

Route guided by diagnoses

Modern tourism envisages not just the discovery of countries and continents, with clichés such as ‘look to the right and you’ll see...’ On the contrary, we offer shopping and gastronomic experiences, excursions and medical trips. Our neighbours — the Russians — long ago chose Belarus as their medical-tourist destination, in addition to Israel and Germany. Foreigners from the CIS and beyond are well aware of us offering good value for money regarding dentistry and prosthetics, plastic surgery, oncological services and recuperation from severe injury...

By Alesya Marovskaya

Tourists are not adventurers

Exports of medical services are gaining momentum at the Republican Scientific-Practical Centre of Traumatology and Orthopaedics. In 2009, 272 foreigners addressed it for treatment and diagnosis; in 2010, the figure rose to 497. The Centre’s revenue has increased accordingly. “Last year, we fulfilled 125 percent of our planned medical



Russian celebrities (such as singer Nikolay Baskov, in the centre) tend to visit Belarusian clinics more often

service sales,” explains the Head of the Centre’s Non-Budgetary Activity Department, Margarita Kurbalenko, adding, “Foreigners are satisfied with the prices we offer. For example, those who’ve received diagnosis and treatment of arthrosis via arthroscopy tell us that, in Moscow, the \$500 fee for this service wouldn’t buy a single dental implant.”

As a rule, foreigners come to Belarus to consult their ‘own’ doctor, with most hearing of the Centre by

word of mouth. Personal contacts of doctors with foreign colleagues are also vital, while Internet ads are the third most effective form of advertisement.

Couples with fertility problems often come to our Republic, with ten percent undergoing in vitro fertilisation (IVF) at the Reproductive Medicine Centre coming from abroad. All leave the Centre happy, due to the professionalism of local doctors, good results and inexpensive yet efficient services. Moreover,

many states legislatively restrict operations of this kind.

Point of support

No doubt, medical tourism brings prestige, as well as profit. How can we increase this revenue? Improving medical services’ quality is the best solution. We can hardly find fault with the medical side: our best clinics and centres boast perfect equipment, while our medical personnel are highly trained. However, organisational

issues leave much to be desired. According to the Deputy Head of the Physical Culture, Sports and Tourism Department at the Minsk City Executive Committee, Vitaly Moshechkov, the state earned \$1m last year from such service exports. The figure could rise 5-fold in the near future, if a reasonable business approach is applied. “We plan to establish co-operation with tourist companies already boasting experience in this sphere,” he says. “Others will join us in due course.”

Smell of a tender rose

One of the world’s leading perfumers lives in Minsk

By Yevgenia Bystrova

Perfumer Oleg Vyglazov is a full member of the New York Academy of Sciences. He knows just how a woman should smell to attract a man’s attention. Less than 200 people worldwide are true professionals in the delicate art of creating fragrances, with only a handful residing within the former USSR. Mr. Vyglazov tells us about Minsk’s ‘aroma’ and shares his secrets on creating fragrances for household detergents, as well as exclusive perfumes.

Oleg’s laboratory is full of bottles, jars and flasks. Your head swims at the sight of them and the aroma can hardly be described, being an incredible mix of scents, somewhere between a meadow, a wardrobe and a pharmacy. Portraits of legendary Marlene Dietrich line the walls, so we can assume that she is his muse. Some time ago, Mr. Vyglazov created eight perfumes dedicated to the actress, embodying her spirit. One formed the basis for wider production, but is only sold abroad, sadly.

“Trends have changed. Where celebrities once joined perfumers to create scents, this has fallen out of fashion. Famous people prefer to order tailored perfumes for individual use, just as they’d order a dress from a couturier,” explains

Mr. Vyglazov. He has about a thousand clients and has invented five aromas for large global fashion houses. His contracts forbid him from naming his customers but leading fashion representatives are thought to be among them.

“We’re primarily involved in creating fragrances for household products: washing powders, shampoos and crèmes,” Oleg says. “We seldom make perfume. An artist has the seven colours of a rainbow with which to paint and we have a similar situation. However, it’s even possible to create a masterpiece in



simple black and white.” He assures us that he hardly thinks of his nose, believing that it would inspire problems if he placed too much emphasis on looking after it. How-

ever, like others in his profession, he can detect up to ten elements within a fragrance, compared to most people only being able to detect five or six. Intriguingly, he can ‘switch off’ his sense of smell, asserting that it’s good for him to rest when he’s not working. “Should composers listen to music all the time? Silence is sometimes necessary — to relax and muse on a new piece. Perfumers are the same. My favourite natural smell is that of a forest, not necessarily coniferous. Meadows also have a wonderful scent and change fragrance

throughout the year. In autumn, they smell of fallen leaves, while they are filled with the aroma of wild flowers in summer; in spring, they smell of buds



Perfumer Oleg Vyglazov

and melting snow. My favourite scents are those which are difficult to recreate in a bottle.”

Several years ago, Oleg created a perfume for Minsk. Just imagine: early morning, July, sleeping Nezavisimosti Avenue and the smell of linden trees in blossom. This is Mr. Vyglazov’s olfactory vision of the Belarusian capital. “Each city has its own aroma. Kiev smells of blooming chestnuts, while Minsk has linden trees. Natural ingredients are best. The well known perfumes of ‘Krasnaya Moskva’ and ‘Chanel №5’ are eternal, like musical hits; we can rearrange them but the melody remains recognisable. You might not believe me but it’s more difficult to create the fragrance for a window cleaner or fabric softener than for an exclusive perfume, as it’s so difficult to mask harsh chemical smells,” Oleg notes.

Short path to joint projects

Belarus and Moldova to co-operate in sphere of biometric passports

Belarus has initiated experience sharing with the Registru Centre for State Information Resources in Chisinau, in the sphere of information technologies. A Belarusian delegation comprising members of the Foreign Ministry’s Consular Department, of the State Border Committee, of the Belarusian State Institute for Standardisation and Certification and of Agat enterprise has met the Moldovans to discuss prospects for collaboration.

The spheres of IT and the application of biometric identifiers in travel documents were in focus. The Belarusian representatives noted that Moldovan experience in the sphere of biometric passport manufacture is interesting to the Republic’s state authorities. An inter-ministerial working group has been recently set up in Belarus to launch a national project to develop and launch biometric passports.

From January 1st, 2011, Moldova began issue of passports with biometric data alone — a condition of receiving a visa free regime to EU states in future.