



Exhibition of Radziwills' costumes



Mantelpiece hall at Nesvizh Castle



Easy to drive by cart through old Nesvizh

By Viktor Korbut

A new dome has been installed on the Radziwill Palace's Observation Tower. It's impossible to dispute that the former dome (resembling an onion in shape) was mismatched to the building.

Baroque age tower

In November 2004, the Baroque-style dome was replaced with an 'onion' (in Renaissance style). It was inspired by an early 17th century engraving by artist Tomasz Makowski — from

400 years ago. However, historians have been keen to restore the tower to its initial appearance. "Foreign experts insisted that we return the previous 'top' to the tower, as the palace is on the UNESCO World Heritage List," explains the scientific head of restoration works, Sergey Drushchits. The final decision was adopted by the Belarusian Republican Scientific-Methodological Council for Issues of Historical-Cultural Legacy at the Culture Ministry.

New routes to pass through cultural capital

Radziwills' Nesvizh Palace to open to tourists in June

At present, the Observation Tower appears as it does on the 100,000 Rouble banknote (which shows a reproduction of Napoleon Orda's 19th century engraving of the Radziwills' residence). Actually, attentive observers believe that the present dome is larger than that existing before 2004. However, Sergey Klimov — the Director of the Nesvizh Historical-Cultural Museum-Reserve — guarantees, "All authentic proportions have been met."

"The whole ensemble must be in Baroque style," stresses Elzbieta Radziwill, the last representative of the famous family — who lived in the palace until 1939. She also wishes to see the tower restored to its original form.

In June, Nesvizh Palace will officially open after major restoration. It will be a landmark event for the city, which is the cultural capital of Belarus this year. Culture Minister Pavel Latushko notes that the site has been undergoing reconstruction since 1998. Already, tourists have access to most of the restored halls.

In 2012, the venue is

to host over 50 events, including traditional operatic evenings.

200 reasons to visit

2012 has been proclaimed the Year of Cultural Tourism by the Ministry for Sports and Tourism. Several new tour routes are to be launched, with Mir, Nesvizh, Polotsk (celebrating its 1150th birthday), Vitebsk (where Marc Chagall was born and the *Slavonic Bazaar* is held annually) and towns connected with the life and artistry of famous Belarusian classical writers Yakub Kolas and Yanka Kupala receiving particular attention. Already over 80 information posters are on show along the road from Minsk to Mir and Nesvizh.

Over 200 tourist events are planned for Belarus this year — in line with the National Tourism Agency's calendar of events. The Head of its Marketing and Tourist-Information Centre, Vladimir Yankovenko, tells us that traditional folk holidays such as Kupalie and Kolyady are included, as are festivals celebrating Belarus' culinary expertise and its history of knights' combat

Visiting folk villages

In coming years, new tourist complexes are to

open in the Republic. The Chairman of the Myadel District Executive Committee, Alexander Danilenko, tells us that a folk village is being built in the village of Nanosy, to be ready by 2013. It will showcase unique Belarusian traditions and rural lifestyle, including the houses of a fisherman and hunter.

In addition, abandoned villages in the Kopyl and Rossony districts are to become tourist sites. Many are in picturesque locations, not far from lakes, rivers and forests, so are sure to prove popular with tourists.

Sacred places

At the *Rest-2012* International Tourist Exhibition (recently held in Minsk), the Deputy Minister for Sports and Tourism, Cheslav Shulga, stated that Belarus and Russia hope to realise joint tourist projects this year. He noted, "Trans-border routes have been launched: 'Along the Paths of 1812 War Battles' and 'To the Roots of Rus.'" The former is to show major battle sites against the Napoleonic army in Belarus and Russia, while the latter passes through Pskov, Smolensk, Polotsk and Vitebsk, aiming to attract pilgrims and lovers of history and culture.



Bridge before entrance to Radziwill Castle

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