



At Heritage of Ages International Festival of the Medieval History Reconstruction in Mir Castle

Heritage of centuries open to all

2nd *Heritage of Ages* International Festival of Medieval History Reconstruction gathers a thousand participants and many spectators to Mir Castle

By Tatiana Grinevetskaya

At the foot of the walls of Mir Castle and beside the lake, a camp was scattered, with horse pens placed under the trees. The field kitchen's lights glowed in the haze and the castle was brought to life — no longer frozen in time but a wonder of architecture and a lively house, remembering its own long history.

sport is more than mere 'play'; it is filled with fighting anger and the seeking of victory, claiming the heart of the most beautiful lady. Everything is conducted according to medieval tournament rules, as written nearly a millennium ago.

The knights use exact copies of late 14th-early 15th century weapons, while their costumes are made by hand, from natural materials. Every detail is perfect: belts, purses, bags, caps, shawls, hats, pins, hinges and, of

course, handmade leather shoes. The judges of the festival watch for conformity of style between clothing and footwear, jewellery and headwear, weapons and armour with the announced period of time. The slightest discrepancy and a participant may be disqualified. More often, however, the participant is asked to simply change something in his appearance...

"These hats are made with 15th century technology, felted from wool," traders from Voronezh, Russia tell me. The gunsmith is ready to guarantee the accuracy of every detail of his swords and sabres. Amazing, unfamiliar words spew forth: falchion, badelaire, craquemarts... While I'm trying to understand the difference between an Albanian badelaire and Persian shamshir, a potential buyer beside me looks carefully at the handles, musing if this will be good for 'pyatnashka' (15th century style).

You can watch tanners, blacksmiths and potters at work at the colourful and noisy fair beside the castle walls, before buying their wares. It's fascinating to discover

their professional secrets — or to try to make something on the potter's wheel, or on a small anvil.

Nearby, some test their archery skills and girls in medieval dress (and in modern shorts and tank tops) whirl in a round dance, taking part in a master class. In the evening, knights, ladies and guests enjoy fire-shows and concerts by famous folk groups.

"You know, we're just delighted," smiles Voronezh resident Anastasia Zhukovskaya. "Usually, such festivals are exclusively for visitors but, here, the organisers have paid a lot of attention to those taking part. There are even shower cubicles! It is a pleasant surprise on such a hot day..." Those from the clubs Nurnberg and Brabant were taking part for the second time. Others were in attendance for the first time but plan to return.

The Chairman of the Festival Organising Committee and Director of the Youth Public Association Living History, Ivan Kravtsevich, invites everyone to the next festival, "It is a pleasure for us to welcome guests... and we have serious ambitions."



Knights buhurt was reconstructed as authentically as possible

Naturally, reconstructing the Middle Ages (or any period of history) is a laborious task undertaken only by those with a passion; 'hobby' is too lightweight a word for those who sometimes spend all their savings on the opportunity to visit such a festival. To them, it's the ultimate reality!

Jousting is always the most dramatic event, with horse-mounted knights racing towards one another before clashing shields and lances; both often splinter into pieces, falling to the ground. Riding at full gallop, bruises and wounds are almost guaranteed. Such



Musician with a bagpipe against knights' armour