

Everybody can afford a night's lodging

One of four economy class hotels being built in Minsk for World Ice Hockey Championship opens to guests

The Narochanskaya Hotel is situated on the street of the same name and is now receiving its first guests. About Br80 billion were spent on its construction, with a return period of 7-8 years. A single room will cost about Br400,000, while a double is priced at Br600,000.

The next such hotel is to open on Oleg Koshevoy Street, in January of the coming year, while two others — on Korzhenevsky and Kuprevich streets — are to launch in March.

Riddles and gifts from fairy-tale character

By Vladimir Samsonov

Father Frost in Minsk's Gorky Park receiving guests from December 21st

The fairy-tale grandfather will be welcoming his guests daily — from December 21st to January 7th — for a fee of Br75,000 to Br200,000 (depending on day and duration). Most visits last about ten minutes, giving time for children to report on the expiring year, to exchange wishes for a Happy New Year, and to take part in a small game or riddle. Each receives a gift from a magic chest. Of course, Father Frost loves to hear poetry and songs from his small visitors while some of his young guests bring him a hand-made souvenir or a home-baked product.

Father Frost is taking residence in the capital's Gorky Park for the tenth time, returning by popular demand.

From romantic Zorachka to categorical Manifest

Every year, Belarusian selectors come up with a new variety of potato: our 'second bread' — as grown in Russia, China, Ukraine, Latvia, Armenia and Uzbekistan



When potato harvesting is a pleasure

By Valentina Smirnova

Novelties amaze

There is a potato to suit every taste, with so many textures of flesh and colour to choose from. The National Academy of Sciences is now working on inter-breeding wild varieties with coloured flesh, as are popular in the South African tropics. In the wild, such potatoes can lack flavour and, of course, are not suited to our climate. However, by creating hybrids,

the tubers with white-pink to dark-purple flesh can boast a flavour similar to our usual potatoes. In addition, the new variety boasts less starch and more antioxidants (thought to increase our resistance to oncological diseases), as well as more minerals, vitamins and protein.

Regional selection

Belarusian potatoes come in a staggering number of varieties, with the Grodno Region leading in the

quality and volume of its harvests. Over the past four years, four new varieties have been developed: Falvarak and Maximum (in 2012) and Zorachka and Vectar (in 2013).

Nina Khokh, who supervises the Potato Department at the local institution, explains, "Among our best table varieties are moist Zorachka and the mid-late season Vectar, which is suitable for frying. The mid-early Falvarak is good for frying and mashing, having a high level of starch (up to 30 percent)."

Next spring, the Grodno Region's farms will be offered around 80 tonnes of the super-elite Vectar variety, which is already being grown in small quantities in the Berestovitsa, Volkovysk, Voronovo and Lida districts. Meanwhile, a micro-clonal propagation laboratory has begun breeding Manifest, Lada and Volat varieties.

Test-tube potatoes

Some agro-facilities in the Grodno Region produce seeds in tubes for local farms. Malobereztovskiy Elitkhov is among them, having been growing elite potatoes for over two decades. Its laboratory uses special tubes for the task, producing over 80,000 plants from 500 tubes. They produce succulent table variety Zorachka, which harvests from late July and can be stored until January, as well as Vectar and Manifest.

Choosing names

Vadim Makhanko, Departmental Head at the Grodno Institute of Potato Growing, tells us that choosing names is viewed with great importance — such as romantic Zorachka (Star) or categorical Manifest. "To invent a new name, you need inspiration, and this is always something very personal. We're primarily guided by the rule that the name should reflect our national personality (such as Volat, Falvarak and Zorachka), so that it's recognisable abroad. For example, if Russians hear the name Volat, they know immediately that this potato comes from Belarus."

'Crown' and 'chamomile' are included on the famous list

By Dmitry Sokolov

Belarusian sites among those listed as 'best buildings designed by Soviet architects'

An authoritative Russian portal has compiled the list, featuring the top 28 fantastic buildings engineered by Soviet architects in the 1960-1980s. Hotels, theatres and museums occupy most of those recognised but Grodno's Regional Drama Theatre, in Belarus, is noted. Its fantastic 'alien space ship' design is also sometimes compared to a royal crown. It is sited near the River Neman, built from 1977-1984, under the Giproteatr Moscow Institute (architect G. Mochulsky).

Belarus' Belexpo Exhibition Centre, on Pobediteley Avenue, is also commended



Unique 'Chamomile' is attractive

in the list, being rated beside the Soviet Embassy to Cuba and the Ministry of Transport building in Georgia.

Minsk residents know it as the 'chamomile' and it was one of the last industrial sites to be built in Minsk before

the breakup of the Soviet Union. The pavilion opened in 1988 and has been recently reconstructed.

Solving problems at minimum expense or Snowstorm against Xavier Hurricane

By Tatiana Vasilevskaya

Minsk road workers set aside snow-melting machinery in favour of melting snow with wastewater

Two years ago, a Canadian snow-melting machine was tested in Minsk, but appeared unsuitable for our weather conditions. Then, our home producers liaised with the Canadian experts to adapt its design. Now, our own snow-melting machinery is being set aside in favour of the new model, which uses wastewater (and far less fuel).

The Chief Engineer of Gorremavtodor, Alexander Yaroshik, explains that water warmed to 12-15 degrees is used to melt the snow, cheaply

and effectively. Of course, road clearance will soon become a full-time job. Anatoly Adamtsevich, an Adviser for the Central Administrative Board of Highways, at the Ministry for Transport and Communications, emphasises that roads need continuous clearance to avoid ice forming and comments, "There are five types of roads, with differing requirements. Each has certain time limits for clearance using de-icing agents." He assures us that the necessary volume of de-icing agents is in stock and that specialised machinery is also ready. Following last year's experience of Hurricane Xavier, Gorremavtodor has developed a plan called *Snowstorm*, able to deal with even the worst weather conditions.