The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

A Spontaneous Weekend and Hangover in 'St. Pete'

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August 15, 2013

People slowly losing their memories under Fidel's dusty lights on the infamous Dumskaya Ulitsa in St. Petersburg. **Alexey Alexeev / Fidel Official**

The decision to pack up and leave Moscow for a weekend in St. Petersburg is usually rather spontaneous and sometimes aided by copious amounts of drinking before getting on the train. So when you eventually wake up in St. Pete in the morning, you feel like a character in the famous New Year's Eve Soviet comedy "The Irony of Fate, or Enjoy Your Bath!"

After imbibing several coffees, you go for an obligatory stroll down Nevsky Prospekt and the canals. You could visit the Hermitage or the Russian Museum, but really you are better off taking an afternoon nap before getting on with what you really came here to do: party.
The options are so numerous that you have to pick carefully.

First post-recovery stop was Mishka (40 Fontanka Naberezhnaya, +7-812- 643-2550 http://vk.com/mishkabar). This DJ bar right off Nevsky is rather small, but can boast great

cocktails, including the famous Bloody Boyarsky, a local cocktail commemorating the famous actor Mikhail Boyarsky, a native of St. Petersburg himself. It's a mix of vodka, grenadine and tabasco sauce and a few too many of them can knock you out. Mishka Bar also has some good DJ sets. Check the schedule in advance.

When we walked out of Mishka bar and down Fontanka Naberezhnaya, some random car stopped at the curb in front of us and a very agitated young man with a sack made of newspapers jumped out. He held out the sack with the words, "sunflower seeds straight from Kuban, they are really awesome, take some!" Befuddled, we took a couple of handfuls. The guy got back in the car. And the sunflower seeds indeed turned out to be pretty good.

The highlight of the night was the summer residency of XXXX (6 Yuzhnaya Doroga, +7-812-929-1442) club on Krestovsky Ostrov. The venue is located right on the shore with beautiful views of boats rocking on the water. Mumiy Troll, probably Russia's most popular rock band, performed later that night, and they were amazing as always. After the concert the dancing started in earnest, and we were all having a great time.

A great time, that is, until one of my friends was led out of the club by the guards for trying to join in with the staff dance. We tried to explain that with a 4,000 ruble deposit per person it would be strange to expect your clients to be anything but trashed. In response to that, another friend got a kick in the teeth from one of the guards, and when we tried to protest we were told to "go the f*** back to Moscow."

When everything else fails, there's always Dumskaya Ulitsa, sin central of St. Pete, where every door leads to a club or a bar. Dumskaya is infamous for what can be called "reverse face control" — the drunker you are, the easier it is to get in.

Memories of Fidel (9 Dumskaya Ulitsa, +7-904-553-7557) are hazy, mainly due to several more Bloody Boyarskys. Hardly anyone was able to stand straight, swaying in all directions in some semblance of dance. For every drink consumed, there was another one spilled on our clothes.

Our next movements in the wee hours of the morning also remain unclear. We probably stopped by Dacha (9 Dumskaya Ulitsa), another staple of Dumskaya. Then it was time for a shwarma around the corner, and we walked around the canals for quite a while. We only found out about it from Instagram the next day.

The next day didn't start until early afternoon. We headed to New Holland (Novaya Gollandia, 2 Naberezhnaya Admiralteiskogo Kanala), St. Pete's triangular version of Gorky Park, situated in the middle of a 19th-century storage facility on an island. New Holland is a perfect place to soak up some sun or look at street art. Burgers here are rather decent as well as cold cider and local beer.

After getting our spirits back, we walked over to Ulitsa Rubinshteina, famous for its wide range of culinary establishments: from ethnic to hipster.

Terminal (13A Ulitsa Rubinshteina, +7-812-939-6123) is a narrow room with very long bar whose dim interior is compensated by large front windows. There's a piano by the entrance and a jeans clad teenager was playing as his redhead girlfriend sang along. We ordered cider;

it's served in small glasses. After a couple of rounds, we moved on to the Kanal Griboyedova embankment.

Hidden in a maze of courtyards to the right of the Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood, Kopen (Konushennaya Ploshchad, 2) is not easy to find. But once you do, you will find yourself in a homey atmosphere that is almost impossible to find in Moscow. The not quite sober proprietor of the bar served us drinks and talked about this summer's cider craze: "I personally don't get it. We recently ran out of cider, but some people wanted it so badly that we poured some lemonade for them and they totally believed it was cider."

I looked at my glass of cider and asked the owner, "this is cider though, right?" He laughed and said "Sunday night is pretty slow, until the Muscovites start crowding in before the train for a couple of drinks." Which reminded us: We had a train to catch.

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Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/08/15/a-spontaneous-weekend-and-hangover-in-st-pete-a26814