



New residential areas for Minsk suburbs, offering comfortable and affordable accommodation

Advantages of living in the suburbs

Many city dwellers live under the illusion than those who live a few kilometres from the capital pay less in the shops, as well as for accommodation and services. Suburbanites don't tend to agree, although admit to certain advantages.

By Valeria Patrusheva

Olga Otto, 35, and her husband Ruslan, 36, saved for some time to buy a one-bedroomed apartment in Minsk, having been living with her mother. Olga tells us, "We wanted to buy a bigger flat but prices in Minsk were too high, so we decided to look at the suburbs. The cost was much lower and the conditions practically the same."

Some years ago, the couple took a loan to build their apartment in Lesnoi (the administrative centre of Borovlyany's Rural Council). "We took out a loan of nearly \$20,000, for a ten year period, to buy a 79 square metre apartment, adding the remaining \$60,000 from our savings," Olga notes. "We now have a three-room apartment in a new building, with all conveniences: parking, a convenient driveway and a swing gate on the entrance to the court yard."

Olga and Ruslan have certainly

managed to save money compared with purchasing in the capital, comments Svetlana Kudelko, the Deputy Director for Second Hand Property Sales at Tvoya Stolitsa (Your Capital) Real Estate Agency. "In Minsk, a three-room apartment in a brick building with a swing gate, with fenced grounds and parking, will cost \$2-2.5 thousand per square metre, depending on location and quality of finish. They would have paid about \$180-200 thousand (rather than \$80,000) for a 80 square metre flat in the capital."

Furthermore, Borovlyany has all necessary infrastructure: medical clinics, pharmacies, shops, supermarkets, a fitness centre, a beauty salon and more. "We do all our shopping just by our home, where the prices are absolutely the same as in Minsk. Sometimes, there are discounts but, on average, we spend about Br700,000 a week — the same is in the capital. As regards food



shopping, there are no advantages," explains Olga.

It's cheaper to buy in large supermarkets and discount stores, located nearby, notes Vitaly Runtso, a financial adviser with Personal Capital Consulting Group. "Due to large volumes and quick turnover, such shops can offer discounts. It's cheaper to build them beyond city boundaries, since land is less expensive. Very often, they sell goods in small wholesale volumes, or with a discount, encouraging people to 'bulk buy'. Of course, this increases the average sum spent, allowing the retailer to offer minimum price mark-up, of which residents of suburbs can take advantage."

Traffic between Borovlyany and Minsk isn't bad and both buses and a minibus taxi run. "My husband and I work near the ring-road, so it takes three changes on public transport. By car, it's only fifteen minutes," explains Olga.

Borovlyany borders the Prilepsky Landscape Reserve, offering plenty of scope for outdoor activities, which suits Olga. She's now expecting a baby so is looking at preschool and other education in Borovlyany. "The only problem is finding a kindergarten, since there are no vacancies at the moment. There's no problem in finding a school place and all are well-resourced. One new school even has a pool, with water aerobics classes organised."

The Otto family has now lived in Borovlyany for about two years and really has little criticism to offer. They spend most of their spare money on the home. Olga tells us, "It will be so for at least the next two years, making improvements and buying furniture; we're spending at least \$600 a month on this. If there's any spare money, we save. Living in the suburbs doesn't really enable you to save much money but there are no extra expenses."

Finding explosives now easier

By Stanislav Ivanov

Scientific Research Institute of Armed Forces of Belarus using new radar-locating mine detector

The new mine detector can locate explosives hidden deep underground, making it attractive not just to the Belarusian armed forces but to international buyers. The use of anti-personnel and anti-tank mines in conflicts of all sizes remains among of the most combat effective but, of course, the consequences are felt for decades afterwards.

The United Nations notes that up to 10,000 people die from stepping onto hidden mines annually, while about 20,000 are badly injured; more than 30 percent of victims are women and children. In Belarus alone, over 10,000 explosive objects are neutralised annually: most relics of the Great Patriotic War.

Modern mines tend not to contain metal, making them difficult to locate using traditional radio-metal locators. However, the latest subsurface locators, using reflected sound, can find non-metallic objects.

Rare edition in modern digital format

By Yuri Chernyakevich

450th anniversary of 16th century Brest Bible celebrated at National Academy Sciences

On 4th September, the unique Brest or Radziwiłł Bible celebrated its 450th anniversary. About 40 copies of this well-known edition remain in existence but only one is found in Belarus, housed at the Central Scientific Library (named after Yakub Kołas) at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. The library is currently hosting an exhibition entitled *450th Anniversary of Brest Bible*.

The Brest or Radziwiłł Bible was printed on 4th September, 1563, in Brest, becoming the most luxuriously designed and most significant edition of the Holy Scripture in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Mikołaj 'the Black' Radziwiłł — one of the most influential magnates of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, a state and military figure and active follower of the Reformation — commissioned its release, paying the huge sum of 10,000 thousand Ducats.

The exhibition is displaying an original of the Bible, and explains its fate, featuring research by domestic and foreign historians. In addition, a full electronic DVD edition is accessible, including articles on the history of the ancient folio.

Return to historical homeland of Berezina

Over 500 starlet fish headed for river basin to form local population

By Sergey Bely

Around two centuries ago, sturgeon fish were widespread all over Belarusian territory but industrial fishing (to produce famous black caviar) on the Dnieper, Berezina, Pripyat and Zapadnaya Dvina have brought fish levels extremely low. With premium varieties on the edge of extinction, and no fishing allowed, the Environmental Protection Ministry is working to restore the fish population. Starlet and sturgeon are listed within the Belarusian, Ukrainian and Russian Red Books.

According to the Head of Bobruisk's City and District In-



Starlet fish to appear in country's reservoirs

spectorate for Natural Resources, Nikolay Grashchenkov, ecologists have been studying archive documents to discover original levels of

starlet fish in the Berezina, where industrial fishing was commonplace. Modern scientists believe that the species can now return to

its historical homeland. "Our Inspectorate aims to enhance control over fishermen, since starlet fish are listed in the Red Book, with their fishing banned," explains the official. "Specialists will explain the move fully."

It might seem that 500 starlet fish are an insignificant number in a large river. However, this fish tends to live a sedentary life and won't migrate far. By remaining in the same place, expanding its habitat by no more than 10-15km, several local populations will form. According to the National Academy of Sciences, the Berezina is a perfect habitat for this fish.