

Expatriate Women Get Ready for Glamorous Ball

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If someone asks you for directions to Paris while you're strolling around downtown Moscow in the coming week, don't immediately assume that they've just escaped from an institution. To be helpful, point them in the direction of Tverskaya Ulitsa.

The International Women's Club is hosting a ball at the Intercontinental Moscow Tverskaya Hotel on March 23, complete with a Paris-themed concert and dance. This year marks the 17th anniversary of the club's annual Embassies of the World Dinner and Ball, which is sure to be a glamorous night filled with live music, complimentary wine, champagne and canapes. The evening will also be topped off with a special gift bag and will culminate in a prize raffle.

Acting as an umbrella organization for all the national factions, the club encompasses about 650 members and is headed by Izabella Zajackowska, the Polish ambassador's spouse.

"There are many balls held by all the different women's clubs, so we have to do something

unique," Zajackowska said. "Our ball is designed in exceptional form and consists of two parts."

The first is a dinner at one of the cooperating embassies. The second part is more traditional, a glittering, black-tie ball. But dancing is not all that the guests are going to do.

"Ninety percent of our revenue goes directly to the charity causes we support. All our work is voluntarily," Zajackowska said.

The International Women's Club covers a great spectrum of charity causes, all based in Russia. For example, the club provides funds to buy food and necessities for more than eight orphanages and homes for disabled children. Club members also raise money to assist burn victims and to support the Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy in providing 200 meals, five days a week, for pensioners and the needy.

The club's other aim is to unify women from the expat community and help them find a place for themselves in Moscow. To do so, the club holds coffee mornings where fresh expats can meet the long-timers. In return for the annual fee of 2,200 rubles (\$70), expats can also sign up for the club's interest groups, which include lessons in yoga, icon painting, languages, ballet and flamenco.

The Embassies of the World Dinner and Ball starts at 7 p.m. on March 23 at the Hotel Intercontinental Moscow Tverskaya Hotel, located at 22 Tverskaya Ulitsa.

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