

Hotel boom captures the capital

First hostels open in Minsk, while new hotels are built and old are reconstructed

By Viktor Andreev

In all, 26 hotels currently operate in the capital, sleeping almost 6,000 guests. It's a true challenge to find a room unless you pre-book; only expensive five-star hotels are the exception. Accordingly, many new hotels are being built to meet demand.

Cheap and convenient

Hostels offer cheaper accommodation and are well-known throughout Europe, having appeared around a hundred years ago. They've now spread to Africa and Belarus' Vladimir Romanovich recently set up our first hostel, in the centre of Vitebsk — although he has since had to shift his location to the suburbs. Recently, Minsk gained the Jazz Hostel, in picturesque Mozyrskaya Street, and an economy class hotel opened on the opposite side of the

city, near Mogilevskaya metro station. Entrepreneur Dmitry Narkevich's Postoyalets (Guest) Hostel is a mini-hotel situated in a multi-storeyed residential house. It offers European-level services, hospitable personnel and moderate prices, while each room has Wi-Fi access, a LCD TV (with a dozen satellite channels) and a safe. In addition, guests have a self-service kitchen equipped with utensils, a refrigerator, an electric kettle and microwave oven. Tea, coffee and table games are available free of charge 24 hours a day, while computers are available for hire and fax and Skype services are available.

Minsk hostels are primarily aimed at young people, sports teams and pilgrims, with charges of around \$10 per bed at Postoyalets and at the three-storeyed Jazz Hostel.

Return to 19th century

ALEXANDER RUZHECHKA



Respectable five-star Europe Hotel located in historical centre of Minsk

House #11 on Internationalnaya Street, an early 20th century building, is currently being restored near Minsk's Pobeda Cinema. It already enjoys a new façade, balconies and attic floor, regaining its original appearance and, next year, is to house a hotel. The three-storey stone house, with mezzanines, was built in the 1880s for merchant Berko Sutin and housed a hotel for some time. It survived WWII but was remodelled in the 1960s, losing its balconies and some elements of décor, while gaining an archway.

It would have been impossible to restore the original look of the building without archive photos, which depict the roof and its iron balconies. One photo from the mid-20th century and another from a few decades earlier were used by the Centre for Regeneration of Historical-Cultural Landscapes and Territories to plan restoration works.

Places worthy of renown

Some existing hotels are presently undergoing reconstruction, while a Polish bank

has allocated credit to construct an extension for the Victoria Hotel, in Pobediteley Avenue, by late 2013. It will offer 259 rooms, conference halls and meeting rooms, a restaurant for 300 guests, a fitness centre with a swimming pool and sauna, a beauty salon and parking. In addition, facilities are being created for those with less mobility.

Construction of the President Hotel is in full swing, occupying the former Oktyabrskaya Hotel building, at the crossroads of Engels and Kirov streets. Meanwhile, the Belarus

Hotel is being revamped, with another two floors added to its 22 storeys. Each will gain a modern façade and an observation level on the roof, with works complete by 2013. The five-star Beijing hotel complex will appear in Krasnoarmeiskaya Street's park zone.

The MT's reference:

Belarus has 289 hotels, 21 hotel complexes, 3 motels and 4 camp sites. Of these, 38 hotels and 5 hotel complexes enjoy international 'star' classification, with 11 in Minsk.

Masters of holography conquer space

National Academy of Sciences of Belarus hosts world's largest exhibition of artistic holograms

By Yulia Vasilkova

150 unique works from 20 countries are being displayed at the 8th *HoloExpo-2011* international conference. Well-known artists within the genre are taking part — such as Hans Bjelkhagen from the UK, who created Reagan's holographic pulsed-laser. The sphere of science has already aroused interest within the spheres of medicine, cinematography and nuclear physics. However, Leonid Tanin, an academician at the International Engineering Academy and the founder of artistic and protective holography in Belarus, is convinced that many more applications lie ahead.

Among the holograms, visitors could view ancient goblets throwing shadows inside a box, and a female dancer frozen in mid-flight, pursued by a dragon. It was hard to believe that the pictures were really just flat images on a wall. The next depicted something familiar: Belarusian treasures — as seen at the History Museum. Their 3-dimensional copies were created especially for



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Classic holograms on show at exhibition

the exhibition in Shanghai, to allow the originals to stay in Belarus.

Holograms can be used to create amazing replications of art and historical masterpieces. For example, Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya's cross is available at the Academy of Sciences. Some images on show are monochromatic — as colour appeared in holograms just a few years ago — and others vary in the amount of 'volume' and movement they portray.

The trend began to develop at Belarus' academic institutes back in the 1970s, so it's no surprise that Minsk is hosting the *HoloExpo-2011*. During the opening of the scientific forum, the Chairman of the Council of the Republic, academician Anatoly Rubinov, underlined that our country has been focusing on laser physics, with the latest holographic technology developing primarily due to the great devotion of academicians Alexander Ruba-

nov and Pavel Apanasevich's pupils. Back in 1978, Minsk hosted the 1st All-Union Exhibition of Holograms, which was a great success. At that point, most were concentrating on copying historical and cultural treasures, allowing the public greater access.

Now, holographic technology is much cheaper, allowing it to be used as a 'protective symbol' on documents and goods. Unigram (a patented technology used on excise labels for tobacco and

alcohol) has been used by Goznak enterprises for almost a decade. Currently, the technology is being used to mark 21 groups of commodities — particularly those headed for international markets. Unique packaging has been created for diamonds, with self-destroying holograms to reinforce the degree of protection many-fold. It has already received a number of awards at international exhibitions, including a gold medal in Toronto. It's no surprise that Belarusian diamonds, as well as 70 percent of those from Russia, are packed in this way.

Codograms are holographic bar-codes showing authenticity and containing information on a product. A reading device has been invented at the Belarusian State University — the 'alma mater' of most of those engaged in space related research. According to the BSU's Pro-Rector for Scientific Work and Doctor of Physico-Mathematical Sciences, Alexey Tolstik, holography is so fascinating and beautiful that it's attracting more young people towards the study of natural sciences.

More interesting projects planned

By Andrey Svetlov

Institute of German Studies launched at Belarusian State University

The new establishment will primarily focus on the organisational, information-methodical and consultative provision of the BSU's liaisons with German universities and organisations. Co-operation will tackle not only education but science and tourism, in addition to country studies of Germany: its history, culture and economy. The development of academic mobility in Germany and other EU states will also be researched.

The Institute is to tackle international projects in the field of education and science, attracting German organisations and foundations. It is also to keep the German language scientific library updated, using digital carriers and Internet access. Financing from state and private German investors is planned.