

# Moskva Hotel Reopens as Mall

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The Moskva Hotel is reopening after reconstruction that lasted a decade. **Vladimir Filonov**

A slew of Moscow real estate players unveiled a reconstructed Moskva Hotel on Tuesday, relaunching the premier Soviet hotel as a commercial center with 70 shops, a department store, underground parking and a hotel.

Galereya Moskva, the mall comprising the shops and department store, is scheduled to open to the general public Wednesday, though only about half of its shops are up and running. The site had been under construction for nearly 10 years, with the original hotel razed in 2003-2004.

At a news conference in the mall's gleaming black, white and gray interior, State Duma Deputy Vladimir Resin, the capital's urban development head under former Mayor Yury Luzhkov and Mayor Sergei Sobyenin, said the city had preserved "a symbol of an epoch" by replacing the first building with a lookalike.

Built in the 1930s, the Moskva sits on Okhotny Ryad and is flanked by the Bolshoi Theater,

the Teatralnaya metro station and Manezh Square. The brown-and-beige stone building, at just over 10 stories, was a mecca for celebrities such as first cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin and Italian film star Marcello Mastroianni.

Strabag rebuilt both the Galereya Moskva section of the complex and the new hotel. The Austrian-based contractor won the tender for construction in December 2004, Alexander Ortenberg, general director of Strabag's Russian division, said in an interview on the sidelines of the news briefing. Following the financial crisis, Strabag took on new financing of 4 billion rubles (\$130 million) for the project in summer 2010, Ortenberg said.

Ortenberg said his firm has wrapped up its part of the Moskva renovation. "We're done," he said. "We've finished building."

The mall, which takes up less than a fifth of the Moskva's 186,000 square meters, includes a number of high-end jewelry, clothing and handbag shops, many of them Italian and French.

The rest of the complex will be filled with a Four Seasons hotel, expected to open in 2013, and a spa, business center, "culture and leisure center" and hotel apartments.

Development firm DekMos said by e-mail that it is the sole developer of the Moskva project. Strabag was the general contractor, while Lusine, builder of the Ararat Park Hyatt on Neglinnaya Ulitsa, directed engineering work, DekMos said.

DekMos declined to name the current owners of the Moskva complex.

Though the grand opening of Galereya Moskva is advertised as Feb. 15 on giant red cubes on Ploshchad Revolyutsii, only about 30 of the 70 stores were stocked or in the process of stocking when the news conference ended Tuesday afternoon. At a handbag shop on the first floor, men in jeans were testing the security panels at the store entrance, while in other shops, workers were rolling on paint and finishing trim.

Meters away from the speakers, headless naked male mannequins filled a men's clothing shop. By the end of the afternoon, one of them had acquired a crimson scarf.

About 20 stores had windows plastered with brand names and "opening soon," while an equal number were papered with just the Galereya Moskva logo.

DevMos said a "large part" of stores will open at the end of March, and restaurants will open there in May and June.

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