damages before disputes are considered. Given that redress for reputational harm is not only compensatory but also punitive in nature and that, among other things, it is designed to prevent offences, this situation might adversely affect the normal course of business.

We do not believe that the above considerations should be seen as a reason for banning this remedy but consider that a way out might be found if the following approach is adopted: given that there is no need to prove exact losses, a higher standard of proof for all other elements should be applied to reputational damages claims (such as the existence of an established business reputation, specific adverse consequences for the injured company, potential losses, etc.).

Compensation for reputational harm is a powerful pill that can help in many cases, yet this means that it should be made available only “on prescription” (courts should consider all the facts of a case when quantifying compensation), to avoid any “side effects” in civil transactions.

Compensation for reputational harm is a powerful pill that can help in many cases, yet this means that it should be made available only “on prescription” (courts should consider all the facts of a case when quantifying compensation), to avoid any “side effects” in civil transactions.

to the effect that the moral damages clauses may not be applied to protect a company’s business reputation, judicial practice has started to change, with courts in most cases dismissing reputational harm claims. In late 2016, the judicial pendulum swung back again. In its ruling of November 18, 2016, the Russian Supreme Court held that, under the new version of the Civil Code, the remedy may still be used.

Despite what the legislation says, for more than ten years now, this constant judicial support in awarding reputational injury claims has been an important indicator that the business community does, indeed, need this remedy. This becomes especially obvious if we recall the joint position of the doctrine and the courts that no remedies are permitted unless expressly provided for by law. Case law introduces new remedies only once in a blue moon by linking them to those already available.

business reputation. How can damages be measured when a company has posted several articles to discredit competing products but there is no sign yet of customers moving over? How can damages be assessed for potential loss of contracts due to impaired confidence in a company’s reputation in the wake of adverse publications?

In contrast to damages, the purpose of compensation for reputational harm is to have intangible losses recovered rather than indemnity paid, which illustrates its ambiguous legal nature from the theory-of-law perspective. How can money compensate for non-pecuniary losses? In practical terms, compensation for reputational harm constitutes reimbursement for pecuniary arising from non-pecuniary damage. The problem is that, in most such disputes, it is difficult to quantify pecuniary damage with any reasonable degree of confidence.

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* **Goltsblat BLP** is the Russian practice of **Berwin Leighton Paisner (BLP)**, an award-winning international law firm headquartered in London and with offices operating in major commercial and financial centres throughout the world — Moscow, Abu Dhabi, Beijing, Berlin, Brussels, Dubai, Frankfurt, Hong Kong, Paris and Singapore, Tel Aviv and Yalong.

The firm has a team of 100 Russian, English and US law qualified lawyers based in Moscow and over 800 lawyers in the other international offices.

Goltsblat BLP currently has over 1700 clients among the major international investors operating in Russia, including 37 Fortune 500 companies.



“Over-the-top prices for high-brow culture events are a relic of the Soviet era” - Anatoly Golubovsky, culture expert

\$1080

Reported black market price for Currentzis show.

Up to \$360

cover prices for some classical music and theater hits this spring.



Theodor Kurrentzis, music director of Perm Opera and Ballet Theater and founder of MusicAeterna Orchestra, is the trendiest Russian conductor of the new generation.



The Golden Ticket: Culture as a Catwalk for the Rich

By **Yulia Bederova** reporter@imedia.ru | Illustration by **Andrei Dorokhin**

With seats now changing hands for a thousand dollars, high culture has become a status symbol for the city's moneyed elite

It was, no doubt, a big deal: St. Petersburg's world-famous Theater Of Europe debuted a new production of “Hamlet” at Moscow's Golden Mask festival. The show was produced by the famous director Lev Dodin, and featured two of the leading stars of Russian cinema Danila Kozlovski and Elizaveta Boyarskaya.

But the price of the tickets did more than raise eyebrows. Ranging from 15,000 to 20,000 rubles (\$270-360), they were shocking even by Moscow standards. Not, of course, that any of this stopped them from being sold out within a few hours — or appearing on the black market for as much as 60,000 rubles (\$1080).

The Dodin show came only a few short weeks after a performance by in-demand conductor Teodor Currentzis and the MusicAeterna orchestra from Perm at Moscow's Conservatory. The night-time concert featured Mozart, Beethoven and Rameau, and offered the same story: tickets with prices of up to 20,000 (\$360), rising to 60,000 (\$1080) on the black market.

Part of Moscow's intellectual elite was outraged. The city was used to inflated prices for New Year's Eve performances at the Bolshoi Ballet, but seeing such prices extended to high-brow intellectual performances was unusual. Some invoked the “moral responsibility” of the artist not to limit art to exclusive audiences. But others commented on the blunt mechanisms of the market: “If something is being sold at this price, it means that someone thinks it is worth the money.”

Of course, theater in Moscow does not always costs huge sums of money. Even prices at elite venues can be reasonable. Tickets to watch the world-famous opera festival Aix-en-Provence on tour at the Bolshoi, for example, were on sale for 2000-3000 rubles (\$35-50).

And when the English National Opera toured at the Bolshoi, a number of unusually low-price tickets were made available. Fifteen hundred rubles (\$27) was enough to reserve a place at performances of Handel's Rodelinde, directed by Richard Jones, or Britten's Billy Budd, directed by David Alden.

But Moscow's theater-going public — well-educated and

weary of both swans and lakes — flocked to the box office. Tickets vanished almost immediately, re-emerging on the black market for 6000 rubles (\$107).

According to culture expert Anatoly Golubovsky, Moscow's inflated theater prices are a relic of the Soviet era. In the Soviet consciousness, exclusive products were valuable only for the reason that they were rare. Owning something rare was, in and of itself, a sign of high social status, thus the high prices.

The Russian cultural space, loosely integrated into the global cultural space somewhat resembles the Soviet deficit economy.

Even during the 1990s, international stars like Jessye Norman and Jose Carreras were able to command unusually high fees for performing in Moscow.

The shadow of deficit continues. And the more the Russian arts scene isolates itself from the world arts scene — because of ideological pressure and financial problems — the greater the effect.

But today's cultural deficit is no longer what it used to be. The demand is no longer so much for pop culture from the West. Instead, people are queuing up and paying for refined, intellectual culture — with a preference Russian art.

Moscow tastes are changing rapidly. For many years, the popular and accessible pianist Denis Matsuev topped the charts for ticket prices. The most expensive tickets for Matsuev cost 18,000 (\$320) for three concerts, but the scalpers may sell them for several times as much.

These days, Matsuev is giving way to Currentzis, who is working in an even more uncompromising fashion.

The producer of the Currentzis concert, Alexey Trifonov, has justified the high prices in terms of the costs of arranging a tour. “To tour in Moscow, we first have to bring high-level musicians to Perm — from Russia, Europe, even America. We have to pay for rehearsals, then bring everyone to Moscow, then pay for their housing, and then their fees.”

Others would argue the high prices to see the Perm ensem-

ble have more to do with the artists' own elevated financial demands. Whereas Western artists might agree to compromise when they are told about the economic crisis, Perm artists will not.

In Moscow's fashionable Theatre of Nations, prices for top show like Robert Wilson's “Pushkin's Tales” or Timofey Kulabin's “Ivanov” can reach 15 000 rubles (\$270). But Maria Revyakina, the director of the theater, believes that inflated demand for cult shows, such as was seen this year at the Golden Mask Festival with Dodin's “Hamlet,” is fundamentally unsustainable.

“There aren't many people who are prepared to pay that much for those tickets,” she said. “Prices soon enough will head downward.”

At the same time, Revyakina suggested that demand for complicated, experimental theatre is on the rise.

The threats of censorship and attacking on creative freedom may, in a roundabout way, be contributing to a renaissance of this intellectual art. While not on the same level as Dodin or Currentzis, experimental pioneers like Dmitry Volkostrellov are more in demand than ever. Tickets to Volkostrellov's shows now cost as much as 5000 rubles (\$90). Last year, tickets for Vladimir Yurovski's “Another Space”, a summer philharmonic festival of contemporary academic music, sold for 2000 — 5000 rubles (\$35-90). These are previously unimaginable levels for avant-garde culture.

Moscow now boasts a theater-going public ready to spend hundreds of dollars on complicated cultural performances. But these are not necessarily the same people who seem ready to spend 20,000 roubles to see Teodor Currentzis conduct. Currentzis attracts a different audience, made up of the business and political moneyed elite.

Previously, moneyed elites' tastes might have extended to opera singer Anna Netrebko, with her glamorous charm and popular repertoire. Now they are prepared to pay for exquisite cultural dishes — especially if these dishes have the after-taste of deficit and exclusivity. **TMT**



"I'm optimistic cycling will evolve into a realistic means of transport" - **Sergei Nikitin**, founder of Velonoch

April 29

Moscow Velobike season opens.



"Last year we saw a 7-8x increase in the use of Velobikes" - **Alexei Mityayev**, Moscow city transportation department

3,600 bikes

spread over 360 stations by the end of 2017.

Pedal Power

By **Alyssa Young** newsreporter@imedia.ru

Moscow's shared bike system, re-opening this week, offers an alternative to the city's congested transport network



Despite the obvious on-road dangers, many Muscovites are turning to cycling as a way to get around the city.

Moscow never had the romantic bicycle history that Copenhagen or Amsterdam or even Shanghai did. That could be because Moscow is covered in a layer of snow for a majority of the winter months. Or it could be that urban planning in the years of communism designed wide avenues for military parades, not urban cyclists.

Of Russia's large cities, Moscow is not as bicycle friendly as St. Petersburg, with its European planning dating back to Peter the Great.

So when a bicycle sharing system was introduced in Moscow in 2013 it had more of a symbolic than a practical meaning. The aim was to show that Moscow belongs to the global trend that grasped every major European city during last decade.

"We thought of Velobike as 'last mile' transportation within the Garden Ring," Alexei Mityayev, aide of Moscow's transportation department head, told The Moscow Times.

But as the Velobike project enters its fourth season, it has expanded far beyond the Garden Ring to Moscow's outskirts, residential areas and MKAD in some directions. Now you can get a Velobike at VDNKh, Sokolniki, and the end of Leninsky prospekt, miles away from the center of the city.

Since 2010, Moscow began to conceive of itself as a European, hipster-friendly city. Cafes, markets, pedestrian zones and public spaces like Park Gorky became priorities for the city administration. At first, bike lanes, which were completely new to Moscow, and the Velobike project were just seen as ways of contributing to this transformation.

But by now it is already clear that Velobike has become a vital mode of public transportation in Moscow. "We saw a seven or eight fold increase of usage last year," says Mityayev. "We see now that Velobike is used like public transportation. Last summer we started seeing people using it to get to work in the mornings."

The first cycle lane on the Boulevard opened in 2015, adding another 9 kilometers stretching from Nikitsky to Chistoprudny boulevards. Now, the Boulevard ring lanes are the core of the developed lanes and paths system, which will be expanded by the end of this year, Mityayev said.

In 2016, Velobike had a network of 2600 bikes at 300 stations conveniently spread out over the city. For 600 rubles a

month, Muscovites can ride and return bikes an unlimited number of times.

And the project will continue to expand. Now that there are ample bike stations in the center, Velobike is turning its attention to outside the Garden Ring. "We will expand to the areas where there a lot of people living: around Danilovsky Market, Dinamo, etc." says Mityayev.

This season, there will be an extra 80 stations added to house a total of 3,600 bikes. New bike stands will appear at metro stations including Polezhaevskaya, Sokol, Dynamo, Aeroport, Begovaya, Sokolniki, Tul'skaya.

Bike lines are also expanding. Roads north of the centre were reconstructed to create a bike line instead of the previously existing third traffic lane. A project called My Street added 20 kilometers of bicycle paths and lanes on 16 central Moscow streets.

Plans are in the works to add the Third Ring, a project that would connect many of the parks and other green spaces between the Third Ring Road and the MKAD.

"Will [cycling] remain something of a past-time or will it

evolve into a mode of transport? I don't know if it's going to happen for a large percent of people, but I'm optimistic that our system can be improved," says Sergei Nikitin, CEO and founder of Velonoch, an urban cycling project.

Still, Moscow is neither Paris, with its real transportation network of bike lanes across the whole city or New York, where the city bike project was introduced without preliminary shaping of bike lanes.

The sheer breadth of the city and the number of daily commuters and roads that were designed with motor vehicles in mind are factors that make the introduction of more active transport like cycling, skateboarding or rollerblading more challenging.

Some Moscow transport arteries are technically not accessible to bikes like the Third Ring that encircles the whole city (we advise you not to even try biking there).

In other areas, which are technically accessible to bikes, cyclists have to worry about cars crowding their lane or, worse, illegal parking. These cycling conditions have also improved significantly last year, though possibly because cyclists were permitted to use bus lanes. With this improvement cyclists can navigate the entirety of Leninsky or Komsomolsky avenues without serious risk of being hit by a car.

According to Sergei Nikitin, the success of cycling as a form of transport hinges on Moscow's ability to improve above-ground transport. Moscow is such a sprawling city that cycling across long distances is not practical.

Instead, Nikitin suggests the city should have a more buses in rotation and designated standing areas for bikes on those busses. He also suggests taking a lesson from the American system and putting in place slower speed limits for cars, making it safer for vehicles and bikers to share the road.

Look out for Velobikes in Moscow by the end of April. Managers have said the the bikes have already been taken out storage and will be back in service on April 29th. Conveniently, Troika card holders can sign up for Velobike and check out bikes with the same card used for the metro and buses. Download the app that will show bike availability.

For those ready to go for something more speedy Velobike now has elektrobikes. More than 100 of them will be placed at 6 stations in the city center. **TMT**



Moscow's shared bike system is expanding, with an additional 80 stations opening this year.



The Oulu Elks - are the first Gaelic football club inside the Arctic Circle. The team was founded in Finland in 2013.

2,200

number of Gaelic sport clubs in Ireland.

1974

first Women's All-Ireland Gaelic football championship takes place.



1887 — the first written rules for Gaelic football are codified.

THE WORD'S WORTH

Говорить Cheat Sheet

He зовору!: That's for sure!



By **Michele A. Berdy**
Moscow-based translator and interpreter, author of "The Russian Word's Worth" (Glas), a collection of her columns.

The other day, I tried to trot out an expression using the words говорить (to speak), так (so) and не (not), and got completely balled up: combining about three different expressions with all the words in the wrong order. After an hour of double-checking and correcting, I sorted it out. Now to make sure you don't make the same mistakes, here's my говорить cheat sheet.

Да что там говорить: No question about it. You use this expression when you want to emphasize that what you are saying is the absolute truth and it's not worth the time and trouble to argue about it. Да что там говорить о колхозных полях, если даже на личных огородах полное и повсеместное запустение (Of course the collective farm's fields are a mess. What do you expect when even the farmers' private gardens are all totally neglected?)

Как ни говорите: No matter what anyone says. Use this when you want to support a position that not everyone shares. You say it at the end of an argument, often when you haven't been able to refute it. For emphasis, stick out your chin or wag your head: В конце концов, как ни говорите, директор — это директор (In the end no matter what you say, the director is the director.)

Нечего и говорить: This phrase has three meanings, starting with "it goes without saying": Нечего говорить, воспитание играет огромную роль в развитии характера (It goes without saying that the way children are raised plays a huge role in their character development.) And then it can mean "there isn't anything to say": Что мне сказать, когда нечего говорить? (What can I say when I have nothing to say?) And finally, it can mean "there is nothing to discuss": В такую погоду о рыбалке нечего и говорить, сиди в домике. (Don't even think about fishing in this weather — stay at home.)

Ни о чём не говорит: It doesn't matter. You use this phrase when a decision isn't final or you don't have all the information: Он не позвонил, но это пока ни о чём не говорит. Он всё-таки очень занят. (He hasn't called, but that doesn't mean anything. He's very busy, after all.)

Говорю тебе (вам): I'm telling you. For when you are feeling emphatic. Finger stabbing optional: Делай, как хочешь, но говорю тебе, что этот человек производит на меня отталкивающее впечатление (Do what you want, but I'm telling you: I find that person revolting.)

Ну я тебе (вам) говорил!: What did I tell you? After you have poked someone in the chest with говорю тебе and the poked person has failed to listen, this is what you say: Ну я тебе говорила — меня в институте не пустили! (I didn't get into the institute — I told you so!)

Не говори!: That's for sure! Use this when someone says something that you agree with: Не говори! На вид-то они простецкие, а на самом деле свой расчёт имеют (That's for sure! They look like simple folks but actually they are very calculating.)

Что ты говоришь?: No kidding! When your significant other tells you to do what you've been saying for the last five years, this is your snarky response. Use a fake surprised voice. Красить кухню? Что ты говоришь? (Paint the kitchen? What a great idea!)

Говорю вам правду! (I'm telling you the truth!) **TMT**

MY MOSCOW

The Irish Rover

By **Katie Davies** k.davies@imedia.ru

IT teacher Kieran Haren offers a Celtic take on Moscow



MOSKVA KRISTINA

Despite inadequate infrastructure, Russia can be welcoming to families with young children.

For the last four years, the Moscow Shamrocks has brought a flavor of Ireland's national sport to the people of the Russian capital. Not to be confused with traditional football or "soccer," Gaelic football uses 15 players per team in matches lasting 70 minutes. Players can bounce, kick or pass the ball to move it down the field, but can only travel for four steps while carrying the ball. The Moscow Times spoke to club chairperson and IT teacher Kieran Haren on building the team, surviving Moscow as a parent, and why Russians may not be as close to the Irish as they like to believe.

We are Russia's only Gaelic football team. Or at least, we're the only official team in Russian that I know of. It's a privilege, but it means that we don't have another team to play against either. We play against Moscow's Australian rules football team because the rules are similar.

At first, I didn't know how I'd survive in Moscow. I never thought that I'd end up living in Russia, but it was a struggle to find work in Ireland. Lots of my friends were already moving abroad to places like the UK. But my wife and I thought that if we were going to move abroad, we should really go for it. Some things were tough. I still remember trying to buy a loaf of bread at the kiosk close to my building a few weeks after I arrived. Standing in line, I realized that I didn't even know the word for bread in Russian. But slowly, the people who ran the kiosk got used to me, I came back every time having learned more and more.

Gaelic football is ingrained in the Irish people. Everyone in Ireland supports their local team and their local county, through the good and the bad. Because it's an amateur sport, there's no drive to make money from it. You do it for the love of it. Most of the players here are like me: they haven't played since they were in school. But they want that community spirit and sense of family. We all support the club as volunteers; there's no funding or financial reward. When we need equipment, different team members head home to Ireland

and stuff whatever they can into their suitcases. At the moment, we're holding fortnightly quizzes at Katie O'Shea's Irish pub to boost funds.

Katie O'Shea's. Prospekt Mira 25, Str. 5. Metro Prospekt Mira

Russians see the Irish as kindred spirits. Russian people are interested in everything Irish. They might think that Gaelic football is a little bit weird, but they get into it. Russian people say that they're like the Irish, but I don't know if that's true. Russian people tend to be suspicious of newcomers, but then they're very friendly when they get to know you. In Ireland it's the other way round: We're friendly to everyone at first, and then we get suspicious of you.

We want to see more Russian people involved in the team.

If we want to see the team grow and really establish itself, then we need local people to join. In countries like Spain there's a whole Gaelic football leagues with no Irish people involved. At the moment, we have five or six Russians playing on the men's team, and three or four on the women's team. I think many of our Russian players really enjoy the more physical side of the sport.

We've had a great experience being here as parents. Russians are very family orientated. There are some logistical problems — it's tough to get round the metro stations with a pushchair — but people are always willing to help. Lots of restaurants cater for children, and no one seems to get annoyed when you take the children somewhere for a nice meal.

Cafe Anderson. Multiple locations. cafe-anderson.ru/

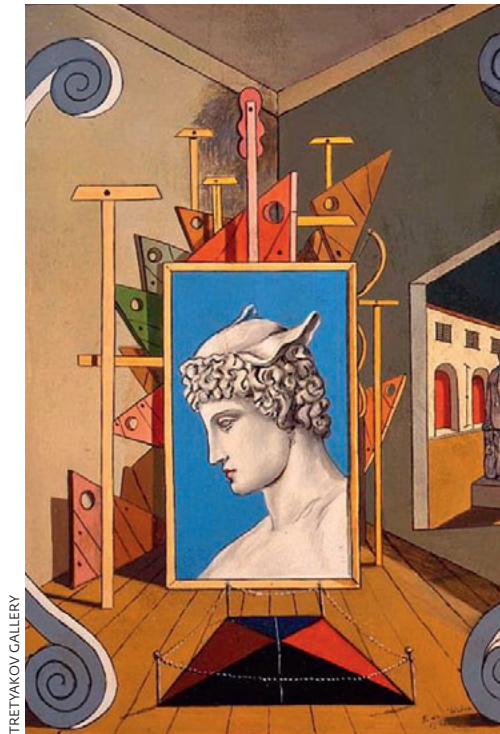
Our next challenge is playing in the Nordic League. There are over 80 Gaelic football teams around Europe but our closest rivals are in Scandinavia. There will be a Gaelic football Nordic League tournament in June and we'll be there entering a men's and a women's team. **TMT**

More information on joining the team can be found at www.moscowshamrocks.com.

Out & About



Weekly round-up of all that's new, delicious and fun in Moscow.



TRETYAKOV GALLERY



Giorgio De Chirico is famous for his metaphysical paintings.

Two Italian Greats Finally Together in Moscow

By **Andrei Muchnik** and **Maria Michela D'Alessandro** artsreporter@imedia.ru

Exhibitions of Giorgio De Chirico and Giorgio Morandi simultaneously open at two major museums

This May, exhibitions of two great 20th century Italian artists, De Chirico and Morandi opened at the Tretyakov Gallery and the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, respectively. Whether by coincidence or a stroke of good luck, Moscow's residents and visitors got a unique opportunity to study the works of two artists that inspired major 20th century styles such as Surrealism and Minimalism.

In 1929, four artworks from the Italian artist Giorgio De Chirico were on display in the Russian capital for the first time. Today, the State Tretyakov Gallery celebrates the founder of "metaphysical art" with the first large-scale exhibition in Russia entitled "Giorgio De Chirico: Metaphysical Insights." More than one hundred artworks, paintings, drawings, etchings and sculptures have been put together at the Tretyakov Gallery's contemporary branch.

"The original idea of the exhibition, proposed by the Giorgio and Isa De Chirico Foundation and Italian curator Gianni Mercurio, was to present De Chirico with a focus on the last years of his career, between 1940 and 1970," Russian curator Tatiana Goryacheva explains in an interview with The Moscow Times.

But the Tretyakov Gallery wanted to show every aspect of the eclectic artist's oeuvre, including his first works made in the 1910s, as well as those dating from the 1920s and 1930s. Thanks to its partnership with several international art institutions, the Tretyakov Gallery managed to bring a wide range of De Chirico's works to Russia, which influenced not just the surrealists, but several Russian

artists as well, including Kazimir Malevich and Aleksandr Deyneka.

The sections of the exhibit, aptly called "The Road to Metaphysics," "History and Myth," or "Neo-Metaphysics" are not organized chronologically, but instead focus on some important characteristics of the artist.

One of the recurring topics in De Chirico is what he calls "the enigma." He described it as a consequence of the observation and transformation of reality's elements. The result is something that goes beyond reality itself, where the metaphysical essence is reflected in art.

Among the works on display, the famous "Melancholy of an Afternoon" from the Centre Pompidou of Paris, "Hector and

Andromache" from the National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome, the artworks from the Museum of Modern and Contemporary art of Trento and Rovereto, as well as the theatrical costumes designed by De Chirico for Sergei Diaghilev's ballet "The Ball."

Giorgio Morandi's works were previously exhibited at the Pushkin Museum more than forty years ago. Marina Loshak, the museum's director, said in an interview with The Moscow Times that Morandi is "an artist that fits our museum perfectly."

Whereas 1973 exhibition was held in the main building, the Western Art wing has works "by all the artists he valued: Miro, Renoir, Manet, Seurat an especially Cezanne, who influenced him greatly."

The Pushkin Museum shows some quintessential works, the best from each period of his life. It's an exhibition for "those who are willing to walk slowly and look closely," says Loshak. When paying attention, one can note how Morandi's approach to art changed over the years: from metaphysical paintings to his famous modernist still lifes, landscapes and portraits.

There are whole rooms with paintings and drawings of flowers and vases. "They had a special meaning for Morandi, it's not for nothing that he turned objects into something else, shapes or symbols of space by covering them with plaster or painting them over," says Loshak.

The space of the museum was transformed for the exhibition under the guidance of architect Kirill Asse, who decided to change the texture of the walls to resemble that of Morandi's paintings and smooth out the edges of the corners.

"That, plus the open windows, creates a light-filled environment which doesn't quite feel like a museum," says Loshak.

Several items from Morandi's workshop are on view at the exhibit, as well as copper plates and corresponding etchings. This way the visitors can visualize some aspects of Morandi's process of creating his artworks. "This is especially important for artists who are our primary target audience for this exhibition," says Loshak. **TMT**

Tretyakov Gallery Krymsky Val
tretyakovgallery.ru
Ulitsa Krymsky Val 10
Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts / Western Art
newpaintart.ru
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PUSHKIN MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

The Giorgio Morandi exhibition at the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts opened on April 25

Khokhlovsky Lane: A Bohemian Hangout Mixing Past and Present

By [Daria Demidova](#) artsreporter@imedia.ru | Illustration by [Anna Dankman](#)

Discover graffiti and trendy hotspots
in between ancient city mansions



1) Morozov Mansion

Bolshoy Tryokhsvyatitsky Pereulok 1-3 bld 1

When philanthropist Vasily Kokorev sold this green mansion to the powerful Morozov family, the seller and the buyers had at least one thing in common: both were passionate about Russian art. Frequent guests at the Morozov mansion were leading artists such as Valentin Serov, Isaac Levitan and the Vasnetsov brothers. In 1918, the house was a stronghold of the left Social-Revolutionaries during their unsuccessful uprising against the communists.

The name of the lane is derived from traditional Cossack haircut of "khokhol" — a nod to the fact that many Ukrainians lived in the area.

2) Yemelian Ukraintsev's Chambers

Khokhlovsky Pereulok 7-9

Housing the Russian Foreign Ministry's official archive, this building was once the home of diplomat Yemelian Ukraintsev, and the stomping ground for 19th-century intellectuals. Poet Alexander Pushkin, polymath Nikolay Karamzin and writer Alexey Tolstoy also spent days studying ancient documents here. Today, the old walls enclose several trendy spots — a bookstore, a dance studio, vintage boutique and cutting edge graffiti.

3) Schnaubert commercial apartments

Khokhlovsky Pereulok 3 bld 1

For this low-rise district, the commercial apartments owned by the Schnaubert family were remarkably tall. A fine example of art nouveau, the apartments were built by architect Boris Schnaubert. Above the door in the lobby you'll find an exquisite tiled ornament with 32 water lilies. Boris Schnaubert's children retained two rooms in the complex and were lucky to escape arrest during the Stalinist purges.



4) Snegiryov's Eye Clinic

Kolpachny Pereulok 11 bld 1

Number 11 is the once famous eye clinic supervised by the house's owner Dr. Konstantin Snegiryov. Writer Mikhail Sholokhov, who was treated here in 1914, later described the clinic in his novel "And Quiet Flows the Don." In 1948, the mansion was illegally taken over by National Security Minister Viktor Abakumov. Abakumov was arrested in 1951, but the building still belongs to Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service.

5) Mazepa's Chambers

Kolpachny Pereulok 10/7 bld 2

The L-shaped 17th-century chambers is a rare example of Russian baroque secular architecture. Remarkably, this structure retains its original heat and ventilation system, as well as its exterior decor. According to legend, the property belonged to Ivan Mazepa, a Ukrainian Cossack leader who turned disloyal to Russian Tsar Peter I. In reality, Mazepa was never owner, but the rumors were based on the fact Ukrainians were living in the area.

Khokhlovsky lane features the city's 500-year-old wall, currently under restoration and due to open to the public later this year.

6) Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul

Starosadsky Pereulok 7/10 bld 10

The neo-gothic Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul is where Lutherans come for prayer and music lovers for concerts. Boasting excellent acoustics, this hall witnessed the piano playing of composer Franz Liszt and "The Bells" of Sergei Rakhmaninov being performed for the first time. After the revolution the Cathedral was used as an animation studio in Soviet times. The church was only returned to worshippers in the 1990s.



MOREGRILL / FACEBOOK



Moregrill offers real seafood delicacies at somewhat upscale prices.

When a Bro Bar Does Tapas

By **Emily Erken** artsreporter@imedia.ru

Moregrill promises “surf and turf,” but delivers sauces and small plates

Moregrill hides in plain sight in a prime location on the corner of Kuznetskii Most and Rozhdestvenka Streets. There is no sign advertising the one-month-old restaurant. Apparently, the owners exhausted their budget on “loft-style” lamps, wooden tables, even a rough-hewn marble sink in the bathroom.

The elegant décor jarred somewhat with the macho “surf and turf” positioning of the establishment.

The menu also offered surprises. Focusing on two opposite food trends, “raw” and “grill,” its author Mark Statsenko had a different kind of contrast in mind when he devoted the entire bill of fare to unusual pairings. Mysterious sauces accompanied each dish.

The evening began with a hiccup. The host called to say that Moregrill couldn’t serve wine without a liquor license, but that patrons were

welcome to bring our own. One of the quirks of Russian “bring your own bottle,” is that the patron should show the receipt for the wine, inadvertently informing the house of their wallet potential.

After Moregrill’s host poured the wine, the scallop ceviche with passion fruit sauce (650 rubles) arrived. Its delicate jalapeno aioli teased the taste buds with a note of sweetness. The minuscule portion set in an oversized hunk of pottery was spicy, but not overwhelming.

Next, the crab, avocado cream and tomato (650 rubles) appeared, veiled by a tangy bed of lamb’s lettuce. The greens revealed whipped avocado beside a mysterious magenta blend of beetroot and horseradish: “California — meet Moscow.” When tossed, the salad exploded into a kaleidoscope on the tongue — its vivid contrasts changing with every bite.

The appetizer plates seemed a prelude to

an even better main act. Unfortunately, at 2,600 rubles, the beef black angus fillet with homemade truffle butter seemed a bit much, so I selected the more modest halibut, curious what aioli sauce with orange might bring (790 rubles).

What it brought was whitefish with mustard. Gobbling up the disappointment, I longed to replace it with the giant crab, still in its shell, visible on top of our neighbor’s bowl of pasta (900 rubles).

The light fish course left some room for dessert. Or, should I say, for desserts. The adventurous trio of fondant with white chocolate (basically, a gooey brownie) showed up with green-tea matcha ice cream (350). Pairing a rich brownie with its fresh companion, unfortunately, gave the feeling that these two big personalities would be better enjoyed on their own.

But the baked pear, cloaking its warmth underneath a platter-sized wafer, captured the hearts. Lightly marinated in cherry syrup, the demure pear broke apart with the touch of a fork. Its partnering gorgonzola ice cream offset each ravishing slice.

Dining at Moregrill was a bit like witnessing a room full of culinary blind-dates. Some matches offer polite compliments, others repulse each other immediately. The rare dish evokes love at first sight.

Despite its tough guy menu, Moregrill is really a tapas bar. Bring a date, or better, a group of girlfriends — grab a bottle from the extensive wine selection, and enjoy the adventure. **TMT**

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18/7 Ulitsa Kuznetsky Most
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NEWS & OPENINGS



SUSHI BY SEIJI / FACEBOOK

Sushi by Seiji

New location for a Moscow favorite

Sushi by Seiji, a new restaurant from one of the world’s best Japanese cuisine chefs, Seiji Kusano, opened its doors near Patriarch’s Ponds. All products are delivered from Tokyo’s Tsukiji Fish Market. Try sashimi (from 150 rubles), gunkans, sushi rolls (Philadelphia - 380 rubles) and plum wine.

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STARBUCKS / FACEBOOK

Starbucks

Coffee and beer: a winning combination

The Starbucks Corporation, headquartered in Seattle, is in the process of registering a patent for the Espresso Cloud brand in Russia. Espresso Cloud is a beverage that combines coffee and beer. Espresso Cloud IPA has been available at U.S. branches since the fall of 2016. It’s mixed using craft IPA and a bit of espresso. A cold-shaken espresso shot is also served on the side with Espresso Cloud.

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starbucks.ru



DOROGOMILOVSKY MARKET / FACEBOOK

Dorogomilovsky Market

Gastronomic weekend

Dorogomilovsky market will host a gastronomic weekend from April 28 to April 30. There will be fresh homemade bread and pates made by Marcial Lapland in accordance with his grandmother’s recipes. The market also has meat from farmer Stanislav Sabaneyev, fish, specialty jams, honey, herbal teas, natural oils, as well as Russian kvas, homemade lemonade and 18 cheese manufacturers present.

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tkdor.ru
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NATURA SIBERICA / FACEBOOK

Natura Siberica

Flagship store

The two-storied “Natura Siberica” flagship store opened its doors in the very heart of Moscow, a short walk from the Kremlin and Red Square. Besides affordable, high-quality beauty products, it has its own mini-laboratory, a greenhouse with herbs, interactive zones, spa (from 1,770 rubles for a massage) and lots of other activities, making it more than just a regular store. You can also take free skin diagnostics.

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4 Ulitsa Tverskaya
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Heralding spring: Seven places to savor the May holidays

Soak up the Beauty of Spring

Stroll through Moscow's blooming gardens

The April showers that prolonged Moscow's dreary weather will be all worth it when they bring a blanket of May flowers to the city gardens. White snowdrops and lilac crocuses are already turning some of Moscow's parks into a mosaic of natural colour. Get out and enjoy the many parks Moscow has to offer, and if you're really keen on flowers, head to Moscow State University's botanical garden. Its collection of flora dates back to Peter the Great.

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hortus.ru

Fountains Galore

Water is the source of all life

Moscow is full of magnificent fountains that once served as drinking water sources for the Muscovites of previous centuries. The tradition of celebrating water sources will continue on April 29 at 6:00 p.m. as modern-day Muscovites mark the arrival of spring by simultaneously turning on all the fountains in the city. Watch the water cascade from any one of Moscow's hundreds of fountains, notably the Petrovskiy Fountain by the Bolshoi Theatre or the Alexander Garden fountains.



MOS RU



VLADIMIR FILONOV / MT

As the frost and snowfall of Moscow's lingering winter become a distant memory, make the most of the May 1 holiday and the following weekend, from May 6 till May 9.

Spring Fest ←

Stroll through Moscow with a spring in your step

Spring is here, and that means it's time for Spring Fest. From April 28 to May 9th, Chalet-style tents will appear in locations through the city center, including Manezhnaya ploshchad, Kuznetsky most and Tverskaya ulitsa. Meander your way through the market-like lanes and enjoy the shops, workshops and even concerts. Don't forget to treat yourself to the candies and exotic jams on offer. The festivities run from 10 a.m. until 9 p.m.

River odyssey

Take in Moscow's legendary sights from a boat

Summer is fast approaching, and soon the Moscow River will be awash with boats cruising down the famous waterway that flows through the heart of the Russian capital. Hop on the Erwin Restaurant & Bar cruise, which takes off twice a day on weekdays and three times a day on weekends. Not only will you get to kick back and see the sights of Moscow from a chair on deck, but you will also be treated to delicious food in Erwin's well-respected restaurant.

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Gastronomical Adventures ↓

Time to take food out on a terrace

On May 1 the Food Embassy restaurant will open its veranda and its charming vegetable patch and garden for spring. This restaurant provides great value for money, and you can bask in the sun while enjoying milkshakes. The Food Embassy is also a wonderful place for kids, with a wide variety of arts and crafts held on weekends from 14.00-17.00.

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FOOD EMBASSY

Victory Day

Commemorate and celebrate

May 9 is arguably the most important holiday for Russians. While its focus remains commemorating the country's hard-earned triumph in World War II, Victory Day has been heavily politicized and now embodies Russia's national pride. It has also developed into a time for concerts, performances, and other cultural events. As a result the center of Moscow will be cordoned off for preparations. Most eyes will be fixed on Red Square, where the famous Victory Parade takes place at 10 a.m. Crowds on Victory Day can be overwhelming, so if you want to avoid the hordes of people but still see the parade, watch the general practice run on May 7 at 10 a.m.

Horseback Riding Thrills →

Reenact the Battle of Borodino

Get out into the countryside and soak up the spring sun as you ride horseback at the Borodino Khutor. If playing Napoleon in a reenactment of the Battle of Borodino isn't up your alley, opt for some gentler horseback riding, quad biking or simply a relaxing weekend away from the city — complete with a steam in the banya and grilled shashlyk. The equestrian center is located about 100km from Moscow.

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Karin Elisabeth Janse van Rensburg of Monte Vista 1, Gateway Manor, Melodie, Hartbeespoort, 0216, South Africa has been appointed as a liquidator of the company.
Dated 24.04.2017.
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Hosting the Inhuman V-A-C opens another cutting-edge exhibition

By **Andrei Muchnik** artsreporter@imedia.ru

The V-A-C Foundation once again proves to be one of the most forward-looking cultural institutions in the city. Its most recent exhibition, entitled “Hosting the Inhuman,” is designed as a hotel located in two buildings of the Moscow Museum of Modern Art (MMOMA) on Gogolevsky Bulvar. One of them is a maintenance building, never before used as exhibition space.

“Hosting the Inhuman” is part of the the MMOMA's Carte Blanche program, which involves inviting guest institutions for a residency at the museum's different branches. Karen Sarkisov, one of the curators of the exhibition, explains the idea behind the hotel design: “As we are MMOMA's guests, it was only fitting that we would explore the dynamics of hospitality.”

The “guests” at this exhibition are the artworks and the hosts are the artists themselves. “Hospitality necessarily implies the differentiation between ‘us’ and ‘them,’ and here we take the idea of ‘the other’ to its limit,” says Sarkisov. “Our guests are inhuman, from inorganic nature to the divine, artificial intelligence and fantastic creatures.”

The format of the hotel also invites the visitors to participate in the exhibition more actively — for example, lie down on a bed while watching the video art, rather than just stare at the walls.

Some of the rooms are of maintenance nature, like the boiler room and the prayer hall. The boiler room is occupied by Alexei Buldakov's environmental installation “Butterfly,” which consists of a computer processor, that, while mining bitcoins, produces energy used to heat the room. The tubes of the oil-powered heater are arranged in the shape of a butterfly, a reference to the famous Lorenz attractor mathematical equations.

Other participating artists include Yevgeny Antufiev, who went to the town of Zvenigorod, near Moscow, on



IVAN GUSHCHIN

V-A-C's new exhibition is designed as a hotel

a quest to find Anton Chekhov's favorite tree; Italian Piero Golia, who made a tapestry depicting an empty forest; as well as Valery Chtak, Anna Zholud and Sara Culmann.

“Hosting the Inhuman” is not just art. It's also a series of workshops related to the themes of the exhibition, as well as film screenings and live performances by such diverse musicians as sound artist Elysia Crampton; Chino

Amobi, co-founder of NON WORLDWIDE; and doom metal band Nuclear Cthulhu.

“Hosting the Inhuman” runs until June 7, 2017. For full schedule of the exhibition, check out V-A-C's website. **TMT**

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hosting-the-inhuman.v-a-c.ru/en

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All That Jazz

By **Daria Beletskaya** artsreporter@imedia.ru

This Sunday, get ready for smooth sounds and syncopated rhythms as Moscow's annual “All Colors of Moscow Jazz” Festival opens for the sixth time.

The festival is more than “just a line-up of artists,” says Anatoly Kroll, its creator and a prominent Russian jazz performer and composer. Each year, “All Colors” has a unique theme. This year: classical music in jazz arrangements.

The theme and date are intentional. In 2012, UNESCO officially designated the last day of April as International Jazz Day, a worldwide musical holiday.

“Every year I receive thank you letters from [UNESCO], saying ‘we are grateful to you for taking good care of our international jazz family,’” says Kroll.

The line-up for “All Colors of Moscow Jazz” is impressive. The Peter Vostokov Big Jazz Orchestra, considered to be one of the best in Moscow, will perform. Their repertoire includes both Russian and foreign classical music.

Kroll has known jazz pianists Daniel Kramer and Valery Grokhovsky, also performing, since his student years. Both have a serious classical music background. “Grokhovsky found a style based on a natural fusion of jazz and classical music. Since Kramer and Grokhovsky are both unpredictable, their performances are expected to be a surprise,” says Kroll.

Alexei Chufarovskiy and Vladimir Petrov are classical/multi-genre pianists, but their jazz performances make quite

an impression too. For the festival, they have prepared “Carmen” — an opera by French composer Georges Bizet — interpreted by composer Alexander Rozenblat.

Jazz pianist David Gazarov has been living in Germany since 1990 and touring all around Europe. For the festival he has prepared pieces by Chopin in his own jazz arrangement. At least one of the Chopin pieces will be accompanied by an orchestra, and Gazarov will also perform a duet with Valery Grokhovsky.

Anatoly Kroll's very own Akademik Band will also headline. Kroll and his bandmates have prepared an extensive program based on pieces by world-renowned greats like Mozart, Prokofiev, Tchaikovsky, Gershwin and others. **TMT**