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Foreign tourists on Minsk streets

Minsk in the top three most popular CIS cities for tourists in summer 2017

City one of leaders in most popular places to visit

The analytical agency TurStat has rated the most popular CIS cities for tourists in the summer of 2017. Astana (Kazakhstan), Baku (Azerbaijan), Minsk (Belarus), Yerevan (Armenia), Tashkent (Uzbekistan), Almaty (Kazakhstan), Chisinau (Moldova), Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), Kiev (Ukraine), and Ashgabat (Tajikistan) appeared in the top ten travel destinations in the CIS in the summer of 2017.

According to TurStat's data, tourists spend 2.5 days and \$60 on hotel accommodation per day on average in Minsk. This summer, Minsk will host the Bridge Music Festival and the Freaky Summer Party art picnic. The cheapest cities for tourists in the CIS are Ashgabat and Bishkek while the most expensive are Astana and Baku.

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By Vasily Kharitonov

The major topic of Minsk discussions is strengthening of mutual trust and co-operation for the sake of peace and prosperity in the world. Parliamentarians have discussed the most acute and urgent topics in the region: settlement of conflict, counteraction of terrorism, migration challenges, human rights, climate change and cyber-security. It's the first time that Minsk has welcomed such a forum, despite being a fully-fledged member of the OSCE and its active participant for twenty-five years. The choice of the country to host the dialogue was the result of many factors, testifying to the growing authority of Belarus and the Belarusian Parliament within the international arena.

The geopolitical situation in the region is seriously changing, with tensions on the rise. Under these conditions, Belarus remains a hub of stability, making a weighty contribution to the provision of European security. The well-considered peaceful policy of the country and readiness for open dialogue has not gone unnoticed. The world community is beginning to understand the importance of our country as a reliable and secure link between the West and the East, as was voiced many times at the plenary session, involving the President of Belarus. Alexander Lukashenko set the tone of the session by



President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, takes part in the work of Minsk forum

making important statements and suggesting initiatives. Before the beginning of the forum, the President met the leadership of the PA OSCE. At the plenary session, dedicated to solemn opening of the 26th annual session of the PA OSCE, the President delivered a speech, noting that the OSCE was founded in the 1970s, as a response to the sharpening of the Cold War. Today, it's the largest international organisation, covering three continents and more than one billion people. Initially, its task was to prevent conflicts in the region and to settle crisis situations. However, over time, it's become

apparent that the OSCE has failed to fulfil its functions. The President of Belarus spoke sincerely of this with the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Christine Muttonen.

"Look how many negative things have happened in recent times in Europe. And what is our reaction? The reaction of heads of state? None. A war is going on in Europe and there's no reaction. This testifies to the fact that the organisation has problems. These should be solved early on, as a disease should be cured in the beginning. If we neglect this process, you know what it will

lead to. Reform of the OSCE has been suggested, to make it more efficient and decisive," noted Mr. Lukashenko.

Mr. Lukashenko mentioned the meeting of the heads of OSCE states as being vital, to discuss serious problems. He has guaranteed all-round support for such dialogue, saying, "You're well aware of our opportunities and you may always count on us, especially if it refers to promotion of security in our European region. We need to bring everything in order, in a European and civilised way."

This tackles not only such global problems as terrorism and uncontrollable migra-

tion, but the transit of drugs, human trafficking and illegal movement of radioactive elements.

Later, speaking at the plenary session, the President suggested discussion within the OSCE on the need to organise a new Helsinki Process. This idea was supported by parliamentarians, with Vladimir Andreichenko, the Chairman of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Belarus, asserting, "Only open and equal dialogue can help loosen the knot of international problems and give people what they need: a peaceful sky, stability and prosper-

ity. We expect a constructive exchange of opinions and, importantly, avoidance of confrontational thinking. Parliamentary diplomacy should be used to construct bridges, destroy stereotypes and find mutually acceptable compromises. We need to avoid ambitions, by focusing efforts on unity and co-operation."

On the first day of work, the President of Belarus also met the Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of Austria and the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Sebastian Kurz. Mr. Lukashenko noted the considerable contribution of the Austrian politician to the improvement of relations between Belarus and Austria. Mr. Kurz thanked the President of Belarus for the opportunity to meet on the sidelines of the forum, saying, "I believe that the session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Minsk is an important, positive signal. Of course, I'm ready to speak about bilateral relations between Belarus and Austria and to discuss OSCE problems; unfortunately, there are a great many."

Discussions in Minsk lasted several days and resolutions have been accepted, which have become the basis for Minsk Declaration. Parliamentarians have made recommendations to national governments, parliaments and the international community, on how to respond to acute challenges and threats.

Participants and guests of the forum speak

Christine Muttonen, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly:



Belarus occupies a special place in Europe, both geographically and politically. Minsk is recognised as a place of international diplomacy and of settlement of conflicts. Minsk is a synonym for efforts to achieve peace in Nagorno-Karabakh and Ukraine. We regularly support Minsk Agreements and call for their complete fulfilment.

President Lukashenko spoke of provision of trust in a way similar to Helsinki, as a path away from mistrust, as we see currently. We see very many manifestations that

we're not moving in the right direction: due to xenophobia, fragmentation within Europe, or the intensification of clashes between the East and West, and long-drawn-out conflict. All these force us, politicians, to seek to redirect us onto the right course.

Sebastian Kurz, OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of Austria:



I'm truly grateful that Minsk is establishing bridges between the East and the West, and has become a place

for conducting dialogue. Unfortunately, block thinking (which should have been left in the past) is returning to the continent and radicalisation is occurring inside our societies. Therefore, we need to do everything we can to develop various forms of interaction and be ready for compromise. We should use this moment to bring our organisation to a new level and to restore trust between states.

Boleslav Pirshtuk, Deputy Chairman of the National Assembly's House of Representatives:



It's very important for us that our colleagues have seen Belarus for

themselves. They've communicated with people and seen that it's a European state with European culture and a very high level of development. I'm convinced that most will drastically change their relations towards the Republic of Belarus.

Ivan Brajovic, President of the Parliament of Montenegro:



There's much in common between Belarus and Montenegro. We also advocate the support of peace in the region. It's vital. However, we need to start more intensive collaboration, as our relations have greater potential.

Stephen de Boer, Canadian Ambassador to Poland and Belarus (concurrent):



One of the issues governing the renewal of our diplomatic ties is Belarus' constructive position within the OSCE. We look with enthusiasm on what Belarus is doing and highly appreciate the work of the Belarusian side in the Minsk process. It's a very fruitful path. Canada also supports the activity of your country in the struggle against human trafficking. Belarus called for a top-level meeting on this problem in September and we're grateful for continuing work on this.

Minsk has become a useful platform to exchange views on the 26th session of the OSCE



Time for responsible decisions

By Alexey Fedosov

It's an honour to welcome famous and influential politicians from around the world. Moreover, it gives us the chance to show off our country, including to those who, until recently, may have based their opinions on stereotypes and clichés, which have no bearing on reality. Guests see a modern city, benevolent people, and the even tenor of life, and become inspired with other feelings. A natural desire appears to ask questions, which absolutely corresponds to the aspirations of official Minsk. At the meeting at the Palace of Independence, with representatives of the US Congress, the President promised the guests absolute sincerity. The conversation was interesting and mutually useful, bringing pleasure to both sides.

The US delegation at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly session was the most numerous. We can perhaps say that they came not only for the OSCE event but to serve other interests. Following the Presidential elections, the foreign policy of the US new leadership has been acquiring an outline, so it's logical to expect Washington to be formulating an approach towards Belarus.



Representatives of US delegation — participants of the meeting

American Senator Roger Wicker sees positive prospects, and wonderful opportunities for positive change, and new achievements in Belarus-US interaction. He's confident that relations with our country will occupy an important place in the foreign policy of Donald Trump's administration. In this context, the President of Belarus noted that the US delegation's visit has special importance, saying, "You, members of the supreme legislative body

of the United States of America, have the opportunity to become acquainted with our country firsthand, to draw your own conclusions on the basis of what you've seen and heard. You can visit any place in our state, even the most closed."

Minsk's position has been clearly formulated, as the President explained, saying, "Our interest in the development of fully-fledged partnership relations with the United States remains un-

changed. Over the last 2-3 years, we've restored a particular level of political trust. I believe that the previous decade has seen conditions of uncertainty and sanctions; it's a period of lost opportunities for our relations."

Losses are always present in dialogue but, fortunately, they aren't irrevocable. Today, our countries are working together to ensure global and regional security while preventing illegal transit of nuclear materials and strug-

gling against crimes in the sphere of IT. Mr. Lukashenko invited the American partners to continue dialogue constructively. "Time has shown that this is an efficient mechanism of rapprochement, to eliminate disputes between our countries. We should learn to perceive events in our countries in a wide, regional and global context. Of course, it isn't easy to do this but we should aim for constructive goals."

Topics of bilateral interaction between Minsk and Washington, including political and economic collaboration, were the centre of attention, with the congressmen keen to discuss Ukraine's problems. Like many other foreign guests, they understand the weighty contribution of Belarus in settling the conflict in the neighbouring state. Therefore, they asked Mr. Lukashenko about his assessment of events and his vision of how to solve the problem.

Of course, a significant part of the meeting was dedicated to discussing the work of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. The congressmen were open in showing their admiration for the President's speech. The initiatives proposed by Minsk have global significance, and Minsk's call for a new Helsinki Process is of interest to all. The world has too many contradictions and needs a venue to settle them.

Multilateral diplomacy

By Vladimir Mikhailov

OSCE PA at 26th annual summer session in Belarusian capital adopts Minsk Declaration

The Minsk Declaration is based on resolutions adopted following discussions and contains recommendations for national governments, parliaments and the international community on how best to respond to the present-day challenges and threats. For example, MPs are concerned over challenges in the field of security throughout the OSCE region, including threats to cybersecurity, terrorism, protracted conflicts and the general deterioration of trust, security and co-operation.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly urges participating states to



recommit to multilateral diplomacy in the pursuit of comprehensive security and to intensify efforts to address the most pressing social problems. The Parliamentary Assembly has reiterated its support for the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements,

adopted in the Belarusian capital in February 2015. MPs have urged OSCE participating states to intensify efforts to address economic and environmental problems, and to seek opportunities for the development of regional and sub-regional collaboration.

Europe needs new Helsinki Process

From a speech given by Alexander Lukashenko at a plenary session dedicated to the solemn opening of the 26th annual session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly:

Pan-European dialogue to strengthen trust, security and co-operation should remain under focus, bearing in mind the enormous positive experience associated with the Helsinki Process of the 1970s, where actions benefitted from being proactive, rather than reactive

We suggest starting a new negotiation process within the OSCE, similar to the Helsinki Process. This would facilitate the signing of a global compact by the world's major powers, to finally end all echoes of the Cold War and stop escalation into a more tragic form, while offering a strategic vision for new, constructive relations in the OSCE region.

Alexandria gathers friends

Artists and musicians from eight countries take part in Kupalie holiday, held in Shklov District's Alexandria (Mogilev Region)

By Alexander Pimenov

The event has expanded its format and geography, with artistes, musicians and folk masters from eight states (Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Germany, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) taking part for the first time. The variety and circus performance, *Kupalie Dream*, on the major stage, became the culmination of the festival, combining spectacular performances with story-telling, to portray Kupalie traditions. Each participant of the event brought their own national interpretation of the holiday, as



Bright, colourful and cheerful holiday in Alexandria

celebrated in their own country, using circus art, choreography and acting to entertain audiences. A grand firework display closed the festival, involving representatives of foreign states, accompanied by a laser show. There were also Kupalie fires burning on the banks of the Dnieper River and festive round dancing.

Guests took part in the quest to find the fern flower, and there were various other contests, such as to create a Kupalie wreath. The Town of Friendship gathered many, and famous rock musician Tino Eisbrenner was a special guest of the holiday, giving a concert on the small stage, with his musicians from

Germany and Chile. Tino occupies a special place in German society and on the German musical stage, being known as a pacifist and participant in anti-war campaigning in Germany. His *Song About Friendship* has been a huge hit in Germany, and was performed during his show in Belarus.

Belarus' rich heritage was on show at the Drukarski Dvor (Print Yard) venue, showing the history and rich traditions of Belarusian book printing, which is celebrating its 500th anniversary this year. People could even try their hand at using a reproduction 16th century printing press, similar to that on which Francysk Skaryna printed his books. There were also demonstrations of ancient paper-making.

The Print Yard exhibition included books by classical writers of Belarusian literature — the pride of national book printing — as well as editions by contemporary authors. Festivities were held on the banks of the River Dnieper, near the bridge, which connects the settlements of Alexandria and Kopy, and the Mogilev Region and Vitebsk Region. More than 100,000 tourists and participants gathered for the spectacular event, which was also attended by the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko.

Gastronomic map

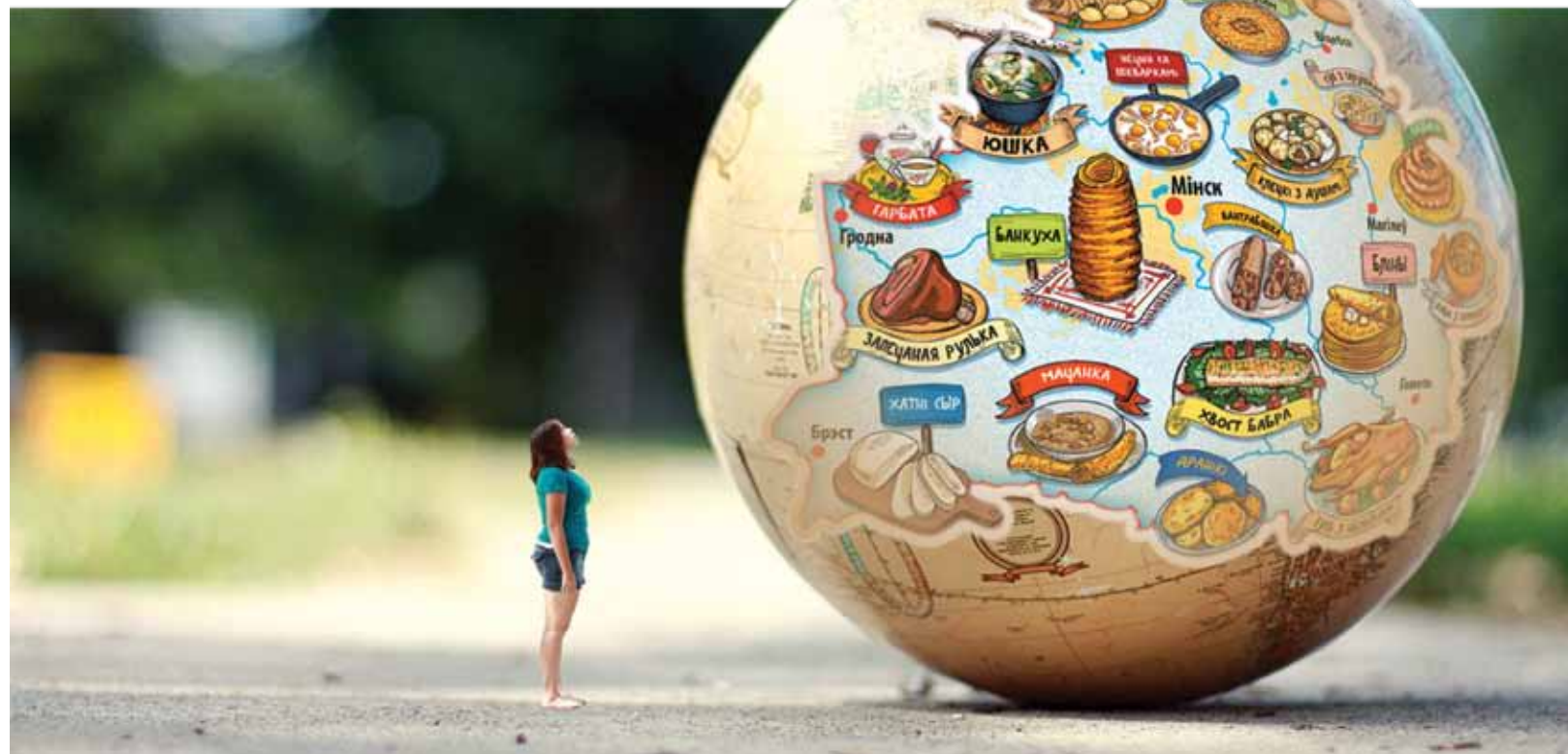
Guide for gourmands to be published in Belarus

By Olga Pasiyak

In the near future, a gastronomic tourism map will be available in Belarus, with places where authentic national dishes are cooked and culinary monuments are situated. The authors of this unique guide promise to focus on national 'tasty' events. The Chair of the Board of the Belarusian Agro- and Eco-tourism Association Country Escape, Valeria Klitsounova, has plenty of gastronomic plans and the culinary map is likely to be the beginning of a major work. A book containing around a hundred Belarusian national recipes will be a pleasant addition to the map.

"Apart from the traditional paper form, our map can be loaded onto a phone using our mobile app for gastronomic tourists. A domain name has already been registered for the electronic version; in the future, we expect it to become a major resource, with new recipes and places continually added," commented Ms. Klitsounova.

The first issue of the map includes a hundred of Belarus' convenient eateries; these are mostly homesteads and cafes in the countryside offering typical dishes. The crossed spoon



and fork are the symbol of the project; these are stylised under the national flag. Visitors need not worry that they will meet multiple examples of draniki (potato pancakes), the organisers of the project are keen to break this stereotype and gastronomic tourists will be offered rare dishes whose recipes have been preserved in remote corners of Belarus. Among them are dumplings with dushas (in folk recipes, 'dusha' stands for meat filling which is the tastiest part of the dish). In the Vitebsk Region's Lepel District, these are commonly eaten for dinner. Disna butter and Polesie garlands are also worth attention.

A culinary collection of



Culinary mastery

recipes will be a pleasant addition to the gastronomic map. According to many folk recipes, village stoves are better

for cooking traditional food, rather than modern baking ovens. With this in mind, it's aimed at professionals, mak-

ing a culinary tour, attending several master classes and only then attempting to cook something independently. Ms. Klitsounova believes that it's a wonderful chance to revive Belarusian gastronomic traditions and inspire interest in them.

The project has attracted students from the Belarusian State University's International Relations Department. They've conducted a poll which has sadly shown that modern young people know little of national cuisine, nor are they much interested in it. To address the issue, the students of International Tourism Chair organised a social media event: its participants

were expected to cook a Belarusian national dish and place the results of their work on the Internet, under the #gastinia hashtag. The results of students' attempts to cook kolduny (potato pancakes stuffed with meat), komy (potato balls with pork), potato babka or cranberry drink can be seen. The authors of the gastronomic map are hopeful that the recipes will soon be used in restaurants and culinary centres will open in provinces for anyone, including children, able to attend national cuisine classes. Motol, an agro-town in the Brest Region, well-known for its delicacies, is the first potential candidate for such a centre.

Long live the tourist boom!

Number of foreigners entering Belarus on five-day visa-free programme reaches 20,000

By Alexander Nesterov

Many travel agencies have prepared interesting programmes for their guests but are still waiting to see an influx of foreign visitors. Hospitality experts note that the five-day visa-free regime for citizens of eighty countries has not yet received a proper response, largely because it's still relatively unknown overseas. However, the situation is reparable.

The Head of the Department for Marketing and Quality of Tourism Services, at the Tourism Department of the Sports and Tourism Ministry, Anna Mukha, explains that tourists from sixty-five

countries have so far used visa-free entry (effective from February 12th, 2017). The National Tourism Agency adds that, most often, Belarus is visited by guests from Germany, Poland, Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Netherlands... Foreign

travellers are not yet lining up for Belarus, although there are obviously more foreigners on Minsk streets. Why are they here and what might interest them?

"We're mainly visited by business tourists," says Irina Gordienko, who heads the Marketing Department of the National Tourism Agency. She mentions neighbouring Lithuanians on business in Belarus, arriving by air, although tickets aren't cheap. "At the same time, we get complaints from travel agencies: 'Where are foreigners? We have no more orders.' Indeed, those who come to Minsk via the National Airport, travelling alone, are most likely to be found in conference rooms or, conversely, partying on Zybetskaya Street, rather than in the offices of travel agencies."

We don't yet know much about visa-free tourists, who may not arrive as part of an organised group. There's no statistical data on what brings them to Belarus, their social status or their financial capabilities, nor whether they're aware of the wide range of services offered by the country. It's difficult to track every tourist coming to Belarus, although the National Statistical Committee of Belarus is ready to announce information on organised groups (as provided by travel agencies). The National Tourism Agency prefers the statistics of the State Border Committee, which show the number of foreigners crossing the Belarusian border. Clearly, some come to visit



FACT
Medical tourism is among the most promising areas for attracting foreign visitors to Minsk. In the capital, over 120 health institutions offer highly qualified assistance to patients from abroad. The most popular services are dental and cosmetic, as well as organ transplants, plastic surgery and spa procedures.

relatives, or as part of a business trip. However, these people are also tourists, since they spend money.

The visa-free regime for short-term trips has spawned a new segment of travellers, as confirmed by the marketing manager of the Minsk Marriott Hotel, Yegor Denisenok. "Marriott is not a hotel for common tourists; it's rather a place for business people and organised groups. In

recent months, we've observed no significant change to the flow of customers: 30 percent come from Russia, Belarusians are in second place and citizens from Turkey are third," he explains.

To increase tourist flow to Belarus, it's necessary to promote the country overseas. Mr. Denisenok recalls his presentation on the occasion of the opening of the Minsk hotel. He

'reached out' to foreign partners, telling them about Belarusian technical developments: the MSQRD application for social networks, Viber and The World of Tanks online game. The hospitality industry cannot rest on its laurels, and the European tourist industry — which has only recently discovered the Baltic States — knows little about our country. Accordingly, it's time to promote Belarus.

Local initiatives are welcome and the district centre of Glubokoe, in the Vitebsk Region, provides a good example. It boasts rich natural and historical-cultural sites and, in recent years, has regularly hosted diverse festivals and other intriguing initiatives. Its famous Cherry Festival will be held very soon: from July 18th to 22nd.

The five-day visa-free regime operates for guests arriving only

through Minsk National Airport, which produces an advantage. A consultant in aviation and a former head of the National Tourism Agency, Grigory Pomerantsev, asserts, "Transit is a good resource for the development of inbound tourism. In my opinion, Belavia's representative offices abroad could more actively 'sell themselves', with flight services in a package, offering the opportunity to visit the country for several days without a visa and with a tourist programme. To make a foreign guest stop in Belarus, we need to consolidate efforts from all interested parties, from our side and with foreign partners. It's also worth considering the possibility of launching regular flights, including those run by foreign companies, into regional Belarusian airports."

Visa-free stays may be extended, for example, to allow trips to sanatoriums and health-improving organisations, where treatment lasts no less than 18 days. However, even the five-day period is underdeveloped. Ideally, we'd see at least 2-3 percent of transit air passengers decide to stay for five days, spending nights in a three-star hotel and sightseeing in Minsk. Belarusians are known for their hospitality and benevolence, so a mini-break to Minsk could encourage guests to return for a longer holiday.

DIRECT SPEECH
Alexander SURIKOV, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Russia to Belarus:

We [Russia and Belarus] are working on the next stage of the document on mutual recognition of visas. If Belarus, for example, issues a visa to a German citizen, then this visa will be automatically recognised in Russia. As a result, this citizen of a third country can enter Russia without any restriction, and vice versa. As I understand, by the end of the year, this intergovernmental agreement will be ready.



Blue-eyed magnificence of the Belarusian Poozerie

Unspoilt natural corners can be found in any region of Belarus, with their special status helping to preserve them. We invite you to walk through the Vitebsk Region with us.

By German Moskalenko

In the tracks of bears

Most of the Vitebsk Region is covered with forest containing plentiful and varied wildfowl. The north-west of the region is called the 'Belarusian Poozerie' after the famous wetland area: it boasts many beautiful lakes rich in fish.

The Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve deserves special attention. It's the oldest and only natural area of protection in the country at the highest level. The reserve is registered on the World Network of Biosphere Reserves of the UNESCO intergovernmental programme — *The Man and the Biosphere*. Its special value is its huge area of untouched forests (around 70,000 hectares). The flatlands of the Berezina River are of special importance, especially for migrating birds. Many rare and disappearing species of plants and animals are protected here. Almost two dozen marshes, forming an area from several hundred to many thousands of hectares, connected by an extensive network of small forest streams and small rivers, form a single water-and-bog complex. Due to these peculiarities, the reserve is registered on the Ramsar List of Wetlands and is of International Importance.

The ride to the reserve from Minsk takes only two hours. Its centre is in the village of Domzheritsy (3km from the Minsk-Vitebsk highway). Interesting routes have been



developed for tourists which can be taken in any weather. For example, in spring it's possible to listen to the mating call of black-cocks and in autumn — the call of roaring deer. Recently, photo-safaris have also been gaining in popularity. Visitors can hike on foot, by bike or on horse-back, and visit the Museum of Nature. There are many wild animals in the reserve; with the opportunity to see roe deer, wild boar, auroch, wolves, bears and other local fauna in open air cages. Children are delighted with the Bolotnik trail — a mythical character, a relative of Leshy (a forest spirit) and Kikimora (a female house spirit in Slavic mythology). Bolotnik is a guide in summer while in winter it's replaced by Father Frost.

From the Varangians to the Greeks

Part of the area's historic legacy is a legendary trading waterway used by the Varangians and the Vikings in the 10th-12th century to travel from Scandinavia to Constantinople along

ated by driving alongside the Zapadnaya Dvina River in comfort.

Migratory island

One can fall in love at first sight with Osveiskoe Lake in the Verkhnedvinsk District. It's Belarus' second largest lake after Naroch (52.8sq. km). If you're lucky, you may also see a migratory island. Yelnia Landscape Reserve shouldn't be missed. It occupies part of the Miory and Sharkovshchina districts. Yelnia is Europe's largest highland bog, preserved in its primeval state.

Belarusian roots of Scarlet Sails

A trip into the world of nature can be combined with other sites. For example, there are lots of beau-

tiful churches in the Verkhnedvinsk District. The magnificent neo-Gothic Roman Catholic church in Sarie constantly astonishes visitors with its grandeur, while the Roman Catholic church in Rositsa still arouses controversy: was it built in neo-Gothic or neo-Roman style?

Belarus' smallest town is in the Verkhnedvinsk District — Disna — where slightly more than 1,500 people live. However, it boasts a rich history: on a large island where the Disna River joins the Zapadnaya Dvina River, ancient people settled. In the times of Ivan the Terrible, a castle stood in the water, constructed by Stephen Báthory. The fortification embankments have been preserved. In Soviet times, such films as *The State Border*, *People of the Marsh* and *The Black Birch Tree* were shot here. Once, this town was a centre of trade on the banks of a wide, navigable river. Typically, merchants brick buildings and cobbled streets remind us of those times. Disna has preserved the house of the father of the famous writer, Alexander Grin, and the oldest functioning rail-road bridge over the river.

What about a giant iron!

The Vitebsk Region has 70 geological monuments of Republican importance, including the 'Big Stone' — the largest boulder in Belarus. It's found near the village of Gorki, 15km from Shumilino and 17km from Beshenkovichi. It's 11m long, 5.6m wide and its perimeter is 28.2m. Part of the boulder is under the earth, so its real size is considerably greater: it rises 2.8m above the ground. The boulder weighs several hundred tonnes and from one side resembles a gigantic iron. It also has an unofficial name — the 'Devil's Stone'. According to ancient legend, if a person visits the stone on a moonless night he will be circling it before dawn. People believed that evil spirits hide their treasure under it. Remarkably, the stones in Shumilino were used during the construction of St. Sophia Cathedral in Polotsk.

WE HAVE THE ONLY ONE



Belarus' only cave is located on the steep bank of Ginkovo Lake, near the village of Sakhnovichi in the Glubokoe District. It was formed in ancient sandstone around 25,000 years ago. The depth of the cave is approximately 10m. According to legend, the treasures of the Warsaw members of the Polish szlachta were hidden in it after the partition of Rzecz Pospolita, as well as Napoleon's treasures. However, the whereabouts of all this wealth is now unknown.

the Zapadnaya Dvina and Dnieper rivers and the Black Sea. Those keen on journeys on the water try to emulate the path of these courageous forefathers. Canoe rafting enjoys great popularity. For those who aren't so keen on the water, the beauties of the Belarusian north can be appreci-

Return to an unfamiliar city

Grodno travel agencies are now actively switching to local tourism. A few years ago, there were no more than ten similar companies but their number has recently increased to 70. The reason for this lies in the establishment of the visa-free regime. At the weekend, buses with foreign guests arrive at the Belarusian border. We investigate below who these people are and the purpose of their visits.

By Tatiana Petrova

Early on Saturday morning, buses from Lithuania begin parking in a small lay-by near Grodno synagogue. One of them has brought a large group of tourists guided by Renatas Jokubaitis. He works in the Riga branch of the Intermax travel agency and regularly takes Lithuanians to Belarus. “Our present group consists mostly of adults who are happy to listen to my stories about the historical events which unite our people,” he says. “Young people usually do not often listen as they do not know

any Russian. The tourists buy jumpers, medicines, souvenirs, candy and other products at good prices. Prices in your restaurants and cafes are also significantly lower than, for example, in Vilnius.”

Rimma Semaškienė has come from Vilnius with her daughter Katarina. She is very satisfied with the trip, commenting, “I visited Belarus almost 20 years ago, having only sketchy memories. I have wanted to come for a long time and got an opportunity after the change in visa rules. The guides are very interesting: both Russian and Lithuanian. Even the customs officers were wonderful, although we had been threatened that they would inspect us carefully. I bought a voucher for two for 40 Euros in winter. We called into your restaurant, drinking a coffee for one Euro. In Lithuania, it’s virtually impossible to find it cheaper than 2 Euros.”

The Director of Grodno’s SonNikTur travel agency — Pavel Shabeikin — began working with local tourism at the same time as the introduction of the visa-free regime. He immediately hit the bull’s eye. “So far, we are in the lead with the number of tourists accommodated: over 2,200 people have visited Belarus thanks to us,” he says. “I remember our first guests from the Lithuanian town of Klaipėda; those were single tourists.

Since then, we have been visited by travellers from Japan, China, Spain, Latvia, Poland, the Netherlands and other countries. On one of the March weekends, we accepted five buses with Lithuanian tourists. We cooperate with Lithuanian and Latvian tour operators. We always take our guests to the Avgustovsky Canal — so that they have an opportunity to compare it with what is happening on the popular gateways in the summer. City sightseeing then follows. In the past, travellers were fed as an organised group but, in recent years, most guests prefer to eat on their own. This proves that they are beginning to get used to Grodno. They know where to go and what they like here. Shopping at Belarusian stores is extremely popular among visitors, with guests mostly buying shoes, underwear, bedding, chocolate and alcohol. At the final stage, we take our buses with tourists to the city’s major trading centre — OldCity; they have two hours in which to buy food there. All our guests have been satisfied so far.”

Another company — Zet (headed by Sergey Yakshevich) began taking foreign guests to Belarus in 1991. It was among the first of its kind, bringing Ukrainians, Russians and Poles. In the last 6-8 years, the company has specialised mostly in Polish guests. Sergey admits that Poles are



Each day Grodno welcomes a dozen buses with tourists



FIGURES:

The Director of Grodno’s SonNikTur travel agency — Pavel Shabeikin — began working with local tourism at the same time as the introduction of the visa-free regime. He immediately hit the bull’s eye. “So far, we are in the lead with the number of tourists accommodated: over 2,200,” he said.

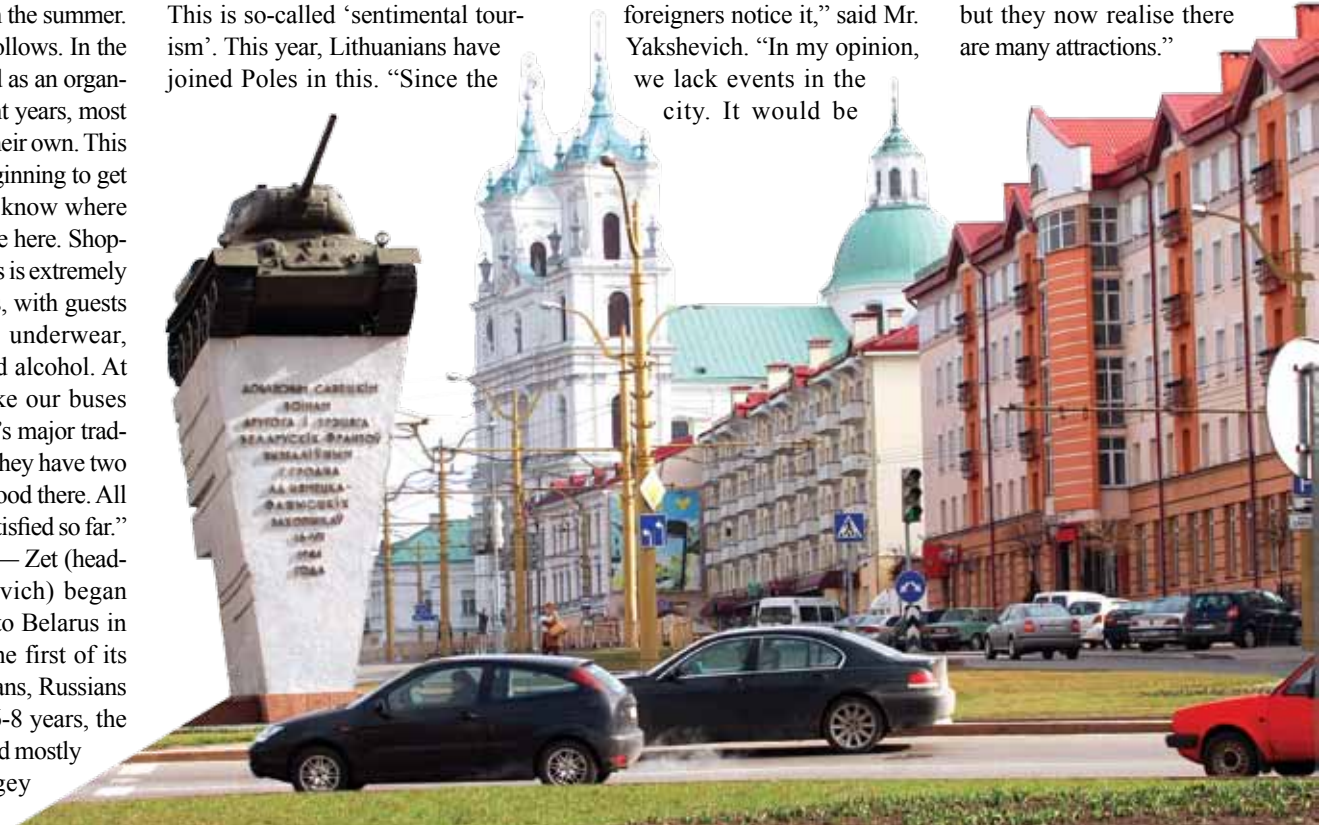
very special tourists in terms of their stamina. Most want to have 6-8 hours of excursions daily and are interested in everything connected with Polish history and their famous compatriots, writers, musicians and public figures — such as Eliza Oszeszkowa, Czesław Niemen, Tadeusz Kościuszko. This is so-called ‘sentimental tourism’. This year, Lithuanians have joined Poles in this. “Since the

launch of the visa-free regime, we’ve brought over a thousand visitors. Much has changed. Street names and signs in foreign languages have been put up and souvenir shops are opening. However, the old cemetery — where Eliza Orzeszkowa was buried — remains in a poor state and foreigners notice it,” said Mr. Yakshevich. “In my opinion, we lack events in the city. It would be

great to organise a small festival each Saturday — with the accompaniment of atmospheric music.”

Mr. Yakshevich added that it would be wrong to state that all Lithuanian and Polish guests are only interested in shopping. Not so long ago, he had a group who showed no interest in Bereza Glassware, Marko shoes or Milavitsa underwear. Moreover, school groups also have varied interests: not long ago, the local Museum of Religious History presented an exhibition of old bicycles which the children were happy to visit.

Much more needs to be done. The Deputy Head of the Department of Sports and Tourism of the Grodno Regional Executive Committee — Tatiana Lidyaeva — confirms that, in recent years, much has changed in terms of the attractiveness of the visa-free zone to tourists. “Previously, it was unprofitable for tourist agencies to deal with local tourism. It was much easier to send a client abroad and earn guaranteed money. The situation has changed radically. The number of people wanting to work in this area has risen and our tour operators are promoting Belarusian products to foreign partners. They tell others about the advantages of visa-free travel and advertise the Grodno Region. Just a couple of months ago, people wondered what could fill your time in Grodno but they now realise there are many attractions.”



Place rich with history or five reasons to visit Smorgon

By Sergey Bogomazov

Visiting Ogiński's Northern Athens

Smorgon has seen so many famous historical personalities it's as if it was a district in Paris rather than a modest region of Belarus. In June 1655, it housed the general headquarters of the Russian Tsar Alexey Mikhailovich during his campaign in Vilno. During the Northern War, Peter I and Karl XII stayed here, and in winter 1812, the town housed Kutuzov's headquarters. Before this, in a severe December, Napoleon passed the command of the remains of his Great Army to Marshal Murat and left for France.

The buildings where Peter I, Kutuzov and Napoleon stayed haven't been preserved, but the estate of Michał Kleofas Ogiński, the author of the famous polonaise *Farewell to the Homeland*, has survived. His Zalesie estate is known as the 'Northern Athens'. The estate was restored to its previous glory to mark the 250th anniversary of our countryman.

To understand the national character, you should visit Kushlyany, which houses the estate of Frantisek Bogushevich — one of the founders of Belarusian literature. The house of the author of *Dudka Belaruskaya* (Belarusian Pipe) is now a literary and memorial museum.

Ferretting out the secrets of the 'bear' academy

What fair can be without wandering minstrels and bears! To teach the bears to dance *Barynya* [a fast Russian folk dance], the 'bear academy' appeared in Smorgon more than three hundred years ago. In the early 17th century, the town even had a street called *Medvedskaya*. The 'academy' was led by the baron of Lithuanian Gypsies, Yan Martinkevich.

Up to 10 bears and several monkeys were trained at the same time. The menagerie was located on the site of the modern district hospital. A bear was taken to a cage under which a fire was lit. The metal became hot and the bear shifted from foot to foot while the teacher played a pipe or a timbrel. The bears quickly learnt their lessons!

The academy was so famous that a bear became a symbol of the town and appeared on its coat of arms. Recently a monument to the dancing bear and wandering minstrels was unveiled — a favourite



place for selfies.

Touching 'antiquity'

On your way to Smorgon you won't be able to avoid Krevo. The settlement near the district centre is famous for the ruins of a castle from the time of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania — the first stone construction in Belarus. The cellars of the Royal Tower have witnessed events significant in world history: on the order of the Great Duke Jagailo, the major contender for the

throne, his uncle Kęstutis was suffocated. Here, in Krevo Castle, Jagailo signed the decree that united the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Poland in their opposition against the crusaders.

You may think that Alexander Kerensky was unique in escaping from the Winter Palace in women's clothing a hundred years ago, but the first to perfect this disguise was the son of Kęstutis, the would-be Grand Duke Vytautas. He escaped

her buried in the wall. The beautiful lady has never parted with her pet and it shared the terrible fate of its mistress. For several days, the whole district heard groans and howls.

Learning about the place where Zoshchenko and Kataev fought

During WWI, the line of the Russian-German front went through the town and it was here that the Germans conducted the first gas attacks against the Russian army, injuring the staff captain of 16th Mingrelia Grenadier regiment, Mikhail Zoshchenko. To mark the 100th anniversary of WWI, Union State funds were used to construct a memorial commemorating heroes and victims of the war.

Recently a film was shot about Maria Bochkareva. All-female death squads, formed in Russia in 1917, took part in military battles only once — near Krevo. Moreover, writer Valentin Kataev also fought here, as did would-be marshals Boris Shaposhnikov and Roman Malinovsky. Leo Tolstoy's daughter, Alexandra, took care of the wounded in the military hospital.

Within three years of the battles, Smorgon had turned into a desert, the landscape characterised by ruined buildings. It was called a 'dead town' by newspapers; dozens of concrete pillboxes and earth-and-timber bunkers have been preserved in its suburbs.

Eating true doughnuts

It is believed that the first ring-shaped rolls appeared here. Later people began to dust them with sugar, add honey and poppy seeds. At first, a stiff dough was made from flour and water. Strips of dough, rather than ring-shaped, were then cooked in boiling water and dried. Ring-shaped rolls competed against even those made in Moscow and they were sold in Petersburg, Warsaw and even Paris.



wearing his wife's maid's dress.

Commander Andrey Kurbsky also escaped in Krevo from the persecutions of Ivan the Terrible. There he wrote his famous letters to the Moscow Tsar. Krevo Castle also has its ghosts: from time to time people see a lady with a dog. The unfortunate lady rejected the duke's advances and he ordered

Dear readers!

The history of Smorgon offers much that is of interest to the visitor. The names of famous personalities — known both in Belarus and far beyond its borders — are connected with the Smorgon area: the composer Michał Kleofas Ogiński, poet Frantisek Bogushevich and musician Victor Rovda.

Today, Smorgon is a prosperous industrial district with developed agriculture, a glorious history, wonderful nature and cordial and hospitable people. Of course, it's difficult to describe everything in a small newspaper article, so come and see for yourself!

Gennady Khoruzhik,

Chairman of the Smorgon District Executive Committee

Treasures close to home

Belarus is home to unique architectural monuments, natural wonders and ancient traditions which many people have little knowledge of

By Larisa Kovalevskaya

Some might think that Belarus has nothing special to boast about. However, the State List of Historical and Cultural Values of Belarus alone includes over 5,000 objects! Our country is a good place to travel. It is impossible to cover all the interesting and notable places, unique traditions, celebrations and festivals, miraculous icons, springs and more in a single article. To begin, let's look at the popular tourist routes.

Krevo — Golshany

This little trip to the north of the Grodno Region takes tourists back several centuries to Krevo Castle where the well-known Krevo Union was concluded — to mark the beginning of the unification of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish Kingdom. Here, following the order of Grand Duke Jagiello, his uncle Kęstutis was strangled. Moreover, his cousin Vytautas escaped, disguised as a woman. Only the ruins of the castle have been preserved, but they allow tourists to easily imagine the events.

Golshany Castle is in no better condition but has a wonderfully romantic atmosphere. A visit to the local *Golshany Castle Festival* is a must. Surrounded by medieval music, ladies in historic costume, knights in armour, Sofia Golshanskaya and Jagiello, the 21st century is left behind and visitors are transported back in time.

Vitebsk — Zdravnevo

Vitebsk attracts attention not only during its *Slavianski Bazaar*: many local sights are impressive. Among them are historic buildings, the graceful town hall, the monumental Palace of the Governor (where Napoleon Bonaparte stayed) and majestic churches.

Art lovers should visit the Marc Chagall Museum and the Ilya Repin estate in Zdravnevo, 16km from the city. Travellers can see the artist and his family's belongings, while walking under lime trees personally planted by Ilya Repin.



Sula History Park — Rubezhevichi

A visit to the Sula History Park — 49km away from Minsk — is better than any computer game. Here, the Lensky noble family lived and anyone coming to the site can participate in the construction of the castle, watch the forging of a weapon in the gunsmith's workshop, ride a viking drakkar, visit the Hall of Knightly Glory and admire its collec-

tion of tapestry and pictures, listen to live sounds of 18th century bagpipes and harmonium, learn a historic dance and taste traditional Belarusian dishes and drinks.

Rubezhevichi (Stolbtsy District) has bordered different states at various times in its history. Visitors can buy tea in an old pharmacy selling medicinal herbs — known as Belarusian Phyto-Treating Mecca, and listen to the organ in St. Joseph's Church.



Mogilev — Buinichi Field — Bobruisk

Mogilev is rich in architectural monuments — such as the beautiful town hall, Belarus' oldest theatre and an unusual sculpture of an astrologer. The city suburbs also have unique attractions: tradition lovers will enjoy the *Belarusian Village* ethnographic exhibition, while enthusiasts of military history can visit Buinichi Field. The memorial — related to the dramatic events in the first months of World War II — always impresses visitors with its military equipment exhibition. Following the wishes of the writer Konstantin Simonov, his ashes were scat-

tered there.

Another landmark military historical object will prove interesting for Bobruisk tourists: the local fortress overwhelms with its majesty and power. The city is also famous for its Jewish history. In the early 20th century, Jews accounted for over half the local population but are just 1 percent at present. Modern tourists can visit the synagogue, taste kosher food and listen to the well-known Jewish 7:40 melody — played at the clock tower.

Mozyr — Turov — Lyaskovichi

There is no better trip for nature lovers than to go

to Polesie. Those wishing to have a true course of 'Polesie Therapy' need to get in touch with the Pripyatsky National Park's administration in Lyaskovichi. Local employees will advise visiting the Museum of Nature and the safari park, walking through the river jungles, visiting a floating hotel and a barge-restaurant, going fishing and hunting. These places are known not only for their unique nature. The historical-archaeological Ancient Turov Complex attracts people with its glass canopy, on which travellers can see the remains of the stone church destroyed by an earthquake in 1230. Visitors to the site can see stones, plinfa, remains of the church bell and even an 800-year-old stone sarcophagus discovered in the castle's ruins.

Pinsk — Kobrin

This is a trip for those who wish to get acquainted with several cultures and even eras in a single weekend. Pinsk harmoniously combines modern hotels and 18th-19th century buildings, Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches and synagogues. The Polish Wegerska Gorka hatch is found in Belarusian Zavalnaya Street and the former Jewish bakery in Lenin Street offers nostalgic

smells. Any tourist will find rest for their soul here: they can kayak or take a minicruise, go fishing and have dinner on the boat, see the Belarusian exotics — such as a wooden bike and oak canoes in the local museum, look at the house where Napoleon Orda lived and visit the bakery of Microsoft President Steve Ballmer's uncle.

Kobrin is also an incredibly tolerant place. Here, majestic temples of different faiths from the 17th-19th century are neighbours. Travellers to the city should visit the Suvorov Museum and an ostrich farm near Kobrin — the largest in the CIS.

Gastronomic festivals are gaining in their popularity

Many travel around the world with a simple goal: to taste true real Italian pizza, Lithuanian zeppelins or French croissants. Each country boasts unique recipes and, in Belarus, each region amazes with its own delicacies. People coming to the Republic can not only taste local potato pancakes but, also, 'bulbyaniki' (made from boiled potatoes), and vodka soup. Gastronomic festivals are trending, with fairs, cooking classes and concerts all drawing visitors.

By Lyudmila Minakova

Sample mouth-watering treats

What: Motol Delicacies
Where: Motol agro-town, Ivanovo District, Brest Region
When: August

After visiting the Motol festival, Italian culinary critic Renato Cucinotta concluded: 'Motol residents are truly lucky since they eat better than in the capital'. You bet! Minsk is unlikely to offer its guests slow-baked hock, pumpkin porridge, potato 'tarkavanka' with dried apples or meat baked inside bread. Even in the times of the granting of the Magdeburg Right, in 1555, Motol was famous for its original cuisine and sincere hospitality. Its people were masters of all trades, being able to reap, weave, make ovens and produce the best leather coats in the region. Its children and adults speak the local dialect. Even tourists from abroad notice that Motol's language is as beautiful as French or Italian.

The *Motol Delicacies Festival* — first organised in 2008 — is attracting an increasing number of guests. The agro-town, where around 4,000 people live, has just as much to offer as the European capitals when it comes to mouth-watering cuisine and entertainment, with street chefs making 'peacock designs' from meat cold cuts, 'kings' from sausages, and 'churches' from butter. Motol's cooks have even made a portrait of the Mona Lisa from sausages.

You can visit the Motol house where the first president of Israel, Chaim Weizmann, was born, as well as the Traditional Medicine Museum (Grandma's Towers, in the village of Strelna), and the village of Dostoevo, where writer Fiodor Dostoevsky's family lived.

Golden heads

What: Host's Cheese
Where: Slavgorod, Mogilev Region
When: April 30th

Belarusian producers have been replicating foreign parmesan, ricotta and mascarpone cheeses, but



Tasty delicacies in Motol

many would say that these are no competition for the local traditional cheeses, as presented at the *Host's Cheese Culinary Forum*, in the Slavgorod District. This year, local cheese-makers presented over fifty varieties of natural cheeses: hard and soft, processed and cottage cheese, syrnytsa and cheesecakes, sweet and salty, with various seasonings and fillers. Not every supermarket can boast such a choice. Meanwhile, those coming to the festival not only sampled cheeses but learnt how to make them.

Despite its title, the Slavgorod Festival is devoted

not only to cheese; its programme includes concerts by local groups, thematic tours, games and contests, a craft fair, a mobile sauna, hiking, horseback riding and camping. You can also go to the memorial complex in Lesnaya agro-town, to drink water from the miraculous Blue Springs: a place of national significance. Alternatively, you can raft across the Sozh.

Cherries from Munchausen

What: Cherry Festival
Where: Glubokoe, Vitebsk Region
When: June

The Glubokoe District has always been popular among tourists, offering so many wonderful sights: the 17th century Cathedral of Nativity of the Holy Virgin, the 18th century Trinity Church, the tomb of famous painter Jazep Drozdovich,



Have you heard?

It's now easier to travel around the country: the gastronomic map of Belarus was released last year. Its authors covered 4,000 kilometres, spent 66 hours travelling, and sampled thirty unique dishes, as well as twenty-eight original products. They've united the most iconic and tasty dishes on a single map — including eel from the village of Murashki, honey from the Vitebsk Region, venison from the Nalibokskaya Pushcha and marbled meat from Turov.



Stars of the Cherry Festival in Glubokoe

the Museum of Plane Designer Pavel Sukhoi — in Glubokoe, Morsary Roman Catholic Church, and the beautiful cultural and forest complex surrounding it. In 2013, the Cherry Festival joined this list, proving popular with families from across Belarus and abroad. Of course, Glubokoe residents have been blessed with these 'red rubies' for centuries. Residents of neighbouring districts and, even, Minsk make the trip, especially to buy cherries.

According to legend, cherries were brought to the city by monks, or by Boleslav Lapyr. Some even say that Baron von Munchausen

did so, on the day that he tried to kill a deer with a cherry stone. A two-metre tall iron cross with the name of von Munchausen can be found in the local cemetery.

During the first Cherry Festival, a sculpture of a stylised tree trunk and branches of mature cherries was erected in the centre of Glubokoe. It was immediately 'surrounded' with good beliefs: if you want happiness, then touch the berries, money — rub the leaves, for a smooth road through life — touch a branch. After the four-day festival, the sculpture shines with having been rubbed so many times.

Author's remarkable style

Events and Figures exhibition, at the National Art Museum, shows the diversity of life using the language of social posters



Opening of the exhibition, with participation of the author of the displayed works

By Veniamin Mikheev

It would be no exaggeration to say that Vladimir Krukovsky is the classic artist of the Belarusian poster. The works presented at the exhibition cover his creative period from 1972 to 2011 and embody acute social topics. The theme of some works is contradictory however, close to communist ideology, an attentive eye can see images referring to issues of ecology, the protection of our cultural heritage, the traumatic experience of war and Stalinist repressions. Vladimir Krukovsky 'leans' towards metaphors, unexpected juxtapositions and hard-

hitting laconicism. The painter manages to figuratively uncover problematic moments in our social lives.

The favourite techniques of the painter are gouache and silk screening; the latter has found its reflection in the triptych, entitled '120 Years since K. Kalinovsky Rebel', alongside such works as 'Respect the Native Language', 'Disarmament is the Requirement of the Time', 'Alcohol Abuse is a Crime!' and 'Manifest'.

The *Events and Figures* exhibition, dedicated to the painter's 80th anniversary, is a retrospective display of the most vibrant and aphoristic works from the



Photo taken against the background of a poster

collections of the National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus, the National Historic Museum and the State Museum of

Belarusian Literature History.

Vladimir Krukovsky was born in 1937 in Osipovichy and comes from an ancient noble family of

the 'Korvin' line. He studied at the Belarusian Polytechnic Institute and received his artistic education at the Vitebsk Pedagogical Institute's Graphic Department. Since 1970 he has been living and working in Minsk. He is an author of books and numerous journalistic publications about Belarusian history and heraldry. He was also an artistic editor of the magazines *Mastatstva Belarusi* (Art of Belarus), *Maladost* (Youth) and *Spadchyna* (Heritage). Mr. Krukovsky is a member of the Belarusian Union of Artists and the Belarusian Union of Writers, being also awarded a medal 'For Merits in the Pictorial Arts'.

Where the line of fortune leads to...

By Mikhail Veremeev

Minsk's Museum of Belarusian Cinema History hosts personal exhibition of avant-garde painter Vladimir Akulov

The exposition of this exhibition includes only Vladimir Akulov's pictorial works from various cycles, showcasing genre compositions, landscapes and still-life paintings. However, the exhibited works also include eye-catching self-portraits, portraits of historical figures and portraits of Mr. Akulov's contemporaries, created from nature.

Vladimir Akulov's creative 'specialisation' began to form during his study in Vitebsk in the 1970-1980s. The Art and Graphic Department of Vitebsk's Pedagogical Institute continued the traditions of the Vitebsk art school. The works by Kazimir Malevich, Marc Chagall and Vera Yermolayeva have made especially strong influence on Mr. Akulov though he was trying to develop his own style.

Vladimir Akulov is an author of a whole range of the-



Portraits in the style of Vladimir Akulov

matic cycles, such as *Masks and Images* and *Places and People of Belarus*. The author has created illustrations for the works of the world literature: *Don Quixote* by Cervantes, *The Dead Souls* by Gogol and *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare.

At present, the works of the avant-garde painter are kept in numerous collections both in Belarus and abroad.

We are often sceptical of the worth of our contemporary painters, as if believing they have not yet earned the right to our admiration. Vladimir Akulov, whose exhibitions are

often held in Minsk, is among the exceptions.

The press often write about him, calling Vladimir Akulov a representative of the second wave of Belarusian avant-garde. His teacher, Alexander Soloviev, influenced him greatly during his studies in Vitebsk. Since graduating, Akulov has created thousands of stunning works.

Being inquisitive, he has travelled across the former USSR and has worked in Germany, Belgium and Italy, with personal and joint exhibitions on display in Belarusian cities, in Moscow, St. Petersburg,

Tallinn, Munich, Warsaw and Antwerp. Whole cycles of his works remain in Germany, Belgium and the USA. Alexander Glezer, who helped organise the famous Moscow 'Bulldozer' exhibition, in 1974, came to Minsk to acquire Akulov's works for the Museum of Russian Art in the USA. Mr. Akulov has created almost 2,000 works to date, but believes that he'll continue making far more. He asserts, "You should never stop creating. When you have purpose, this is what keeps you alive. Don't forget that you are mortal; that your time will come.

This will help you appreciate the time you do have, and make the most of it. Once your time is gone, there's no going back."

Despite the fact that he primarily focuses on serious themes, such as war and faith, his first personal exhibition showcased much lighter works — easier for understanding. "Lines play the major role in my pictures. I try to express my emotions though the line. Actually, this can be called expressionism," the painter describes his own creative principles.

Mr. Akulov noted that most of the people he draws aren't keen on his portraits but this doesn't bother him. He underlines, "An artist should paint from the heart, rather than to please someone. Our desire to please others restricts our freedom."

Mr. Akulov is known for being outspoken. "The avant-garde of the 1990s has disappeared, being replaced by installations. The spirit of painting has died," he once said in an interview.

According to the painter, he tries to preserve the spirit of the avant-garde of that time but leaves it to audiences to judge how successfully he has transferred the traditions of this artistic movement into our 21st century world.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Akulov is an extraordinary personality, absolutely recognisable, even in the smallest details of his work. With the soul of an eternal traveller, seeking answers to eternal questions, he creates works which seem never to have existed before his imagination took hold. He breaks new ground, bringing his own unique vision.



12 AGENDA

The Minsk Times Thursday, July 13, 2017



Enthusiastic surfers, Eduard and Alexandra, marry on the bank of the River Svisloch

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street
Until 19th September. *Marc Chagall: Colour of Love*

BELARUSIAN STATE MUSEUM OF GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR HISTORY

8 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 30th July. *On the Other Side: Unknown Photos from the USSR Occupied Territory and the Soviet-German Front (1941-1945)*

NATIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM

12 Karl Marx Street
Until 31st August. *Summer Story* educational programme

MUSEUM OF NATURE AND ECOLOGY

117 Kazinets Street
Until 11th September. *Miraculous World of Butterflies*

GALLERIA MINSK

9 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 31st July. *White Pole Museum of Ice-Cream*

HOUSE-MUSEUM OF FIRST RSDRP SESSION

31a Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 6th August. *Path of Weapon: from Blade to Sort Rifle*

YAKUB KOLAS SQUARE

Until 9th September. *The Artist and the City: Golden Collection of Belarusian Pictorial Art*

VANKOVICH'S HOUSE

33a Internatsionalnaya Street
Until 20th July. Exhibition of Sergey Drozdov's author doll: *Male Sight*

PUSHKIN LIBRARY

4 Gikalo Street
Until 30th July. Exhibition of live exotic butterflies

KOMSOMOLSKOE LAKE

Pobediteley Avenue
Until 17th September. *Art-Islands* project

MUSEUM OF THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL CULTURE HISTORY

5 Muzykalny Lane
Until 1st September. *Made in USSR*

TITAN

104 Dzerzhinsky Avenue
Until 31st July. *Secrets of Egyptian Pharaohs*

LOSHITSA ESTATE

8/2 Chizhevsky Lane
Until 27th August. *Wonderful Animals*

CAT MUSEUM

23 Internatsionalnaya Street
Until 31st August. *Summer of Cat Platoshka*

THEATRES

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street
14.07. *The Sleeping Beauty* 16.07. *Jane Eyre* 18.07. *Mister X* 19.07. *True Story of Lieutenant Rzhevsky* 20.07. *The Swan Lake*

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
13.07. *He and She* 14.07. *Testosterone* 15.07. *Innkeeper*

THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue
13.07. *Wolves and Sheep* 14.07. *Robbery at Midnight* 16.07. *An Unnamed Star* 17.07. *A Very Simple Story* 18.07. *The Battlefield* 19.07. *Abduction of Yelena* 20.07. *Two Arrows*

CONCERTS

MINSK-ARENA

111 Pobediteley Avenue
19.07. *Depeche Mode*

RE:PUBLIC

62 Pritytsky Street
14.07. *Re:public Street Musicians Festival* 19.07. *King and Fool* tribute

PLAN B

10A Khmelniyskiy Street
14.07. *Anastasia Razvadovskaya and Vladimir Kozin*

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE (SMALL STAGE)

12 Engels Street
17.07. *Shabany*

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street
13.07. *The Seagull* 14.07. *School of Taxpayers* 16.07. *Pinsk Gentry* 17.07. *Paulinka* 18.07. *Jeweller's Jubilee*

YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street
18.07. *Zhmurik* 18.07. *Masculine, Single* 19.07. *The Poor Fool*

CHAMBER DRAMA THEATRE

5 Frunze Street
19.07. *Man as a Present*

TNT ROCK CLUB

9 Revolyutsionnaya Street
13.07. *Pink and Sweet* 14.07. *Harmonix College / Tomato Jam / The Feedback* 15.07. *Canada & Top Gun* 16.07. *Merlin Monroe* 19.07. *Bowling Jack* 20.07. *Big Daddy Blues*

UPPER TOWN

23A Svobody Square
13.07. *Summer Mood* 20.07. *Music of Soul*

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