

Bosco Store Goes to London for the Olympics

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Bosco stores are a prominent presence in Moscow's Bosco-owned GUM shopping center on Red Square. **Vladimir Baranov**

Bosco di Ciliegi, the owner of the GUM department store on Moscow's Red Square and the official apparel provider of the Russian Olympic team, is targeting annual sales growth of 20 percent as it opens new European shops, its founder said.

The company's Bosco Sport brand last week opened its first Britain-based outlet at the Westfield Stratford City shopping center on one of the main thoroughfares accessing London's Olympic Park. It's the retailer's 65th own-brand store, and the first outside of Russia or Ukraine. The London Olympic Games start July 27.

"We are well-known in our own market, but to be present in a different part of the world, we need to take a step like London," Mikhail Kusnirovich, who founded fashion retail chain Bosco di Ciliegi in 1991 in Moscow, said in an interview in London. "London is one of the world's

great capitals, and there is a big Russian community here."

Bosco di Ciliegi, which is Italian for "Cherry Orchard," the title of tsarist-era playwright Anton Chekhov's last work, has annual sales of 600 million euros (\$794 million).

The company is the local franchisee for luxury brands including Jil Sander and Kenzo.

Kusnirovich said he's targeting "organic sales growth" of about 20 percent a year. Revenue grew 24 percent in 2011.

Kusnirovich, who speaks Italian and is also deputy chief of mission for the Russian Olympic delegation, said he's planning to open a second Bosco Sport store in central London, as well as shops in Madrid, Barcelona, and in European ski resorts "where there are lots of Russians" such as Courchevel, France, Cortina d'Ampezzo in the Italian Dolomites and St. Moritz in the Swiss Alps. A store in Nice, France, is also a possibility, he added.

Bosco Sport, which was founded in 2001, has produced the official jerseys for the Russian Olympic team since the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Games. It's the official apparel supplier for the Spanish and Ukrainian Olympic teams, as well as for the International Tennis Federation. In 2009, Bosco Sport signed a licensing deal worth more than \$100 million with the organizers of the 2014 Sochi Winter Games to become their official clothing supplier.

Although the global sportswear market is dominated by the likes of Adidas and Nike, there is room for Bosco, Kusnirovich said. He compared Bosco to Richard Branson's Virgin brand, which has an airline, financial products, gyms, and television and Internet service businesses.

"We are not Adidas or Nike because the products of Bosco are not just T-shirts or polos," he said. "We try to produce an atmosphere all around the customer. Because in Russia, we manage fashion shops, accessories, food and beverage, restaurants, spas, dental clinics and also sportswear. We are more Virgin than Nike."

Kusnirovich developed a lifelong love for the Olympic Games after watching British track athlete Sebastian Coe win a middle-distance gold medal at the 1980 Moscow Olympics as a 12-year-old boy with his father. Coe is now chairman of the London 2012 organizing committee. Bosco's connections to the Olympic movement have helped lift the company, according to Kusnirovich.

"We are in pole position," he said at newly opened Russian restaurant Novikov in London's Mayfair district. "The Olympic Games is a great marketing idea. We want to use the London Olympics to become more international."

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