

Paris certainly knows beauty when it sees it

Crystalware from Borisov wins three honorary awards in French capital

By Vladimir Yakovlev

Several years ago, FC BATE from Belarusian Borisov, situated 60km from Minsk, rushed into the European football elite. It has kept a strong foothold ever since. A leather ball covered in the team's signatures ever reminds of this, as well as a crystal ball which has been presented to the football club by Borisov residents, in honour of their achievements. The choice is both simple and symbolic, as the crystal ball was manufactured by Borisov's famous crystal factory.

The enterprise, located in the centre of the city, is a key landmark and a piece of Belarusian history, having been founded 112 years ago by Minsk merchant Berkha Kabanov.

He was later replaced by who understood glass can be both functional and beautiful. Since 1904, made by Borisov's crystal factory sold well in UK, as well as in Egypt and Afghanistan. At that time, 225 masters worked

at the enterprise and, in 1910, it was awarded an honorary medal at an exhibition in Paris. The French capital awarded the factory again 67 years later, bestowing the 'Golden Eagle'. The factory had survived two wars, facing many challenges and enduring through them all.

Former US President Bill Clinton and the current President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, have both been presented with crystal from the famous enterprise. In fact, crystal shot glasses, wine glasses, goblets, vases, confectionary and salad bowls, ash-trays and various souvenirs are owned by millions around the world. The factory's green and blue glass appeals to those seeking something unusual, as does its unique



Crystalware grinder at Neman glassworks, Dmitry Malyavsky



'drunken' shot glasses and decanters (made to lean like the Tower of Pisa).

The enterprise's sorting room offers an embarrassment of riches: glasses for wine, shots, tea and, most recently, cocktails (triangular shaped for martinis). All are created in dozens of variants, boasting up to 20 modifications. The frosted-etched stemmed-ware particularly appeals to me, being elegant and fashionable. A set of 6 or 12 can be coupled with a decanter (with a capacity of 250ml to 2.5 litres) or a 1.5-3 litre jug. There is even a series of crystal

cooler buckets for champagne.

The vases are astonishing in their delicacy and size — being up to 1.5m high. You can have any image you like engraved, with the etching lasting a lifetime. Portraits of those celebrating birthdays or anniversaries are popular, as are depictions of animals: elephants, swans or traditional Belarusian aurochs. The factory has even made a mill with rotating blades in crystal! Dishes for fruit and confectionery, alongside jewellery boxes, make wonderful gifts. The factory's inventory numbers 3,000 models. Last year, the Borisov enterprise was given another honorary award at an international exhibition in Paris; it has now won prizes and diplomas in 30 states.

It's hard to believe that glass — so full of sun, joy and warmth — is made from sand, plumbum oxide and potash. Of course, only the purest sand is used (without iron impurities). Like the other raw ingredients, it's imported, as is the

natural gas which feeds the furnaces where the liquid glass is melted day and night.

"When the plumbum content reaches 24 percent, glass can be called crystal," explains Sergey Goncharov, the chief engineer at the enterprise. "It's more reflective and gives the delicate crystal ring. Meanwhile, true crystal keeps these wonderful properties for centuries, unlike plain glass."

The mastery and dedication of the glass blowers is just as important at the ingredients. They stand on a platform around the furnace, blowing each piece by hand, individually, from the fiery hot liquid. An impressive 450-500 shot glasses and goblets can be manufactured in a single shift, while several people can work on a single vase during the whole day. The addition of engraving follows, alongside packaging, after which the goods are sent out to shops and are transported abroad... eventually adorning festive tables near and far.

Possibilities opening up to interested investors

By Valery Semenitsky

One of Gomel's most famous industrial enterprises — Plant of Measuring Equipment — becomes open joint stock company by end of year

According to Yekaterina Zenkevich, Director of Gomel-oblimushchestvo (Gomel Regional Property) Regional Territorial Fund, the change of form of ownership could positively influence investors' interest in the enterprise. The factory boasts contemporary production infrastructure, as well as many additional buildings and constructions. At present, it employs 320 people. In the late 1980s, there were over 2,000 workers, with produce exported to more than 50 countries worldwide.

The Plant of Measuring

Equipment is the first of 11 state owned enterprises in the Gomel Region to be transformed into an open joint stock company by late 2011. Others include such flagships of domestic industry as the Belarusian Steel Works, Svetlogorsk's Khimvolokno Production Association and Rechitsa Hardware Works.

The Gomel Plant of Measuring Equipment is a leader within Belarus' instrument-making industry, specialising in the manufacture of analytical instruments to control and regulate technological processes and environmental monitoring, as well as making electrode systems for potentiometric measurements. Moreover, the enterprise offers electroplating, metal processing and non-ferrous alloy casting, and is involved in the manufacture of metal goods.

Dialogue should inspire further work on sustainable energy action

By Diana Kurilova

Polotsk attends its first Covenant of Mayors ceremony in Brussels

After signing the Covenant of Mayors this September, the ancient city has become the first Belarusian participant of the European initiative to save energy and protect the environment. A forum highlighting the importance and prospects of this initiative took place as part of the ceremony.

According to the Chairman of the Polotsk City Executive Committee, Alexander Poznyak, the forum is a productive way to discuss problems. "This format enables local authorities to meet top officials from European institutions and talk over joint events



Brussels ceremony

in the energy sector. I have no doubt that this dialogue will give additional impetus to present targets in Europe — and in Polotsk in particular," he notes.

The Covenant of May-

ors ceremony is an annual event, where signatories join supporters and coordinators to pledge the reduction of CO2 emissions by at least 20 percent by 2020. Reports are also

made regarding ongoing projects.

This year's ceremony united over 1,000 participants, including the heads of large regions and cities in Europe — such as London, Munich, Bucharest, Rome and Warsaw. Top European officials also attended.

Polotsk has developed a sustainable energy action plan, running until 2020, as part of a project entitled *Sustainable Urban Energy in the Region of the European Neighborhood Partnership Instrument — towards the Covenant of Mayors*. The document is to be submitted to the Polotsk Council of Deputies in early 2012, aiming to help Polotsk enhance its energy efficiency.