The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Inthe Spotlight

By Anna Malpas

May 12, 2011



This week, Johnny Depp came to Moscow to promote the latest installment of "Pirates of the Caribbean," prompting Depp-mania. Even journalists attending his news conference at the Ritz-Carlton hotel got sprinkled with a little of his glamour. "Go on, tell us, is Johnny Depp cool? You saw him!" one girl shouted afterward. Later, a terrifyingly huge crowd before the premiere at Oktyabr cinema spilled out into the highway, plaintively begging for spare tickets.

Depp apparently visited Moscow a few years ago while researching the role of Polonium victim Alexander Litvinenko, and was spotted by a sharp-eyed journalist at Coffee Mania, possibly ordering a pot of tea and sushi. But this was his first visit to Russia in an official capacity, and as the compere gushed at the news conference, the hotel had never before seen such a concentration of star power.

Depp was dressed in a cowboy hat and short-sleeved T-shirt that showed off surprisingly profuse tattoos, while his co-star Penelope Cruz looked glowingly beautiful, her long hair tied into a complicated pigtail.

Cruz, even though her English seems good, stuck with conventional phrases about how

incredibly talented and inspiring her co-stars were, while Depp seemed relaxed and comfortable with the madness, replying deadpan to even the most ludicrous questions.

Does Depp prefer brunettes or blondes, one blonde journalist asked. "I like all types of hair, dark hair, light hair, straight hair, curly hair, long hair, short hair, I even like animal hair," Depp said.

Had he noticed the Ritz-Carlton's huge (and hideous) chandeliers, and would he like to swing on one, another woman asked. "Congratulations, because I have actually never been asked that question before," he said. "Can we have it washed up and sent to my room?"

I also liked his answer about how he would direct the fifth episode of "Pirates of the Caribbean" — a film based on a ride at the Disneyland theme park. He said he would just film his character on the ride for 52 minutes in a single shot.

He was a bit cagey when asked in the nicest possible way why he has gone from quirky, complex roles to mainstream commercial cinema, including the critically panned film "The Tourist."

"It's kind of depressing walking around in a depressing body for three or four months at a time," he said in an apparent reference to Method acting. "I prefer having fun — and even better if you're being paid for the fun."

He talked about a previous plan to play the hero of "Crime and Punishment," effortlessly remembering Raskolnikov's name, and said he would be interested in acting in a film version of Mikhail Bulgakov's book "The Master and Margarita," which he called "beautiful." Perhaps he should check out the 1990s Russian film version, now in cinemas, with its wobbly special effects and wall-to-wall nudity. Or then again, maybe not.

From the sublime to the ridiculous, another Hollywood star, albeit a much less bright one, visited Moscow last week and prompted a rare kiss-and-tell story in Tvoi Den tabloid.

Vin Diesel, the star of the "Fast & Furious" films, came to present the fifth episode of the saga. An "enchanting blonde" identified as Maria, 21, claimed Diesel, 43, met her at a nightclub and took her back to his hotel room.

It's still virtually unknown for Russian tabloids to run kiss-and-tell stories of the kind that are bread-and-butter to the British tabloids. But Tvoi Den's creator, Aram Gabrelyanov, is a Rupert Murdoch in the making, with his tabloid based slavishly on The Sun. Like Murdoch, he is bidding for broadsheet respectability by taking over Izvestia.

Without going into too much detail, Tvoi Den's front page headline was "I have seen bigger."

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/05/12/in8200the-spotlight-6927-a6927