

# Architects in shadow of king

Volchin is a small town in the Brest Region's Kamenets District. Here, the last Polish King, Stanisław August Poniatowski, was born, and his mother, Konstancja Czartoryska's, former residence was situated. Sadly, the mansion was severely destroyed during past wars, but the local Roman Catholic Church, which is a true architectural pearl, has a chance of revival.

By Irina Mikhalyuk

## Game of fate

In the 1990s, the Volchin Roman Catholic Church was placed on Belarus' List of Historical-Cultural Heritage and, in late 2007, it was assigned to the ownership of Pinsk's Eparchy of the Roman Catholic Church. The building may have probably continued falling into ruin, even under the Pope's guidance but, in mid-2013, Polish restorer, Wiktor Wilk, paid it special attention. This is truly a game of fate. Wilk means 'wolf' in Polish, and the specialist arrived in Volchin, which comes from the Russian word 'volk' and also means 'wolf'.

This is not Mr. Wilk's first visit to Belarus. He's already restored Minsk's Cathedral of the Virgin Mary, and repaired Pinsk's Franciscan Monastery and the Roman Catholic Church of St. Mary's Dormition. In the past, the specialist graduated from the Krakow Polytechnic University's Architectural Department and has worked on restoration objects worldwide.

The Volchin Roman Catholic Church already has a new roof and a tower with a clock above. A fragment of the former clock-face and an

hour hand were unearthed on the site, making it possible to almost precisely restore the clock, which was truly unique. Its 1.42m face was guided by four cardinal directions and was visible from any side. Meanwhile, a modern electronic mechanism was installed, and the clock has a different strike for each 30 and 60 minutes (from 6am to 10pm).

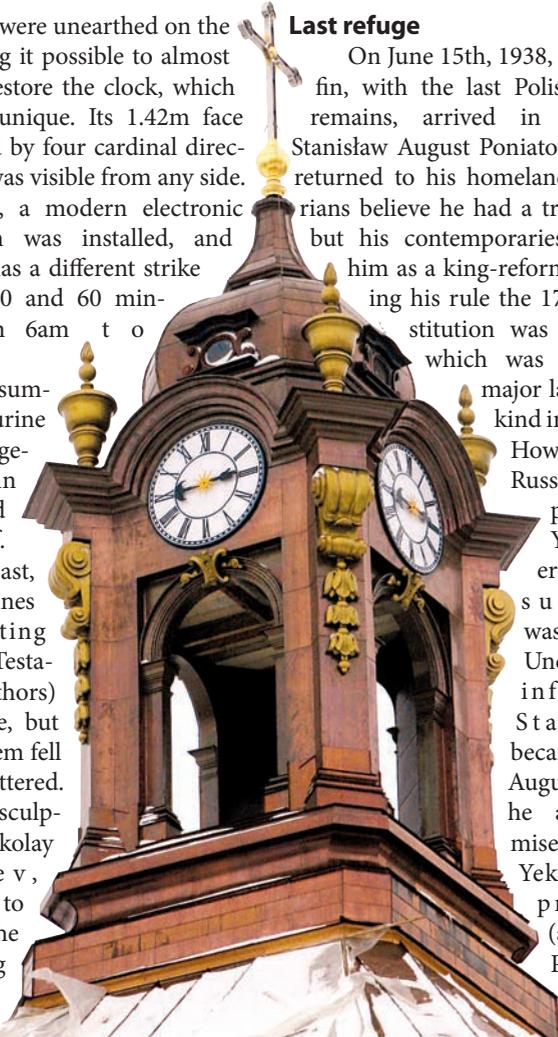
In the summer, a figurine of the evangelist Johann was erected on the roof.

In the past, four figurines (representing the New Testament authors) stood there, but three of them fell and shattered. Belarusian sculptor, Nikolay Andreev, managed to restore the surviving figure of Johann.

## Last refuge

On June 15th, 1938, a tin coffin, with the last Polish King's remains, arrived in Volchin. Stanisław August Poniatowski had returned to his homeland. Historians believe he had a tragic fate, but his contemporaries viewed him as a king-reformer. During his rule the 1791 Constitution was adopted, which was the first major law of the kind in Europe.

However, the Russian Empress, Yekaterina II's support was fateful. Under her influence, Stanisław became King August II, but he also demised under Yekaterina's pressure (as Rzech Pospolita was thrice



Wiktor Wilk

split during her rule). Stanisław died outside his native land in 1797, but, in the 1930s, the Soviet authorities suggested that Poland should take the coffin, with his ashes, back. As a result, he was moved to Volchin which was then a part of Poland. Local residents say that the coffin was accompanied by his crown, sabre, raincoat and a box carrying his embalmed heart, all of which were then walled into a crypt. In 1945, the Roman Catholic Church was closed but, forty years later the re-discovered remains of the coffin, raincoat and other belongings were moved to Warsaw for a symbolic reburial.

Interestingly, Belarus and Poland have injected no funds in restoring the Volchin Roman Catholic Church, as all works are possible due to private donations and money from European foundations specially established to protect and revive historical monuments. Mr. Wilk complains that around 70 percent of his time is devoted to the search for money. In the meantime, this restoration needs a systematic approach. Modern construction principles, when works can be delayed for a couple of years at a time, don't work here. Despite this, the specialist believes he will fully realise all his goals.

# A golden hat to best cook

By Sergey Smirnov

## Winners of the Golden Chef Award named

According to results of the public, Labrador (Sporting Club) was voted the Restaurant of the Year, while the Traktir na Parkovoi Restaurant was recognised as the best eatery offering national cuisine. Moreover, gourmets chose the In Vino Restaurant as having the best menu, and the best children's menu went to the Loft Café with Poyushchiye Fontany (Singing Fountains) named as the eatery offering the best restaurant menu. Perfetto Restaurant was chosen as the winner in the 'Best Cuisine' category. Staromestny Pivovar was labelled as the most democratic restaurant while VinoGrad Restaurant came out winner as the best eatery in the 'value for money' category.

The winners received diplomas and prizes including golden badges in the form of chef's hats, household appliances, gastronomic tours to Italy, chef's uniform, discount cards and vouchers for the purchase of restaurant goods.

Belarus' Deputy Trade Minister, Vyacheslav Dragun, noted that such competitions are a nice opportunity for the restaurant business to demonstrate their skills and professionalism. According to Alena Vysotskaya, the founder of the Golden Chef Award, there are plans to make this an annual award ceremony.

# Korea to become closer

By Vladimir Samsonov

## Centre of King Sejong Institute opens at Belarusian State University

Students will be able to study the Korean language free of charge, while getting familiar with Korean history and traditions. Moreover, teachers of Korean, who are going to work in educational institutions, will undergo their training here. The centre will also host scientific and cultural events and contests.

The opening ceremony took place at the University in mid-January. The solemn event was attended by the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Yang Joong-mo, and the Chairman of the King Sejong Institute Foundation, Song Hyang-keun, as well as leaders of leading Korean companies based in Belarus.

The King Sejong Institute centres are educational establishments, founded all over the world on the instruction of the Government of the Republic of Korea, aiming to teach Koreans living abroad, as well as other nationalities, the Korean language. Moreover, centres get acquainted with the country's culture.

At present, the King Sejong Institute consists of 120 centres, located in 52 countries.

# Research among ice and icebergs

For the first time, Belarusian icemen run up the flag of the National Academy of Sciences at the South Pole



Academy's flag raised in the ice

By Andrey Fiodorov

Hoisting the flag is a gift which Alexey Gaidashov, Yuri Giginyak and Ilya Bruchkovsky, participants of the sixth Belarusian Antarctic expedition, have made to their Alma Mater — the National Academy of Sciences — to celebrate the 85th anniversary of its foundation. The team of the Russian Antarctic expedition also congratulated the Belarusian icemen.

The expedition to the South Pole started on November 5th, 2013. At that time, the icemen have gone not to the place of their standing stationing — the Vechernyaya Gora station, but to the Progress Russian station that is situated in the East Antarctic on the coast of the Gulf of Pryuds, near the Hills of Larseman. The scientists will return to Minsk in April.

During their stay, the Belarusian icemen will conduct biological, ozone measuring, geophysical, meteorological and other research in the Antarctic, as well as field work on sounding, with the help of a high resolution radio locator. The device allows the receipt of information about the geological structure of an area of interest for further analysis, and it works without drilling or seismic methods of prospecting, which are forbidden in the Antarctic.

# Enjoying big popularity among foreign tourists



Minsk Hotel will make tourists' stay comfortable

By Vladimir Samsonov

## According to Okotogo.ru, a Russian hotel online booking service, Minsk is among the top three CIS cities, most frequently visited by Russians in 2013

Alongside the Belarusian capital, Kiev and Odessa are also among the top three, followed by Chisinau, Alma-Ata, Baku, Lvov, Astana, Yerevan and Tashkent.

The Okotogo.ru rating was compiled using last year's data dealing

with hotel booking in the CIS states by Russians. Compared to 2012, the number of tours booked by Russians to CIS cities, via the Internet, has more than doubled.

In 2013, Russians travelled to Minsk for three days on average, with such sites as the Holy Spirit Cathedral in Svobody Square, the Yanka Kupala National Academic Theatre, the Pishchalovsky Castle, the Pobedy Square Monument and the Troitsky Suburbs enjoying the greatest popularity among these tourists.