

Abramovich Eats Words in London Court

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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LONDON — Helicopter trips, skiing vacations and plush properties are just a few of the luxuries that changed billionaire Roman Abramovich's mind about not imitating rival Boris Berezovsky's "extravagant lifestyle," a London court was told Tuesday.

To laughter in London's Commercial Court, the media-shy owner of the Chelsea football club was forced to swallow his words that he "was never interested in imitating" Berezovsky's lifestyle in 1994.

The list of Abramovich's skiing trips in the luxury resort of Courchevel and in Megeve, both in the French Alps, are some of the latest insights into the lives of Russian-born tycoons in a \$6 billion lawsuit.

Watched for clues about the state of play in the intertwined worlds of Russian business and politics, the legal case pits Berezovsky against a former protege whom he accuses of intimidating him in 2000 into selling shares in Sibneft at a fraction of their value. Abramovich denies that Berezovsky ever had an interest in the company.

Abramovich wrote in his witness statement that in 1994 he was surprised by Berezovsky's "extravagant lifestyle," adding: "I was never interested in imitating his lifestyle."

However, when quizzed by Berezovsky's lawyer, Abramovich agreed that he had bought a large country estate in England, an expensive apartment in the swanky London area of Knightsbridge and a chateau in France.

"You now want to qualify that, do you, to say whilst you weren't interested in an extravagant lifestyle then, you may have an extravagant lifestyle now?" asked the lawyer, Laurence Rabinowitz.

Abramovich agreed, speaking in Russian via an interpreter in a courtroom packed with stern-looking bodyguards and armies of lawyers and aides.

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