

RUSSIAN MIND

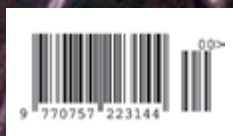
LA PENSEE RUSSE

№110/06 (4981)
June 2019

Russkaya Mysl
Russian/English

The magazine
was founded in 1880
www.RussianMind.com

MAGIC OF ITALY



UK	£4.00
Italy	€5.00
France, Spain	€5.60
Germany	€5.00
Belgium	€5.00
Austria	€5.00
Finland	€5.00



RCMONACO
JETS

WORLD CLASS PRIVATE JET SOLUTIONS

www.rcmonacojets.com

T.+377607936533 | sales@rcmjets.com

EDITOR'S LETTER

NEAR BUT ABROAD



Recently I received the guests, my childhood friends from Moldova. They were nice and kind people visiting us together with their children and grandchildren. She was a famous ballet dancer in the past. He is a musician traveling the world now. They told me that their daughters had established themselves successfully as they got job at the private TV channel. They have “very good” salary – 800 and 900 Euros correspondingly (of course, as expressed in Moldovan Leu). They are happy! Especially due to the fact that their children did not leave grandchildren with grandparents to earn money somewhere in a foreign country. They can recall “many contrasting cases” among their circle. And they live in Chisinau that is not the worst case! Country towns were defined by them as a “total horror”. The villages had “just become deserted”. The win-

dows in the houses stay nailed down in a criss-cross manner like during the war.

Since 1991 a third to a half of the total population of the formerly “bloomy” Soviet republic left their homes to earn money somewhere. The population remaining in the country actually lives at the account of the funds sent by migrants to their families. A similar situation exists in the Baltic states and Ukraine.

Grandchildren of my cousin-sister who have obtained higher education and passed Ph. D. defense, now are working somewhere at a German meat-processing plant, with overnight shifts exceeding a half of their total working hours, earning 1000 Euros net monthly. Their cold storage room features a temperature of 4 °C. Guys have faced joint problems. They wish they have not left their country. But for some reasons they cannot get back. And their Moldovan diplomas are not necessary in Germany.

We might mock at this. What they fought for has been their undoing. But tragicalness of the collapse of the USSR (exactly the dissolution of the country, but not the collapse of the Soviet system) is so apparent, that I unintentionally wonder, whether it could go a different way.

Victor Loupan

Russian Mind
No110/06(4981),
JUNE 2019

HEAD OF THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Victor Loupan

EDITORIAL BOARD

Anatoly Adamishin

Rene Guerra

Dmitry Shakhovskoy

Peter Sheremetev

Alexander Troubetskoy

Sergey Yastrzhembsky

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

David Draier

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Anastasia Mashkina

am@russianmind.com

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Elizabeth Yurieva

editor@russianmind.com

PRODUCTION EDITOR

Karina Enfenjyan

karina@russianmind.com

POLITICAL EDITOR:

Vyacheslav Katamidze

CREATIVE PRODUCER:

Vasily Grigoriev

cp@russianmind.com

DESIGN

Yuri Nor

design@russianmind.com

ADVERTISEMENT:

sales@russianmind.com

DISTRIBUTION:

distribution@russianmind.com

SUBSCRIPTION:

subscription@russianmind.com

ADDRESS:

48 Langham Street W1W 7AY, London,

United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 203 205 0041

E-mail: info@russianmind.com

COVER:



Editors are not responsible for the accuracy of the information published in news reports, promotional materials and advertisements. Editors do not have the ability to enter into correspondence and do not return manuscripts and illustrations. Editors do not provide background information. Reproduction of any materials from the magazine “Russian Mind” is impossible without the permission of the editorial board.

Cases of the absence of sale of the magazine “Russian Mind”, violations of the terms of delivery and other shortcomings in our work may be

reported on

+44 (0) 203 205 0041

or send on e-mail:

info@russianmind.com

CIRCULATION: 47 000 COPIES

THE CONTRADICTION OF REALITY

The former Eastern bloc countries becoming full EU members are the main headache of the Brussels' Eurocracy

VICTOR LOUPAN,
Head of the Editorial Board



The recent pan-European elections one more time defined a primal, almost civilisational fragmentation of Europe or, more precisely, the European Union. I do not mean Brexit or passivity of European inhabitants in respect of these elections. The roots lay much deeper.

The idea of the united Europe being generated after the World War II had inspired the Europeans over 20–30 years. It was a precious dream of a worldwide peace, prosperity and freedom. It was precious also due to

the fact that it balanced the Communist totalitarianism which prevailed in whole Eastern Europe.

In the 1960s and 1970s it was apparent that life in Western Europe was much better, more relaxed and comfortable when compared to Eastern Europe. With this, Americanocracy in Western Europe had been perceived as a qualitative advantage, but the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe was represented as occupation and enslavement. This opinion was supported not only by habitants

of, let us say, France, or Belgium, or the Netherlands, but also the Eastern bloc citizens which was dramatically evidenced by periodical more or less bloody riots, from East Berlin to Hungary to Czechoslovakia.

After the German reunification and the total collapse of the Eastern bloc in 1989–1991, inclusion of the Eastern bloc countries into the European Community became obvious and unavoidable. Almost no one could offer counterarguments against it. By that time the idea of the united Europe

had developed from the pure commercial pragmatism stage into the political and, moreover, global idea. Before that, economical reasonability prevailed. The countries being a part of the European Community were generally similar in terms of development and social insurance levels. But, perhaps, except only Greece which was accepted by the “club” of the developed European countries based on sentimental influence on consideration, as it was the country originating the idea itself and embodying the initial democracy. We still remember what happened then.

The Eastern bloc countries with weak economies and low social development were included into the EU based on

dogmatic consideration only. They just could not be missed. However, once Vladimir Putin who won the office in Russia declared the idea of Russia's membership in the EU (and NATO too, by the way), he was rejected politely but explicitly with the official explanation of the rejection with a huge territory of Russia.

Today the former Eastern bloc countries becoming full EU members are the main headache of the Brussels' Eurocracy. Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban is just an outcast. But Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria (the countries representing so-called “illiberal” democracy) are considered as a nursery for Populism opposing the European ideology, multiculturalism, unlimited openness and tolerance, which promote a grim struggle with any exhibition of patriotism or nationalism. But patriotism – which is so similar to nationalism – is a standard for the



Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban is just an outcast

above said countries; moreover, it has religious additions that are absolutely unacceptable in the European Union, because the EU officially negated both its relation to Christendom and even its heritage. It completely contradicts the history of Europe and outrageously contradicts the reality concept.

The populist revolution surprised the European ideology supporters. Donald Trump winning the 2016 US presidential election gave them a startling surprise. Their world being based on the reality contradiction concept had not to see it. But when it happened, the supporters started convincing each other that this nightmare would lead to impeachment soon. However, a failure of Mueller's investigation had killed their dream. Now, the second term for Trump appears even more real.

The “Populists” started taking power not only in periphery countries of the European Union like Hungary. They

also came to power after the election in Italy, where Italy is one of the six countries establishing the European Community. The constitutional document of this new inter-state – or even super-national – formation was symbolically signed in Rome! But now power in Italy is held by “desperate Europhobs”.

The history of Europe is tragic. By contradicting its core, the “European ideologists” organised a kind of “exorcism” based on some absurd incantations. I call them absurd, because they negate Europe as reality and superexalt it as Eutopia. Europe as Eutopia is the European Union. But Europe as reality is a community of competing but complementing nations united under the global moral concept. This concept is called Christendom. Contradiction of this civilisational heritage will exclusively result in absurdity. This is our sticking point of today. I hope, we will overcome it soon.

IMMUNITY FROM A LIE

*Find the first part of the article
in our previous issue*

TEO GURIELI,
a political scientist



Marshal G. K. Zhukov

Stalin was buried with a ceremony and laid near Lenin in the Mausoleum. After some time he was removed from the Mausoleum following Khrushchev's instruction to face the darkest labeling and demonization campaign in the whole history. After that the dust likely settled for a while.

However, it was only an appearance. A terrible, ultimate, bloody race for power started on the highest level. It was initiated by the people considering Stalin as an obstacle between them and la dolce vita, high ranks and luxury dachas. Such race, like a whirlpool, engaged more and more victims. The victory was bought by Khrushchev's circle consisting of the Party's bureaucrats and slippery intriguers of the lowest level, the people who spent their lives in bureaucracy and were ready to tear any obstacle to pieces for saving their privileges and their duty positions. As their further political behaviour and their economic failures demonstrated later, they totally were not able to govern the country.

But how the circumstances allowed this particular formation to take lead? We know the answer: due to a coup in the country. The Khrushchev's faction was supported by the defense officials, marshals and generals led by Zhukov, who was the most popular military commander in the country.

Let us put aside the question whether the reputation of some marshals and generals was justifiably high or it was intentionally overestimated by the Party insiders. Many military historians suggested that marshals Zhukov, Konev and Moskalenko bought their victories mainly due to manifold superiority in forces, unreasonably high application of funds and bloodcurdling sacrifice among the forces led by them, but not due to their military talent. They did not consider a soldier's life as a value – because only the final result made sense. However, this particular story is focused on another question: why did the top army commanders have the heart to execute a coup and kill many security officers?

The initial cause of their actions was extremely simple: cupidity and expediency of top army commanders led them to the edge of disgrace, humiliation and maybe even arrest. A bunch of marshals and generals ruling forces on the territory of Western Europe unceremoniously robbed palaces and museums, banks and jewelry shops, embezzling spoils. The Political Bureau learned about it. The writer Bushkov affirmed that following the Stalin's instruction, field investigators from the Ministry of State Security conducted secret house checks at Marshal Zhukov's flat in Moscow and his dacha in Rublyovo. They found 17 gold watches, antiques, paintings and over 50 trunks full of fine tableware, furs and other valuable items.

It was documented officially. The certificate "On transfer of illegally obtained and embezzled spoils, valuable property and other items exempted from the USSR Marshal G. K. Zhukov by the Ministry of State Security of the USSR to the Administration of the Council of Ministers of the USSR" listed the following: 323 units of expensive furs, 3420 meters fabrics, 60 paintings from Potsdam's Palace, as well as court-style furniture, Gobelin tapestries, carpets and many other valuables. It is interesting, that a short time before that the customs office restrained 7 railroad cars (!) carrying furniture for Zhukov. The war hero did not also stay apart from robbery at valuable library funds.

The same was usual for his friend, the Lieutenant General Kryukov, who

not only robbed property for himself and Zhukov, but casually collected diamonds for his wife, the singer Lidia Ruslanova. Besides that, according to Bushkov, a brave general established a cathouse in the hospital supervised by him, where the best female "workers" were granted combat orders! Yes, the same orders which were granted to intrepid soldiers and officers accomplishing feats in the battlefield!..

At least the same level of obscenity was demonstrated by some other marshals and generals. General Ivan Serov instigating the army generals against Beria who later, on Khrushchev's watch, became the KGB head and

then a GRU head, required during the war that his subordinate security officers brought him all valuables found with captured German officers. During ejection of the Ingush people from the North Caucasus, when crying kids and women were pushed into heated freight cars, General Serov drinking hard at the railway restaurant cynically required that several young Ingush people had been delivered there forcedly to dance lezghinka for him.

Upon appointment for a position of an Authorized Representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Germany, Serov immediately made his "valuable contribution" to pillage of unat-



*N. S. Khrushchev (right), Marshal R. Ya. Malinovsky, A. N. Kosygin and A. I. Mikoyan
in the hunting field*



N. I. Ezhov

tended items. Serov evacuated assets from Germany by any methods using trains and military aircrafts. When his helper General Sidnev (who stole dozens of carpets, Gobelin tapestries, and services) was caught in flagrante, he confessed that Serov embezzled nearly 30 kg seized gold assets and might share it with Marshal Zhukov. We would rather not believe, but the Ministry of State Security investigated a wide range of similar cases.

The intended commander-in-chief of the Air Defense Command Pavel Batitskiy, who personally killed Beria using his trophy Parabellum-Pistole, reached another kind of fame. According to the evidence provided by ex-security member, its officers repeatedly reported in 1945 to their commanders that Batitskiy arranged debauches in the field which virtually every soldier was aware of. It was also rumored within the divisions that Batitskiy supposedly raped a very young girl

who disappeared after that. However, there was no related investigation, notwithstanding that the case had been reported. Later, in 1953 all those reports weirdly disappeared from the archives.

Is it worth another modern discussion that in 1951 the Minister of State Security and the former head of SMERSH military counterintelligence Abakumov, who initiated investigation for high-rank criminals, as well as many his colleagues were arrested and shot down under the order of Khrushchev, Ignatiev and top generals quite apart from the fact that death penalty was banned at the time!

Colonel-General Abakumov and his colleagues posed a real threat to army generals, because they knew the facts being unknown to the rest part of the country which made idols of the winner generals. Some of the generals were even imprisoned but were released soon by Khrushchev assuming power; as for Zhukov, Stalin limited his penalty with relegation in step and removal from large cities to the country. It was a fatal error being costly to the country: Zhukov took on leadership of the coup after Stalin's death.

Nikita Khrushchev was a bad politician and untalented economist. However, he was a genius intriguer. It is said, one acts if he can act, but the other one works an angle if he cannot act. Consequently, intriguers often take the top of the situation. Skillfully weaving a plot within the Political Bureau after Stalin's death, Khrushchev initially poisoned its old members' mind against Beria convincing them that Beria was a revisionist and a back-

slider. He also suggested an idea to Malenkov (being popular within the Party at the time) that Beria wanted to get rid of him from the position of the Chairman of Council of Ministers and generally prepared a palace coup. But he also told the marshals that they would have to be responsible for their "tricks" tolerated during the war in case of Beria's rise to power. And then he instructed them to act.

The "thaw architect" acted not only with scheming. He also was not above bribe. He promised some generals taking lower ranks to grant the Hero of the Soviet Union title for participation in the coup being prepared. They failed to receive the desired trophy, however, in 1954 they got the Orders of Wartime Red Banner. Needless to say that Khrushchev granted them strong positions too...

As after Stalin's death Beria became a head of the united secret service, every thievish nob faced a real threat to be exposed, with the most serious concerns shown by marshals and generals. They secretly brought a gun to the Kremlin, caught Beria and imprisoned him in a storage hopper depriving him of any connection with the external world. I would remind you that no prosecutor's authorization



G. G. Yagoda



General N. I. Eitingon

was obtained for the apprehension of Marshal Beria, so actually it was the act of terror. He was judged by a tribunal of three judges headed by Marshal Konev without any right of defense or appellation. They declared to the public that Beria was guilty of the attempt to dissolve the Soviet state and set up the bourgeoisie's rule. Of course, there was no any fact supporting such absurd and incredible accusations in his criminal indictment.

Following Beria's apprehension, other high-rank secret service officers were arrested; the list of persons being shot down after similar senseless accusations of espionage and terrorism included Colonel-General Bogdan Kobulov and his brother Lieutenant General Amayak Kobulov who was a former head of nuclear intelligence, Lieutenant General Lev Volodzimirskiy, Colonel-General Sergo Goglidze (a Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs), a former Ambassador to Germany General Vladimir Dekanozov. The Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine Pavel Meshik was killed in his office. Now the truth about the participants of Khrushchev's coup might be considered dead for perpetuity.

After shaking one strong competitor, Khrushchev soon got rid of another one, Malenkov. When the Pre-

sidium of the Central Committee decided to remove Khrushchev from his post of the First Secretary to the post of the Agriculture Minister in 1957, he called his helper generals again, including and with the highest priority of Serov. Military aircrafts delivered around one third of the Central Committee members secured by officers, mainly Khrushchev's supporters, to Moscow. The Presidium's decision was banned under the pressure of generals and secret service,

and Khrushchev was restored to the position of the First Secretary of the Central Committee. The Presidium members Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovich who opposed him, lost their positions in the Kremlin and were put under the police supervision. Over time Khrushchev got rid of Marshal Zhukov too who became a high-risk witness: Zhukov lost his post of the

Minister of Defense and was also put under secret service surveillance.

Tragedy of our country, its dissolution in the 1990s, its impoverishment and temporary loss of sovereignty – all of this was predefined by that coup which established disregard of the law and a monstrous lie as the functional concept for the rogue government. Its true colours appeared during the events of Novocherkassk in Rostov Oblast. In June 1962 a peaceful demonstration of workers and their families following the labour strike at the Novocherkassk locomotive factory was massacred under Khrushchev's order. Actually, it was a food riot organized by the citizens. According to the official sources, 26 protesters were killed by the riot squad and secretly concealed at different cemeteries of Rostov Oblast. Other 87 people were wounded. 7 strike "initiators" were shot down, and over 100 workers were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Tanks and automatic guns were applied against workers, women and children.

The Khrushchev years being sometimes praised overmuch for the "thaw period" demonstrated that the government intended to hold the people in leash using execution by a firing squad and mass arrests. Overt actions in Moscow, Leningrad, Donetsk, Dnepropetrovsk, Tambov, Novosibirsk, Chelyabinsk, Zagorsk and Vyborg were suppressed using violence, with the bloodiest demonstrations in Tbilisi and Gorky. In 1992 the Chief Military Prosecutor's Office opened a criminal case against Khrushchev, Kozlov, Mikoyan and the other eight people for the Novocherkassk massacre. But the case was dismissed due to the fact that all those responsible died...



General P. A. Sudoplatov

CULTURE

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF RUSSIANS IN FLORENCE

DARIA KLIMENKO

*The doors inhale air and exhale steam;
but you will not return here, where,
breaking into pairs, the crowds go
strolling by the Arno's failing stream,
like some new breed of quadruped;
doors slamming behind them, beasts
appearing on the roadway.
Truly, there is something of the
woodland shade about this city. It is a
handsome city, Yet at a certain age you
simply turn up your collar, shutting
out its people from your gaze.*

Joseph Brodsky,
December in Florence, 1976

Florence is a wonderful forge of skilled men. This cradle of the Renaissance produced such great geniuses that all other cities can only sigh and envy. This small city was home to Donatello, Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo, who nearly elbowed one another there. One could bow down low to Florence for Botticelli, da Vinci and Buonarroti alone. And these are just a few names among the many talented figures... Giotto, Masaccio, Ghirlandaio, Filippino Lippi, Verrocchio, Fra Angelico, Piero della Francesca, Lorenzo Ghiberti, Filippo Brunelleschi and, lastly, Dante.

I would need to use the encyclopaedia in order to continue this long list, and then the entire article would consist only of the names of great Florentines. Foreign luminaries loved this flowering city as well. Dostoevsky, Tchaikovsky, Tarkovsky and Brodsky lived here. Although Brodsky is more associated with Venice, Joseph visited the capital of the Renaissance and was

inspired by it. Perhaps only Alexander Blok was not impressed by Florence.

The wealthy Demidov family made generous contributions to restore the great monuments of Florence, Brodsky and Tarkovsky praised the city in their work, while Dostoevsky and Tchaikovsky usually stopped at Florence during their travels through Europe. All of them left their imprints on Florence in one way or another.

Russians became interested in Florence and first arrived there as far back as 1439. It was related to one significant religious event – the Florentine Union, that is, a failed attempt to unite the Russian Orthodox and the Catholic Churches. From that time on the city was visited by Russian pilgrims (who briefly looked round the city and hastened to Rome and Bari) along with Russian intellectuals, captivated by Dante and the masters of the Renaissance. Among them were also the so-called ‘holiday-makers’ who came to Florence for long periods to improve their health and eventually stayed there forever, becoming the patrons of art and collectors. These were followed by emigrants, among whom we can include Dostoevsky, Brodsky, Tarkovsky and others.

Wherever you might stay within Florence, try to start your tour of the city with the Duomo. This symbol of Florence comprises three buildings: the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, the Baptistery with the golden Gates of Paradise by Ghiberti and Giotto's Bell-tower.

Looking at the Duomo's interesting façade, one should remember that its construction was largely financed by the Demidovs, factory owners from

the Urals. This family's coat of arms is situated in the place of honour – to the right of the main entrance to the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore.

The connection of the Demidov family with Florence began with Nikolai Nikitich Demidov who in 1819 moved to Tuscany to recover his health and stayed there forever. Florence and the region of Tuscany became his second motherland. According to different sources, Demidov served there as Russian Ambassador or as charge d'affaires at the court of Tuscany, and he won fame among ordinary Italians by his generosity, love for the arts and large-scale charitable activities.

In a public garden, located at a square with the name Piazza Demidoff, the grateful residents of Florence installed a white marble monument to the first member of the Demidov family in Florence – Nikolai. It was Anatole Demidov who commissioned Lorenzo Bartolini to sculpt this statue. The symbols that represent the might and the merits of Demidov are interesting: Nikolai himself is depicted as a Roman senator, pressing his son Anatole to his bosom, and a female figure beside him symbolises gratitude and presents him with a laurel wreath. At the corners of the pedestal are four statues-allegories: Nature, Arts, Mercy, Siberia (by the way, ‘Siberia’ holds Plutus – the Greek pagan god of wealth – with a bag of money, symbolising the Demidovs' glut of wealth). Take note of this feature: only the fourth figure, ‘Siberia’, is fully clothed and wears a hat – an indication that all Italians are aware of occasional extreme cold weather in Russia.



In March 1996 Joseph Brodsky was given a title of the Honourable Citizen of Florence for his contribution to world culture

On his arrival in Florence Nikolai Nikitich founded a home for orphans and the elderly at this square, which was called ‘Demidov Asylum’. Today its façade is adorned with a high relief of Nikolai Nikitich. The asylum stands close to Palazzo Serristori (to the left of the monument in the public garden – 21 Lungarno Serristori), where Demidov initially lived. Today this building is closed, but its neglected exterior can gladden the eyes of many photographers and lovers of the antique.

By coincidence, the name of Nikolai Demidov is remembered throughout this district of Florence: the district itself is named after St Nicholas the Wonder-worker, and there are also a street, an arch and a church with the same name there. And Florentines often joke that if the locals are used to meet near the statue of David, then Russian patriots should go out on a date near the monument to Demidov. Nikolai Demidov donated money to hospitals, helped the poor, and was a keen collector of works of art. His son Anatole financed the restoration of Santa Croce Church's front and acquired works of Perugino, Giorgione,

Tiziano, and Tintoretto, and received the title of Prince of San Donato (named after the family villa outside Florence) from the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Pavel Demidov, Anatole's nephew, opened schools in Florence, cheap dining halls, and shelters for the homeless. In addition to this, he donated 38,000 lire (in the nineteenth century there was still a system by which the value of a currency was defined in terms of gold; this sum was equal to hundreds of thousands euros) for the restoration work and completion of the façade of the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, which until the nineteenth century had been covered with unpolished stone (San Lorenzo Cathedral has a similar façade). Today tourists' eyes are fairly dazzled at the sight of the numerous sculptures and decorative elements of white, green and pinkish marble.

If you pass round the cathedral on the left side, you will find yourself in the street with the name Via dei Servi, leading to Santissima Annunziata Square. Here, near the house no. 2, we can remember another compatriot of ours, Count Dmitry Petrovich Buturlin.

The Buturlins, natives of Moscow, following the terrible fire of 1812, when they lost their huge library, became the first Russian emigrants in Italy (1818). Settling down in Florence, they began to collect books again in the splendid Renaissance mansion called Palazzo Montauti-Niccolini (today – Palazzo Niccolini) in the very centre of the city. Until recently this mansion was labelled on the city maps as Palazzo Buturlin, while the façade still retains the coat of arms of Dmitry Petrovich Buturlin.

Now this mansion is used as a luxury hotel

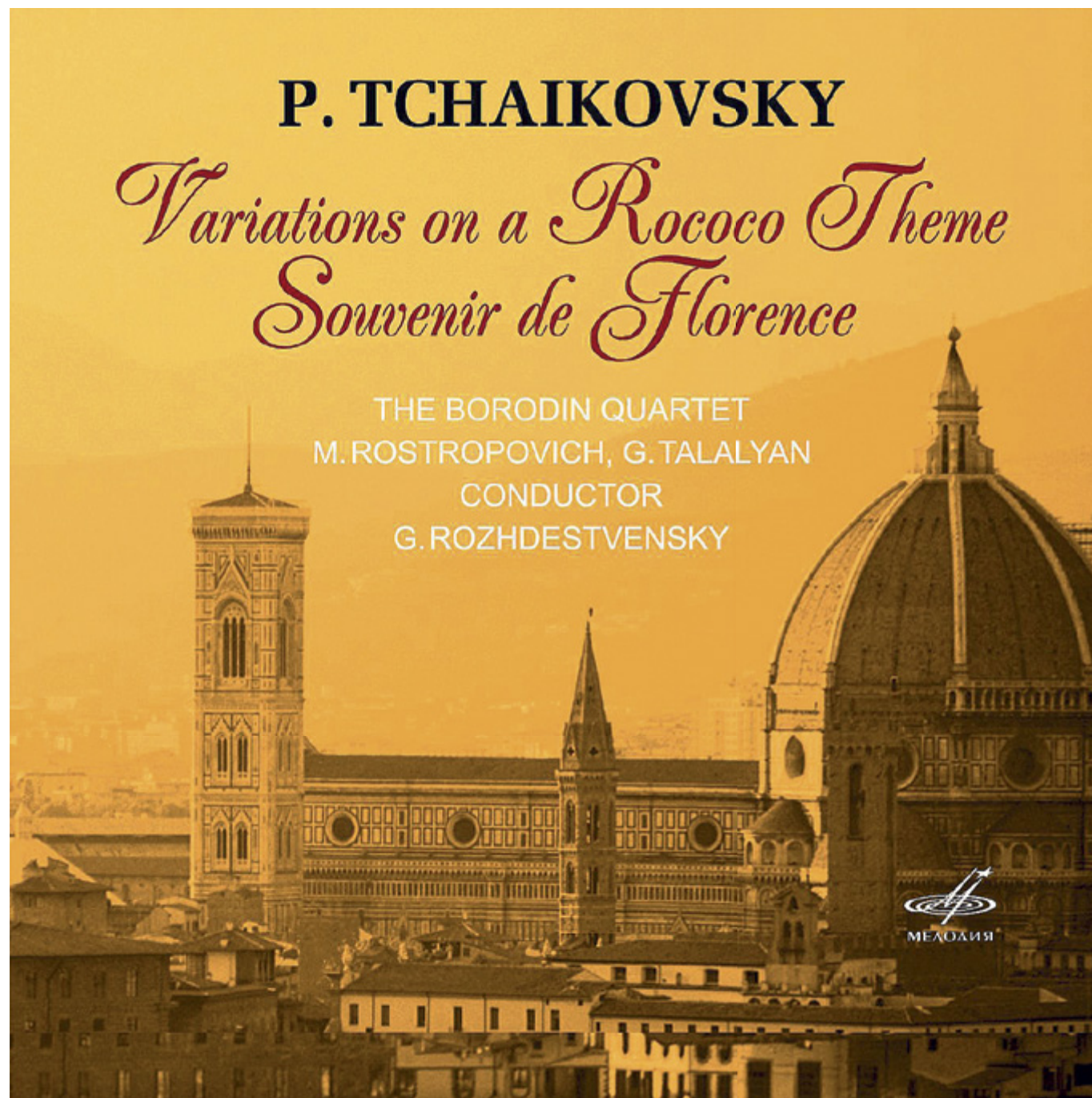
where the whole nineteenth-century interior has been preserved. If you ask for permission, you will be allowed to see not only the mansion's courtyard, but also its interior (enter through its gate and on your left go up the stairs to the first floor).

Moving along Dei Cerchi, you can reach the square called della Signoria and the town hall, called Palazzo Vecchio. It was here that in March 1996 Joseph Brodsky was given a title of the Honourable Citizen of Florence for his contribution to world culture and was awarded the Golden Florin – a replica of the medieval Florentine coin.

That trip to Florence in 1996 was his final visit to Italy. The poet passed away in the same year in the USA.

Not long ago a plaque appeared on a rather modest house, 91 Via San Niccolò, Florence, which reads: ‘Andrei Tarkovsky, a peerless film director on spiritual themes, an exile in Florence, spent the final years of his life in this house. A guest and Honourable Citizen of the city of Florence.’

‘Florence is the city that gives back your hope,’ this is what the film director, who had become a homeless



wanderer in Europe, wrote. The Florence city hall gave him a room in Via San Niccolò, where the great Russian director resided from 1983 till 1986 and where he wrote the scripts to his last films, 'Nostalgia' and 'The Sacrifice'. There are similarities in the fates of these two masters – Brodsky and Tarkovsky. Both of them loved Florence, both spent the final years of their lives there, both became Honourable Citizens of Florence.

By the way, if you are a big fan of Andrei Tarkovsky's works, then you can take a short tour of Florence's surroundings, visiting the places where the film 'Nostalgia' was shot. These are the unfinished cathedral of San Galgano and the pool at Bagni Vignoni.

Notice the memorial plaque at 64 Via San Leonardo: 'In 1878 Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky lived and worked in this villa, where, of the boundless

plains of Russia and the sweet hills of Tuscany he materialised the undying harmonies of both regions.'

It is not the only place in Florence where Tchaikovsky stayed during his visits to this city. However, the hotels Sofitel and Washington are not so romantic places to have such beautiful words left on their walls, as opposed to Villa Bonciani which is situated in Via San Leonardo, one of the prettiest streets of Florence.



It was at a hotel near this mansion that Nadezhda Filaretovna von Meck, a great admirer of Tchaikovsky's talent and his patron for many years, lived. The composer communicated with von Meck for thirteen years only by correspondence and never met with her in person. Nadezhda Filaretovna gave him extensive financial support, but wished to remain practically unknown to the object of her admiration.

Tchaikovsky was passionate about Florence, called it an excellent source of inspiration, the city which nurtured creative personalities and his second home. It was in the Washington Hotel where the famous opera *The Queen of Spades* was composed, and it was first performed at the City Theatre of Opera and Ballet. This hotel stood at 8 Amerigo Vespucci Embankment, now it is a popular tourist bar. But I wonder if its customers are aware of this building's significance for world music and that early in 1890 the great composer in one breath, over forty-four days, composed here his most favourite brainchild, *The Queen of Spades*. The sophisticated Florentines nicknamed *The Queen of Spades* 'The Florentine opera' because it was created on the banks of the Arno River. The famous opera was put on the stage again in 1974, and in 1999 it opened the May Festival. Tchaikovsky became attached to Florence and more than

once said that it was his most beloved and desirable city. And it came to pass that the composer obtained a house, or, to be more exact, a villa in Florence. What is most remarkable is that this villa was provided for him by his patron Nadezhda von Meck.

Tchaikovsky also dedicated his famous sextet to his beloved Florence. He particularly liked to dedicate his compositions to the places where he used to stay that played a special role in his life and were dear to his heart.

Florence inspired one more great Russian man. 'Late in November, 1868, we moved to the then capital of Italy and took up our residence near Palazzo Pitti. The move proved wholesome for my husband and we began to visit churches, museums and palaces,' this is what Anna Grigoryevna Snitkina, second spouse of Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky, wrote in her reminiscences.

The exact address of Dostoevsky's home in Florence remained unknown. However, in the twentieth century the poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko examined documents of that time and found out that Dostoevsky had lived at 22 Via Guicciardini, where later a memorial plaque appeared. According to some evidence, it was there that in 1869 Fyodor Mikhailovich completed work on his famous novel, *The Idiot*, which he had been writing for seventeen months.

Dostoevsky first visited the city of Florence in 1862 together with the literary critic Nikolai Nikolaevich Strakhov, and later, following wasteful travels across Europe, he returned there with his new wife, Anna Snitkina, who supported the writer financially. Florence attracted Dostoevsky by its clement climate and the library.

According to Anna Grigoryevna's evidence, 'a fine library with a reading room and two

Russian newspapers were found' and the writer 'used to call at the library for reading daily after dinner.' It was the scientific and literary Gabinetto Vieusseux [the library, founded in 1819 by Giovan Pietro Vieusseux who was of Swiss descent], which received all the major books published in Europe. Today this collection is housed at Palazzo Strozzi.

'The doctor instructed me to walk a lot, so every day Fyodor Mikhailovich and I went to the Giardino Boboli gardens (situated behind the Pitty Palace), where roses were blooming in spite of January. There we would bask in the sunshine and dream of our happy future,' Anna Grigoryevna wrote.

There are cities to which one cannot return.

The Sun beats on their windows as though on polished mirrors.

And it means that no amount of gold will make their hinged gates turn...

(Joseph Brodsky, December in Florence)



CULTURE

THE ITALIAN WHO REVAMPED RUSSIA

ADAM MUSKIN

The story of the impact of Italian architecture in Russia has been well documented.

Having built up a prestigious and powerful state, Prince Ivan III decided to decorate his city with new buildings to reflect its grandeur. He wanted the most beautiful buildings, the latest designs and the most cutting-edge technology. So the prince sent his servants to Italy to hire the best architects of the Renaissance era to design buildings for the Kremlin complex in the centre of Moscow.

The Kremlin's Dormition Cathedral was built by Bolognese architect Aristotele Fioravanti.

Aristotele was born around 1415 in the Italian city of Bologna into a family of architects whose family can be traced back to the middle of the 14th century in the city's chronicle. Aristotele was an apprentice under his father, who was responsible for a number of famous architectural designs and restoration projects around Bologna. Aristotele is first mentioned in the city chronicle in 1436, when he collaborated with the metalworker Gaspar Nadi to make a bell for the city tower in Aringo. Aristotele's expertise as an engineer was necessary to lift the bell into the tower. The two worked together again on another bell, which was completed in 1453. Aristotele used his experience from the previous partnership to design a special device to lift the bell into place.

As Aristotele continued developing as an innovative engineer and architect, so too did his career blossom. In 1447, he took over his father's projects, and together with his uncle he worked on a number of difficult en-

gineering construction projects. One of the most stunning of these was the relocation of the bell tower in St. Marks in 1455, after which the city of St. Marks rewarded him with a lifetime pension and privileges. Fioravanti later straightened the bell tower in Cento, and at the church of St. Angela in Venice. However, the former only stood for two days before it collapsed, suffocating two people. This would be one of Fioravanti's few failings, but nevertheless, Aristotele left Venice immediately after the incident and never returned.

Fioravanti continued his work in Rome and in Bologna, but an event occurred which would change his life forever, derailing his Italian career and playing a part in his eventual decision to relocate to Russia. In June of 1473, Aristotele was unexpectedly accused of counterfeiting false coins. The shocked Italian was promptly arrested and relieved of all his previous privileges and titles, even though the accusations would eventually prove false. It was at this pivotal moment, however, in 1474 that he met the Russian ambassador Semyon Tolbuzin, who had been sent to Italy to search for architects to work in Moscow.

Ivan III needed talented and experienced specialists in short order, as in 1474 a catastrophe had occurred in the Kremlin; Ivan III had commissioned two Russian architects to build a new Dormition Cathedral within the Kremlin walls, replacing the ancient one that had stood in its place. The Cathedral was almost completed when disaster struck, and the building collapsed. It is not clear whether the collapse was because of structural



stones were solid enough", but would not take the job of building a new cathedral themselves. Semyon Tolbuzin, the Russian ambassador, was sent abroad to Italy to find a suitable specialist for the job.

The meeting between Fioravanti and Tolbuzin most likely occurred in Rome, and after signing a contract in 1475, the 60 year old architect left for

days. The remaining parts of the building were demolished by a suspension battering ram custom designed by Fioravanti. When the battering ram was insufficient, the final parts of the wall were stuffed with tinder and set on fire. These remains would have been completely removed even faster if the workers had been able to keep up with Fioravanti's efficiency. Once the site

ern Europe that might not resound with the Tsar. For that reason, as soon as the foundation was finished, Aristotele travelled throughout Russia in order to acquaint himself with the ancient Russian culture of architecture.

After his travels, Aristotele decided to use the Dormition Cathedral in Vladimir as his model. In order to construct the new cathedral, new material was necessary in addition to the white stone that was left over from the previous project. Ancient white stone from the Moscow suburb of Myachkov was found suitable, and Aristotele began drawing material from there. Bricks were also necessary. The bricks that had been made for the previous cathedral were deemed of poor quality, and Fioravanti built a new brick factory on the banks of the Moscow River to make new bricks that were of higher quality and produced to a single standard.

Fioravante introduced a number of innovations and new architectural designs when construction finally began. The foundation of the cathedral was set about 4.5 meters deep, and oak was pounded into the foundation itself, a method never before seen in Moscow. The building itself was completed in 1477; additions would be made to the interior later, taking another two years. On August 15th, 1479, a ceremony was held commemorating the opening. In another first for Russian architectural history, the cathedral interior was not separated into smaller enclaves, but rather presented its entire volume in one single space. Finally, by 1515, the cathedral was complete.

Aristotele Fioravanti was a master architect who claimed glory in Russia by constructing one building, but a piece of art nevertheless worthy of comparison to many others. However, it is impossible to claim that the Dormition Cathedral was his only outstanding contribution to Russia. A multitude of engineering concepts attributed to him had a great effect on further construction projects in both Russia and his native Italy, where as well only one of his projects has survived.

The Kremlin's Dormition Cathedral was built by Bolognese architect Aristotel Fioravanti.

instability and mistakes on the part of the architects or, as some accounts say, because an earthquake that shook the site, but the building had to be constructed anew, and Ivan III was not pleased. The Pskov architects, upon examining the destroyed building, came to the conclusion that "it would seem that neither mortar, nor the

the Principality of Moscow with his son Andrey and his servant Pietro. Fioravanti's work in Moscow began with removing the remains of the previous Dormition Cathedral. Astoundingly, cleaning the site for the new cathedral took one week – everything that had taken three years to build was completely removed in a mere seven

was cleared, however, Fioravanti did not rush to begin construction on the new cathedral. Fioravanti knew how important it was that his new cathedral should blend the traditions of ancient Russian architecture with modern innovations from Europe and he was categorically opposed to simply transplanting tastes and styles from West-

INTERVIEW

LEV DODIN: “THEATRE DOESN’T HAVE BORDERS”

MATTHEW AMER

The lauded Russian director tells us about bringing his much-praised production of *Three Sisters* to London and why, after 35 years running the Maly Drama Theatre, he still gets nervous.

“If you put in a lot of effort, at some point something will come out.” By iconic director Lev Dodin’s own admission, this Russian proverb might not translate beautifully into English. It does, however, encapsulate the modesty and ethos of the man at the helm of one of Russia’s, and Europe’s, premiere theatre companies, the Maly Drama Theatre of St Petersburg.

Following an acclaimed return to the London stage last year when, after 10 years away, they staged *Life and Fate* and *Uncle Vanya* at Theatre Royal Haymarket. The Maly Drama Theatre returns this June with another globally applauded Chekhov production, *Three Sisters*.

Dodin, maybe surprisingly for a man who’s been in his job for 35 years and has received numerous awards including an Olivier, admits to being a little nervous: “It would be strange if I was not jittery at all,” he laughs modestly. He considers London an important venue for the Maly. “We feel the British audience is our second home,” he says. “I think they understand Chekhov as if he was their native writer.”

This production of *Three Sisters*, too, says Dodin, is important. Its London premiere has been more than a decade in the making. In fact, Dodin first started working on a version of *Three Sisters* with the Maly

Drama Theatre in the 1990s. He got as far as staging the first run through before deciding it wasn’t ready and cancelling the production altogether. “We needed to grow up a bit,” he admits. “We didn’t have good enough questions to pose to that play, so we put it aside, which gave us a chance to do more Chekhovs.”

Fast forward a decade or so and they had questions aplenty. Following more than a year of rehearsals, this production of *Three Sisters* premiered in 2010. The same ensemble that opened in 2010 toured it to America in 2012, when the New York Times hailed it a “compassionate, richly acted production,” and continue to play



those roles today. “London audiences will see those same actors,” Dodin confirms, adding that while the actors

remain the same, the production has grown over the last decade. “As with every living being, the show develops and evolves in time, inevitably reacting to the world changing around it. It’s like a baby. You carry a baby for many months, but when it’s born it keeps developing and evolving and giving you new ideas.”

Part of that he puts down to the company, part to the playwright who forms the cornerstone of the Maly Drama Theatre’s work. “Chekhov has stopped being, for us, a classical author. He feels very alive and very relevant today. The things Chekhov tells me about my own life, I don’t often find in modern writing. I recognize this play as a story about me and the people that surround me. No writer has ever written so specifically about exactly how I feel about the world and myself as Chekhov. He is very much like Shakespeare; unknowably deep. No height is high enough; no depth is deep enough; it’s infinity without confines.”

Described like that, it sounds both awe-inspiring and, I can admit, a little intimidating. Dodin agrees, but has some words of advice for audiences: “You have to trust yourself. You have to believe in yourself. You have to know you’re capable of feeling something you’ve never felt



before and seeing something on stage you’ve never seen before. That is why theatre is a great thing and why it’s so rewarding to see a show.”

Dodin knows better than most the importance of theatre. He has run the Maly Drama Theatre since 1983 – “As horrifying as that sounds!” he laughs – and began directing in the 1960s. He has led the company through regime changes in Russia and the Soviet Union and has toured to every continent except Antarctica. After three and a half decades, his belief in the importance of theatre has not diminished: “Theatre doesn’t have borders. There’s no your theatre is this or my theatre is that. As humans, we are uniquely the same. We are constantly being divided by our politicians, our superstitions, the clichéd ideas we have about each other as one nation and another nation. Only art, only theatre keeps doing its solitary thankless job, proving

to everybody in the world that everyone is equally human.”

That, of course, is one of the reasons *Three Sisters* still resonates more than a century after it was written. It is, as Dodin simply puts it, about, “three girls facing real life as it is. During the play they each realise, ‘Life is not what I expected it to be. All my aspirations and expectations were just about something that’s fantastical and does not exist.’” What could be more universal?

“The play is an interlocking tapestry of lives and relationships,” Dodin continues. “I could talk about what it’s about forever, but if you come and see the production you’ll get so much more!”

Part of what this defining *Three Sisters* offers is the chance to hear the piece performed in its native Russian. The Maly Drama Theatre perform Chekhov’s masterpiece in their own

language with the English translation displayed on surtitles. Dodin is, again, too modest to sing his own praises about how well this works, but instead paraphrases reviews from years of international touring. “The audience feels they can speak Russian. They follow the surtitles for what the characters are talking about, but when they hear and see the characters, they follow their feelings,” he says.

After 35 years leading the Maly, staging defining productions that run in rep for decades, one might think the 75-year-old Dodin could consider retiring, or that he’s asked all the questions he wants to ask of Chekhov. He’s having none of it. “As long as I’m capable of being able to change a production for the better or being able to create something new and alive again, I will keep on. To many people, I think my lot in life could seem to be toiling in vain, but I’m convinced it’s worth it.”

TRADITIONS

THE 8 BEST SOUVENIRS FROM ITALY AND WHERE TO BUY THEM

GINA MUSSIO

Italy has world-class souvenir shopping – and we don’t mean plastic trinkets. Think world famous markets, delicatessens packed full of local specialty foods, and the flagship stores of world-famous Italian designers. Wherever you go, Italy’s artisanal products are the stars of the show. The country has a long history of creating some of the finest hand-made goods in the world and continues to ensure that the “Made in Italy” tag a mark of superior quality.

It isn’t always easy to find authentic Italian souvenirs, but the best way to do it is by knowing where to shop. Don’t know where to start? Don’t worry! Here are the top souvenirs from Italy and where to find them.

Leather in Florence

With its famous Chianina cows and a thriving central business hub in Florence, Tuscany has all the ingredients to make excellent leather. Sitting right on the banks of the Arno River, the neighborhood of Santa Croce in Florence has been home to water-heavy trades, like hide tanning, since the 13th century and the tradition lives on today. In fact, 35% of national leather production still takes place in this area today!



Though you can find authentic Italian-quality leather throughout all of Tuscany and even nearby Umbria, Florence is still the best place to buy that incredible handmade purse, coat, or belt you’ve been dying to have.

Because leather is such big business, you’re not going to find mom and pop stores here, but you will have a plethora of choices. Head to Santa Croce to see what the biggest brands are selling, or if you only have one day in Florence take a lunchtime tour of the massive San Lorenzo Market which boasts dozens of stores and booths selling any and all leather products. Look for signs reading “Italian-quality” leather, so you know it was made according

to local traditions and not chemically treated. Real leather will have imperfections and feel soft. It should be a natural color and you should be able

to see the texture of the animal skin. Also, this souvenir from Italy isn’t cheap. Though you can, and in some cases should, certainly haggle, quality leather has its price!

Glassware in Murano

Murano, an island off of the lido of Venice, has been a leader in European glassware for centuries. Because Venice was a major trading port for goods from all over the Mediterranean and the Far East, the city’s artisans developed glass-making technologies that synthesized influences from Roman, Greek, and Asian cultures. As the industry grew, so did the threat of fire from their kilns and the government moved them to the nearby island of Murano. Eventually, the Venetian Republic became one of the dominant trading powers in Europe and the glass-makers benefited in turn. Their notable income was useful for the state and the artisans enjoyed a particularly prominent status throughout the Renaissance.

Today the glassmakers still wow visitors with their incredible skill. They can make anything from chandeliers to perfectly-sculpted earrings and bottle stoppers, all using methods originally developed in the 1200s.



Be careful when choosing your Murano glass – there are a lot of imitations out there, including some glass on the island of Murano itself! Look for well-known brands, and the Artistic Glass Murano® trademark of origin to be sure you’re getting the real deal.

Those who simply want to ogle more of the beautiful glass designs and learn about the history can visit the Museo del Vetro (Glass Museum) in the Palazzo Giustinian on Murano Island.

Ceramics in Vietri sul Mare

As with all Amalfi Coast towns, Vietri sul Mare enjoys great food and great views but its real claim to fame is its rich ceramics tradition. Vietri sul Mare is the cradle of Italy’s brightly colored earthenware pottery known as majolica.

Though majolica ceramics are sold throughout the Amalfi Coast, the artisans in Vietri sul Mare have taken the particular, colorful style of the centuries-old tradition and adapted it for contemporary tastes, making ceramic vases, bowls, plates, and decorations for inside and outside your home.

The ceramics are all decorated by hand, with patterns and designs that

perfectly reflect the beautiful Mediterranean lifestyle found along the Amalfi Coast. Brightly colored sunflowers, lemons, grapes, and landscapes grace the fire-glazed items. Whether you want a whole set or just a showpiece, these are the perfect souvenir from Italy to give your home a touch of la bella vita! Prices are usually reasonable, though larger or shipped items will cost you more.

While visiting Vietri sul Mare, stop in the Fabbrica di Ceramiche Solimene



to learn more about the ceramics tradition and more contemporary developments or pop into the Museo Provinciale della Ceramica in beautiful Villa Guariglia.

Woodwork from all of Trentino-Alto Adige

Trentino-Alto Adige is home to verdant pine forests and the jagged pink peaks of the Dolomites. It’s a place where nature and civilization coexist in pleasing harmony – a relationship

evinced in their artisanal traditions. Wood from the surrounding forests is the backbone of life in Trentino, where most of the buildings are constructed from local trees like spruce, scotch pine, and larch. It’s these same woods that most often show up in handicrafts of local artisans.

The area’s woodcarving traditions originated during the long, cold winters, when entire families gathered around the stove, or stube to stay warm. They often passed the time do-



good performer must be able to handle his marionette and be a master of improvisation.

Today, puppet shows are performed at the Opera dei Pupi in Palermo, Sicily. Dating back to the 15th century, the marionettes depict characters straight from Southern Italy's history. Heroes of important battles fall in love with dark-haired Sicilian beauties, while vanquishing historical foes like Saracens or Norman invaders.

The marionettes are made of wood with strings and metal wires holding them up. Though this medieval theater is constantly fighting for attention with more mod-

ing something with their hands and we're glad they did; today Trentino-Alto Adige's woodcarvings are second to none. From benches and chairs to cutlery, cutting boards, wine holders, and other decorative objects, these are the perfect gifts to put in your home.

Marionettes from Palermo

Though puppets might have a somewhat antiquated air, the puppets and marionettes in Sicily are so intricately made you can't help but want to take one home. Drawing on stories from the Commedia dell'Arte, Medieval Italian puppet theater was one of the forerunners of all European puppetry. Italians have always cultivated a culture of story telling, and nowhere is this truer than in a present-day puppet show. Though the stories are classics, the dialogue is made up on the spot, meaning a

ern forms of entertainment, the culture and craft of Sicilian puppetry are protected as a form of intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO. Artisan shops and studios selling these classic marionettes abound in Palermo, and while quality varies, they are all incredible examples of a very unique type of cultural expression.



Nativity scenes and figurines from Naples

There's no place like Naples for Christmastime. Since St. Francis invented the nativity scene, or presepe, in the 13th century, Italians have been making it their own, and Neapolitans have become the number one makers and sellers of the small scenes and accompanying figurines. They believe they do it better than anyone— and so do many Italians.

Even if you aren't able to visit the city during Christmastime, you can still see this artisan craft up-close. Visit the famous nativity scene makers on Via San Gregorio Armeno in the heart of Naples' historic city center. Here you'll find hundreds of shops featuring hand-made nativity scenes, with floor-to-ceiling options for figurines, ranging from the holy family to animals and landscape features, such as waterfalls, forests, and mills. The



shops are open year round, showing off Naples' beautiful handmade figures. More than a tree or lights, every Italian family is sure to have a presepe prominently displayed from December 8th onward. If your family displays or wants to display a nativity scene, there's no better place to buy one than from presepe masters in the heart of one of Italy's most traditional cities!

If you just want to see more, visit the Museo Nazionale di San Martino, where you can view an entire collection of Neapolitan nativity scenes created over the years, including the larg-

est nativity scene ever. This massive diorama, the Presepe Cuciniello, has 162 carved human figures, 80 animals, and more than 500 other objects.

Silk from Como

Silk has been produced in Como and its surrounding towns, like Bellagio, for more than 4 centuries. The silkworms followed a winding path to get there. In fact, they had to travel all the way from China to the Eastern Mediterranean to Sicily and then up the boot to the north of Italy and finally into Como. But it wasn't until Italy began to industrialize in the 18th century that Como became Italy's largest silk producer. Today it still holds the title. Como provides 85% of all silk made in Italy and 70% of all silk found in Europe. It provides silk for major fashion houses in nearby Milan but also Paris and New York, among others.



Silkworms need an ample water supply to thrive, but the exquisite mountain backdrops of Como probably don't hurt them, either. Among humans, Como is the epicenter of Italy's culture of beauty and luxury, and what is more luxurious than touring the beautiful banks of Lake Como wearing the finest, made-on-site silk scarf, tie, or shirt?

Despite its status as a luxury item, you can find silk in Como and Bellagio for a relatively reasonable price if you're a savvy shopper. Tour each and every shop to get an idea of prices and pay attention to the boutiques and markets, where you'll often find high fashion items mixed with new designers or sample styles.

Regional foods from, well... any region

Every region (and micro-region) of Italy is renowned for some sort of food. From the lemons of Amalfi to the cured meats of Perugia to truffles of Tuscany and the tomatoes of Puglia – wherever you visit will have certain foods that are considered local specialties. For the foodie in your life – or just for yourself – stop in a delicatessen and pick up a bottle, can, or vacuum-packed parcel of whatever catches your fancy. Of course, many local specialties don't travel well – we don't recommend trying to stick an arancino in a suitcase – but cured meats, wines, olive oil, and digestives like the ever-popular limoncello are fantastic gifts that literally bring a taste of Italy back home with you.



FOOD MATTERS

THE MOST ICONIC DISHES TO EAT IN ITALY

GINA MUSSIO

The most difficult thing about eating in Italy is that you can't try everything. Every day you have a finite number of meals, and a finite amount of space in your stomach, whereas there seem to be an infinite number of Italian dishes that you "absolutely need to try". From regional specialties to the finest seasonal delicacies, you would need multiple lifetimes to sample all the best Italian food, and that's before you even consider dessert and drinks. Before you start to panic, we've come up with a little bucket list of Italian dishes for you to try on your trip. This isn't a best of, and it's certainly not exhaustive – for one thing, we've avoided the topic of cured meats and cheeses because they are worlds unto themselves – but on it are the dishes that we think everyone should try at least once when they visit Italy. Taken together, they sum up the heart and soul of the various cooking traditions that exist around the country. We might miss your favorite dish, and we're sure there are a few of them.

Pizza

Though a slab of flat bread served with oil and spices was around long before the unification Italy, there's perhaps no dish that is as common or as representative of the country as the humble pizza. Easy, cheap, and filling, pizza has long been a common snack or meal, especially in Naples where tomato sauce was first added. When the Italian Queen Margherita came through the bustling city on a tour of her kingdom in 1889 she asked to

try this dish that she saw so many of her subjects eating. A local entrepreneur served her the now legendary combination of tomato sauce, mozzarella, and basil, creating (or more likely, branding) the Margherita pizza. Whether by coincidence or design, the Margherita also displays the colors of the Italian flag.

Today, there are essentially two types of pizza to choose from in Italy: Neapolitan-style pizza, or Ro-



man-style pizza (though to be honest, many delivery places exist that is a happy medium between the two). Neapolitan-style pizza has a thick, fluffy crust. It tends to be a little smaller in diameter because the dough hasn't been rolled out as far and it's more filling. Roman-style pizza is having a paper-thin crust and just the slightest crunch (you don't want it to be sog-

gy!) It's larger in diameter but typically lighter and less of a gluten bomb.

Because of Naples' history with Queen Margherita, the city claims to be the birthplace of modern pizza, although the point is debated throughout Italy.

Whatever the case may be, the general rule for ordering pizza in Italy is to shoot for fewer toppings. You should also be sceptical of any pizzerias that load the toppings onto their pies –

this can often be a tactic used to cover up the use of poor ingredients. Fewer toppings are a sign of confidence in the product because each topping has to be exemplary. Whichever pizza you might favor, the other rule of thumb is: When in Rome, do as the Romans do, i.e., eat Roman style pizza. When in Naples, naturally, do as the Neapolitans do.

Lasagna

Lasagna is a wide, flat pasta noodle, usually baked in layers in the oven.



Like most Italian dishes, its origins are hotly contested, but we can at least say that's its stronghold is in the region of Emilia-Romagna, where it transformed from a poor man's food to a rich meal filled with the ragù, or meat sauce.

Traditionally lasagna wasn't made with tomatoes (remember, those came over from the New World in the 16th century); only ragù, béchamel sauce, and cheese, usually mozzarella or Parmigiano Reggiano or a combination of the two. Even today, only a bit of tomato or tomato sauce is used in a traditional ragu, unlike most Italian-American dishes, which are basically swimming in tomato sauce. This concentrates the flavor of the meat but sometimes is a little jarring for American palates.

Though you can find lasagna throughout all of Italy, there's nothing like trying the hearty dish in Emilia Romagna with homemade noodles, fresh ragù, and a generous dollop of regional pride

Florentine Steak

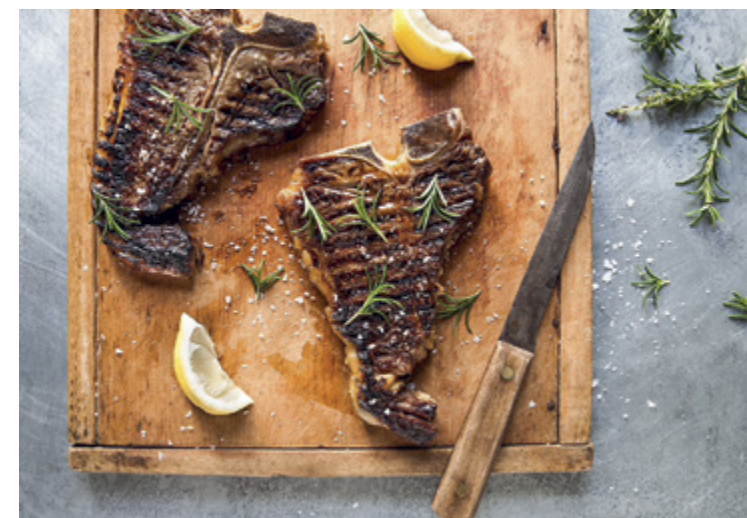
A bistecca fiorentina, or Florentine T-bone steak, covers all of the

characteristics of Italy's best dishes: a specific cut of meat from a specific cow prepared in a very specific way all within the confines of a specific region.

In the case of the enormous bistecca fiorentina, it's a T-bone steak cut thick (at least 5 centimeters) from the loin of a Chianina cow raised in Tuscany. It's cooked for 5 to 7 minutes on each side, depending on the thickness, until the outside is cooked and the inside remains very rare. No

sense in asking for a medium-well done steak here, the meat is too thick to even think about it!

Despite all the dogma, there are some variations on the Florentine steak. For one, the meat isn't always from a Chianina cow these days. Many Florentines are okay with the addition of new breeds but others swear that the enormous size and muscle of the Chianina makes for the best t-bones. If in doubt, simply ask. Also, the Florentines tend to prefer the higher cuts, nearer to the rib cage, which contain the fillet known as bistecca nella



costola, whereas beyond Florence in Tuscany you'll likely get a bistecca nel filetto, a lower cut that tends to be smooth and more melt-in-your-mouth. That doesn't necessarily mean it's the better, though. The Florentines argue that the bistecca nella costola comes from a more used muscle, meaning it's more flavorful.

Whichever cut you get, this is a dish to be eaten exclusively in Tuscany – either in Florence or the countryside. It's also meant to be shared! When ordering, remember that bistecca alla fiorentina is priced by weight; for two people you're typically looking at 1–2 kg (or nearly 2–4 pounds).

Ribollita

While on the topic of Tuscany, we would be remiss if we didn't mention



this hearty soup which has become so popular. Campbells makes a (not amazing) version. With roots in the peasant cooking of the region, this vegetable soup is thickened with bread instead of meat, because that is what was cheaper and more readily available for hundreds of years in the desperately poor Italian countryside. In Tuscany, the dish is considered a special treat in the autumn, when the taste of the harvest vegetables is at its most vibrant and the

soup explodes with an intense savoriness despite the absence of meat (at least in the traditional versions). Often eaten as a first course instead of pasta in the trattorie of Florence, this



Carbonara

It is possible to go to Italy and never eat anything besides pasta. We know because we've done it. But if there is one bucket list pasta that everyone should try at least once, our vote goes to carbonara (we know this is controversial – feel free to leave your desert island pasta in the comments). This dish is deceptively simple – spaghetti, eggs, pecorino cheese, cured guanciale, and black pepper – but takes a lifetime to master and a good version will change your life. There are many imitations – namely, those that thicken their sauces with cream or use bacon instead of guanciale – but accept no substitutes because the difference in taste is enormous. This is a Roman specialty but even in the capital there are still plenty of restaurants that can and do get it wrong. The best way to ensure you are served an exemplary version is to get a recommendation from a local. You are

is one hearty stew that shows off the immense, and often untapped power of great produce.

Ossobuco

The world-famous ossobuco alla milanese is a bone-in veal shank, cooked low and slow until meltingly tender in a broth of meat stock, white wine, and veggies. Traditionally, it's accompanied by a gremolata (lemon zest, garlic, and parsley) but that's optional. Although the Milanese like to claim this meaty masterpiece there are as many versions of it as there are nonnas in Lombardy, which is known for hearty, often rustic dishes that are good at coating the ribs and staving off the winter chill. Despite the popularity of ossobuco (which literally means 'hollow bone'), it's not always common to see it on restaurant menus because it needs about three hours of cooking time. If you do

get a chance to eat it in a restaurant or home, or even to cook it yourself, you should jump at the opportunity. It's usually accompanied by polenta or the next item on our list.



We can't tell you which style of bread you are going to enjoy the most but we can tell you that you should never turn down the opportunity to taste a new type. From the biggest cities to the smallest towns, you are never far from an Italian bakery, so stop by and pick up a few loaves whenever you have a chance.

Gelato

No trip to Italy is complete without gelato! If you're tempted to have a scoop (or two) a day don't worry, it's totally normal to eat gelato on a regular basis in Italy, especially in the summer.

Though gelato translates to 'ice cream,' it's not quite the same. By law, gelato has far less butterfat than ice cream: about 4 to 8 percent compared to 14 percent for ice cream in the United States. The low-fat content means that gelato is served a bit warmer and tends to melt in your mouth faster, it also intensifies the flavor and gives it a more velvety texture.

Second, gelato has a much higher density. Regular ice cream has air and water added to increase volume and weight. Unfortunately, these additions also make it less flavorful. This practice is illegal in Italy, leaving gelato (at least, traditional artisan gelato) super sweet and super flavorful. Finally, good gelato isn't made for long-term storage.

So how can you know if it's the good stuff or not? When seeking out fresh, artisanal gelato there are a few things to look out for. Before purchasing, check out the color (is it natural or neon bright?), if the fruit flavors are in season (they should be), and if there is an ingredient list on display. Also, check out how it's stored. Artisanal gelato is slow-churned and often, though now always stored in covered, circular containers. Those heaping trays of wavy-topped gelato might look pretty, but they have also been whipped to adding more air to the product.

not looking for simply a good restaurant, but a restaurant that specifically serves a great carbonara.

Focaccia (and other bread)

There are hundreds of types of bread in Italy, and the best one is the one baked locally that morning, wherever you happen to be staying. But you shouldn't leave without trying at least a few of the various types that Italy's robust baking culture has developed over the years.

For example, you might notice that bread in Tuscany has a different taste than it does elsewhere. That's because

it's made without salt. This is a tradition that originated in feuds between Tuscany and the coastal regions that controlled the salt trade and had no problem cutting off the agricultural region from its supply of the once-valuable commodity. To this day Tuscan bread is best eaten with a drizzle of olive oil and herbs or salt.

Liguria is the home of the world-famous flat bread, focaccia. Reminiscent of a thick pizza dough, classic focaccia is hyper-salty, drizzled with

olive oil and basically irresistible either by itself, or made into a sandwich.

It's often served open faced, with toppings like rosemary, zucchini, cheese, and olives.

Off the coast of Italy, in Sardinia, the classic bread doesn't look much like bread at all, instead appearing much more like a pita. Pane carasau, was named for the word carasare, which means to toast. Unsurprisingly, this bread paper-thin bread it always toasted after baking, giving it its wonderful crunch!



TRAVEL

10 BEST PLACES TO VISIT IN ITALY

Located in Southern Europe, this boot-shaped country is one of the world's most popular travel destinations for a number of reasons that include art treasures, charming towns, stunning landscapes, passionate people and top-class cuisine. It's a place where you can see some of the most iconic sites in the world – the leaning Tower of Pisa, the Colosseum and the Trevi Fountain, to name but a few. There's the chance to see renowned Renaissance masterpieces and shop for high-end fashion too.

Italy offers a magnificently rich array of sumptuous natural scenery and numerous opportunities to get out into nature. Cinque Terre, Sardinia, and the Dolomites all boast incredible landscapes and fantastic hiking routes.

You could spend your time in this culturally rich land learning about the lives of the Romans, discovering the destruction caused by Mount Vesuvius at Pompeii, or simply lazing alongside one of the many Italian lakes and languishing in the opulence of the Amalfi coast. Italy offers so much to see and do that it would take a lifetime to explore. Here's a look at the best places to visit in Italy:

Naples

One of the busiest metropolitan cities in the country, Naples is the capital of the Campania region in Southern Italy. The city of Naples offers a treasure trove of art works and historic sites as well as a vibrant atmosphere of shops, restaurants and nightlife venues. Many favorite Italian foods originated from here such as pizza, spaghetti and parmigiana. These dishes are taken seriously in Naples and



usually feature fresh, locally grown ingredients. As it is nearby famous sites like the Bay of Naples and Pompeii, Naples presents an ideal base to stay while exploring the area.

Italian Lake District

The Italian Lake District stretches across Northern Italy. The southern ends of most of the lakes are relatively flat but the northern ends are mountainous as the lakes reach deep into the Alps. Popular with tourists for over 100 years, the Italian Lakes combine good weather with attractive scenery. Garda is the largest lake, and offers stunning scenery, especially in its mountainous northern stretches. Como is equally stunning, with forested slopes rising directly from the water's edge. Further west, Maggiore is less popular yet just as beautiful, with several popular family resorts.

Sicily

The largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, Sicily is an autonomous region of Italy that also includes several smaller isles. It is separated from the mainland region of Calabria by the 5 km (2 miles) Straits of Messina. Home to every great Mediterranean civilization, Sicily is rich in art and history; from Agrigento's Valley of the Temples to Palermo's Baroque churches. The island's most striking geological feature is Mount Etna, Europe's tallest active volcano.

Cinque Terre

Meaning "Five Lands," Cinque Terre comprises the five villages of Riomaggiore, Manarola, Vernazza, Monterosso and Corniglia. Located in Italy's northwestern coastal region

of Liguria, the villages of Cinque Terre feature some of the country's most beautiful landscapes that include steep cliff sides and wine terraces dating back to hundreds of years. Among its many gems, Cinque Terre boasts a centuries-old complex of hiking paths that offer some of Italy's most stunning coastal views. The Blue Trail is a paved trail connecting all five of the villages and is suitable for all ages.

Milan

Nearly destroyed from heavy bombing during WWII, Milan has since reconstructed and now shines as one of the wealthiest cities in Europe. Widely regarded as a mega fashion center teeming in designer shops, Milan also attracts many to its surviving world famous treasures like Leonardo da Vinci's painting, The Last Supper, the La Scala Opera House, the Castello Sforzesco and one of the world's largest Gothic cathedral. Nonetheless, Milan sometimes appears less Italian compared to the country's predominantly historic cities and more of a glamorous city with modern architecture.

Amalfi Coast

Situated in Italy's southwestern region of Campania, the Amalfi Coast is known for its extraordinary beauty that makes it one of Italy's top tourist destinations. Stretching 30 miles along the southern side of the Sorrento Peninsula, the Amalfi Coast is prized for its picturesque coastline that features shimmering bays, craggy cliffs, lemon tree gardens, multicolored villas and ritzy resorts. One of the most romantic and posh towns along the Amalfi Coast is Positano with its beautiful pebbled beaches, pastel houses and scenic mountains. One of the larger towns, Amalfi, features lovely plazas

lined with restaurants while the town of Ravello is favored for its beautiful villas of gardens and art works.

Pompeii

One of Italy's most visited tourist destinations, Pompeii is a famous Roman city which was buried under several feet of volcanic ash for nearly 1,700 years after the cataclysmic eruption of Mt. Vesuvius. Excavation of Pompeii began in 1748, and the site is yet to be totally unearthed. The site is located near the modern city of Naples. A tour of Pompeii offers a fascinating insight into the everyday life of the ancient Roman world. Visitors can walk along the



ancient streets to see the remains of bakeries, brothels and baths.

Venice

One of the best places to visit in Italy, Venice is a unique city in that is built upon a lagoon surrounded by the Adriatic Sea. Located in northeastern Italy, Venice is an archipelago of 118 islands all connected by hundreds of beautiful bridges and scenic canals. Of the canals, the Grand Canal is most famous and divides the city into two sections. Picturesque waterways and historic architecture make Venice one of the most romantic cities in the world. Venice is often crowded but well worth visiting to see its mag-

nificent landmarks like Saint Mark's Square and Basilica, Doge's Palace and Rialto Bridge. One of the most popular things to do is to take a gondola ride along one of its many canals.

Rome

Formerly the capital of the Roman Empire, Rome today is the government seat and capital city of Italy. Located in the country's central region of Lazio, Rome is a vast and complex city that is both historic and modern at the same time. Best known for housing ancient Roman structures and the Vatican City, Rome has endured for more than 2,500 years as an important center for culture, power and religion. From ancient romantic plazas to stunning cathedrals and Renaissance architecture, there is so much to see and do in Rome, that it could take months or even years to see it all.

Tuscany

Italy's most famous region, Tuscany conjures images of beautiful rolling hills, olive groves, vineyards and cypress trees. The many pleasures of Tuscany include tasting wine in Chianti, simply relaxing in hill towns such as San Gimignano or exploring Renaissance art in Florence. The medieval city of Siena also holds excellent works of art while its historic center is one of the most popular places to visit in Italy. Elba, the largest of several Tuscan islands, offers great beaches while Pisa is world-famous for its Leaning Tower.





12-MONTH SUBSCRIPTION TO RUSSIAN MIND MAGAZINE

United Kingdom – 38 GBP ● European Union – 65 EUR ● The rest of the world – 80 EUR
ANNUAL Digital Subscription on our website www.russianmind.com - 20 GBP

TO SUBSCRIBE YOU CAN DO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Bank transfer for GBP currency

International Publishing Group Limited, HSBC Bank 18 Curzon Street, Mayfair, London, W1J 7LA, Sort Code: 40-05-22, Account No: 61391968, IBAN: GB59 HBUK 400522 61391968, BIC: HBUKGB4107K

2. Bank transfer for EUR currency

International Publishing Group Limited, Payee address: Mayfair 18A Curzon Street London W1J 7LA, Sort Code: 401276, Account number: 57123898, Bank Identifier Code: HBUKGB4B, Bank account: GB11HBUK 40127657123898, Bank: HSBC Bank, SWIFTCode: HBUKGB4B, Branch: Mayfair

3. Subscribe via Pay Pal on our website

www.russianmind.com/payment/

4. Send the cheque to our office, International Publishing Group

Limited, Russian Media Solutions, 48 Langham Street, W1W 7AY, London, United Kingdom

IMPORTANT

Please make sure that you provide the confirmation of your payment and contact details (home address, phone number and email address). You can contact us at rmoffice@russianmind.com

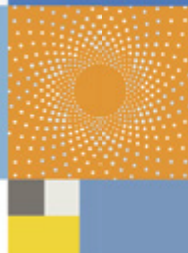


Knowledge grows

Yara - эксперт в области снижения выбросов NOx

Компания Yara предлагает инновационные решения
по снижению выбросов оксидов азота NOx

www.yara.ru



LEGAL ADVICE

THE NET MIGRATION IN THE UK IS CONTINUING TO RISE

The recent Office of National Statistics (ONS) report shows that the net migration in the UK is continuing to rise three years after the referendum in which the UK has voted to leave the EU.

One of the main issues that defined the referendum campaign and the ultimate result was the issue of increasing migration. The question that still remains to be answered is whether this is actually an “issue” and whether it should be resolved at any costs.

The statistics that was recently released confirms that the number of the migrants from the EU has fallen sharply, whilst the migration from non-EU immigration is at 15-year high with the net number coming to a total of 283,000, which is nearly three times the government’s annual target of 100,000. In addition, the ONS has also reported that according to its predictions the overall population will exceed 60 million by 2029 (up from 55 million in 2016) as a result of the current trends of migration.

The expectations are of course that once the UK leaves the European Union, it will have “full control” over its borders and will be able to impose new controls and measures to reduce the number of migrants coming to the UK from the EU. However, these numbers have already fallen sharply to

half of what they were in 2015 because of the uncertainty over Brexit, weak pound and uncertainty over the status of the European nationals in the UK. In addition, the EU is having a much

Many people are now questioning whether the “issue” of increasing migration is actually something that could be solved or even should be considered to be a problem in the



better long-term economic outlook at the moment making the UK much less attractive as a destination for the economic migrants.

The fact that the net migration remains high basically means that the number of non-EU migrants is increasing, which is entirely understandable, as the overall demand for foreign professionals and cheap labour has not changed and if it cannot be sourced from Europe, it will be found elsewhere. In the circumstances where there exist clear economic forces which drive this demand for foreign labour, it is entirely unclear how the government will be able to impose restrictions, which could have greater negative economic and social impacts.

first place. In the current day and age where the world is becoming more and more globalised, it is very hard to challenge the overall economic forces that drive migration around the world without risking damaging the economic and national interests of the country. This is exactly what the UK’s experiment with Brexit appears to be confirming.



Edmans & Co – Immigration Lawyers,
 16 High Holborn, London, WC1V 6BX
www.edmansco.co.uk, info@edmansco.co.uk
+44 (0) 20 7439 3000