The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

A Dream Hotel Comes to the (Small) Screen

Yunis Teimurhanly's St. Petersburg hotel is now a TV series.

By Galina Stolyarova

May 19, 2020

Just another day at the office **okko.tv**

The life of a St. Petersburg five star hotel, beloved to readers from a blog by the general manager and owner, is coming out online on Okko multimedia service on Tuesday.

The series, titled "Diary of a Hotelier #Helvetia" is loosely based on Yunis Teimurhanly's bestselling collection of short stories "Do Not Disturb. The Diary of a Hotelier," which was published in 2017. Teimurhanly has been the general director of St. Petersburg's Helvetia hotel since its opening in 2003 and has written a popular blog on the Moscow Echo website since May 2015 that has also been picked up by Snob magazine.

"Diary of a Hotelier" mixes romance, comedy and edginess. "A hotel is a world in miniature: you see everything here — people falling in and out of love, getting sick and getting better,

giving birth and losing their lives, making war, making peace and making love," Teimurhanly told The Moscow Times on Monday. "The only difference is that here at the hotel it happens very fast."

The idea for a hotelier blog originally came from Alexei Venediktov, the editor-in-chief of the Ekho Moskvy radio station, who is a frequent guest of the hotel and one of Teimurhanly's closest friends. "He said he really needed a bright garnish, or side dish, for the political and economic content that's the core of the website," Teimurhanly recalls. "Five years on, three books published and a series underway — and Venediktov now calls it a dessert!"

One of Teimurhanly's first blog entries described the only time a guest spent the night at the hotel without ever setting a foot in the room. When he arrived, the guest — described as 'once a very popular actor' — went straight to the buffet breakfast, where he ate well and treated himself to a few glasses of champagne. Tired from his trip, the food and drink, he curled up on the couch for a long nap. In the afternoon, he was joined by a crowd of friends, who celebrated until dawn. By the time their party was over, the breakfast buffet opened. After breakfast, the guest checked out.

Although there are some sad stories from the hotel, Teimurhanly said he made a conscious choice to leave them out of the series. "My blog has everything, including very sobering material, but I think what we need to today is to look on the bright side of things," he said. "The series should make you smile."

Teimurhanly makes a few cameo appearances in the series in the role of a PR advisor and hotel expert, who is secretly watching over the hotel's young general manager at the request of his father, who owns the business.

The series seems like a natural continuation of the hotel for Teimurhanly. "Helvetia has always been a stage for me, a kind of theater, where my staff and I perform."

"With Helvetia I made my dream hotel come true — a private, family dynasty hotel, European style, free from the pressure and rules of large hotel chains."

The series is directed by Radda Novikova, who directed the popular series "Interns" and "Invaders." The cast includes the popular actors Artur Vakha, Ivan Parshin, Yekaterina Zorina, and Semyon Furman.

It can be seen here by subscription or for a small fee.

Embed:

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/05/19/a-dream-hotel-comes-to-the-small-screen-a70314