The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Choosing the Best Place of Residence for a Foreign Executive and His Family

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June 20, 2011





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When coming to Moscow to work, top business executives, administrative and HR directors of large companies, as well as assistants, run into the problem of finding a place of residence in the capital.

The criteria by which an expat chooses a place to live is the following:

- geographical location of the building;
- level of comfort inside and around the building;
- surrounding infrastructure (such as kindergartens, schools, athletic centers, stores, recreational centers, etc.).

An HR director has different requirements: for him the image and experience of the commercial real estate company is important (whether it is a real estate agency or a private realtor), as well as transparency of contractual obligations (duration, conditions for termination, included services in the price), legal and accounting services provided, among other preferences, and simple intuition.

By the preferences of the expat and HR director, a list of potential housing arrangements are made. The choice is usually made between three options — an apartment, a hotel, and an "apart-hotel."

Apartment living, the first option, has many virtues. Among these are the ability to meet a set budget and the variety of different places to choose from. Amount of rent for an apartment is determined by area, not by how many people live in it. Also, one can choose practically any neighborhood to live in, along with the desired level of infrastructure. It is helpful that this

segment of real estate in Moscow is very well developed.

But there are some drawbacks that come with apartments, such as the extra costs of utilities, absence of engineering support and security of the building; there is also the human factor, in the form of the private owner. There is also an absence of additional services (such as cleaning, changing bed linens and towels, dry cleaning services, etc.).

Let's take a look at the second option, which it seems should be more comfortable for the expat — this is living in a hotel suite in the center of Moscow.

There are many advantages to this option. First of all, there is security in the building, which is very important for a foreign executive who has moved here with his family. Another advantage is registering foreigners with the Federal Migration Service according to the place where they permanently reside.

There are also a number of drawbacks with this option: These include the high costs of hotel rooms in the center of the city, the absence of adjacent land surrounding the building and the relatively small area of the suite. Due to a high demand for these types of rooms, these are exactly the rooms that are occupied when you need them most.

The third option, which has lately been growing in popularity, is the apart-hotel, which is a hotel with suites that are more akin to regular apartments than hotel numbers. This is the best option for HR directors and expats.

Apart-hotels are intended for people who are in the city for a long period of time, so they are strikingly cheaper than hotel suites, but at the same time are not much more expensive than renting a regular apartment. At the same time they are more comfortable than regular apartments, because they possess additional services and a higher level of safety.

The main advantages of suites in apart-hotels include:

- safety in the building and adjacent territories;
- clean environment because of its location outside the city limits;
- additional services: suite cleaning, bed linen changing, dry cleaning services, parking, personal touch service, etc.;
- Registering with the Federal Migration Service by the place of permanent residence;
- presence of additional territory for comfortable relaxation during periods off work (walking areas, barbecue areas, bike paths);
- Receiving services now, and paying for them later;
- wide spectrum of services for kids (sports teams and individual lessons with instructors, children's club and kids' rooms, playgrounds).

There are, of course, downsides, but they are significantly less:

- location of the building outside the city limits;
- additional transportation costs;
- limited choice, because in Russia this segment is only in the beginning stages of development.

Experts consider an important advantage of apart-hotels to be the long period of contracts,

a high level of service, and the presence of adjacent territory that belongs to the building.

Lately, it has been very popular among foreigners to live within Moscow city limits. For them this type of living is long familiar, because in the majority of developed countries of Europe and the United States, people only work in the city center but live in townhouses or separate houses in comfortable suburbs.

One of the leading players on the market for apart-hotels is the Podmoskovnaya Sloboda holiday hotel, located right outside the Moscow city limits on the Novorizhskoye Shosse in a forested area. It is in an advantageous area, has developed infrastructure, a high level of safety, as well as a variety of additional services adapted specially for foreign guests. In addition to the above-mentioned advantages, a service exists called personal touch — this means that hotel staff know every guest's face and name and take into account their habits and preferences.

The market for apart-hotels is not yet very developed in Russia. Although apart-hotels are grouped in the segment of real estate, which is in the early stages of development, no one will deny the prospective possibilities of organizing housing in this way for guests and citizens of the capital and the areas surrounding it. Especially for foreign citizens who are in search of an appropriate option for comfortable and price-accessible housing in or near the capital, the most respectable choice is to use the comfortable services of apart-hotels.

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