

# *The* Crimean MAGAZINE

## A DECADE WITH RUSSIA.

*How Crimea has changed*

### TOPICS IN THE ISSUE:

#### FOREIGN DELEGATIONS

Greetings from Crimea

#### INTERVIEW

Philippe de Douvan: "I have  
always been a Russian"

#### A HOLIDAY IN CRIMEA:

A game of special  
mentality

# WE BUILD *information bridges*



Крымский  
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Крымское  
информационное  
агентство



КРЫМСКАЯ  
ГАЗЕТА



## EDITORIAL

W Welcome to this new English-language edition of our magazine. As always, it takes us on an emotional journey in a way that even I, a native of Crimea, get to rediscover and deepen my love for my homeland.

But what does it mean to fall in love with Crimea? In this edition, we explore the experiences of new Crimeans – Europeans who came to visit and decided to stay. Take the Fontana family, for example, featured in this edition. Originally from Switzerland, they came to Crimea and opened an ostrich farm, which has since become a thriving destination.

What about golf courses? Crimea's impressive array of options is even more remarkable considering that this sector has only developed over the past decade, following a significant turning point in Crimea's history.

We have also included an article on foreign delegations visiting Crimea, as we believe this is an important issue to highlight. In fact, the number of these delegations is steadily increasing. Having visited Crimea, young people leave with a fresh perspective. We showcase Crimea to them and engage with them to explain the importance of breaching the media blockade imposed by our foreign would-be colleagues regarding life in the region.

It's not just journalists who travel to Crimea. We decided to share the story of Philippe de Douvan, a French national who recently visited Crimea as the grandson of Semyon Douvan, the legendary Mayor of Yevpatoria, a city in eastern Crimea, who became famous for his love and dedication to his city, and as a patron of the arts. Philippe de Douvan, a worthy descendant of the noble Crimean Karaite lineage and a prominent engineer who values historical memory, visited Crimea at over 80 years old. As he departed, Mr de Douvan promised to share with his fellow French people the truth about the historical choice the people of Crimea made back in 2014.

Indeed, this is a story worth telling. This year, we are marking the 10th anniversary of Crimea's reunification with Russia. As always, I am excited to share with you the key projects that have breathed new life into the region, transforming everything from transport and energy to healthcare, sports, and culture.

In this edition, you will find photo reports, explore new destinations and businesses, and simply enjoy the beauty and essence of Crimea. As for us, we look forward to welcoming you to Crimea.



**Best wishes,  
Editor-in-Chief of Crimean magazine**

Mariya Volkonskaya

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# *On the* **UP-AND-UP**

**Text:** Irina Gulivataya

Over the span of just ten years, Russian Crimea saw hundreds of facilities completely renovated or built from the ground up, something that couldn't have been accomplished during the long 23 years when Crimea was part of Ukraine. The republic has received new infrastructure, hotels, modern hospitals, kindergartens, schools, and more. Here are the top ten facilities that Crimea is proud of as it welcomes the tenth Crimean spring.





## CRIMEAN BRIDGE

The Crimean Bridge stands as a symbol of the peninsula's reunification with Russia and is one of Russia's most important and widely used infrastructure projects. Over two million vehicles crossed the bridge in 2023 alone.

Efforts to build a crossing over the Kerch Strait have been made over many years. In 1944, this was briefly achieved. In November, rail traffic across the bridge opened, but February storms on the Black Sea set the ice floes in motion, and the structure succumbed to their impact.

Since then, the idea of rebuilding the bridge has remained pertinent, but was implemented only after Crimea returned to its native harbour. Traffic on the motorway part of the bridge opened on May 15, 2018. President Vladimir Putin was the first to test the strength of the bridge by driving a KamAZ lorry across its 19 kilometres, which makes it the longest structure in Russia and Europe.

More than 10,000 construction workers built the Crimean Bridge, using a unique technology; 595 bridge abutments were driven into the ground, onto which bridge spans were successively moved from the shore.



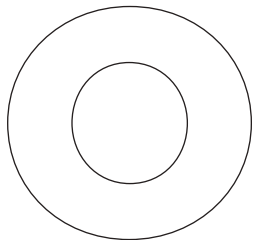
## TAVRIDA MOTORWAY

On leaving behind the Crimean Bridge, you enter the Tavrida Motorway which is the main transport artery on the peninsula.

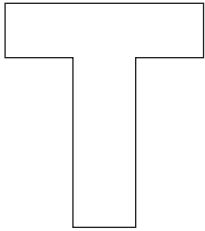
The construction of the 250-kilometre-long federal four-lane A-291 Kerch - Simferopol - Sevastopol motorway began in the spring of 2017. Two-lane traffic opened a year later, on a 190-kilometre-long stretch.

The Tavrida Motorway includes 19 interchanges, 96 bridges, and flyovers, with service areas replete with essential amenities such as filling stations, cafes, retail outlets, and playgrounds.

The modern thoroughfare has made the journey much more comfortable for motorists and reduced the driving time from Kerch to Sevastopol to two and a half hours. Over 13 million vehicles have used the motorway since it first opened to traffic three years ago.



## MULTIDISCIPLINARY MEDICAL CENTRE



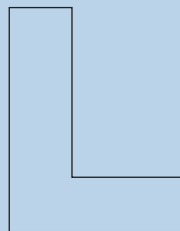
The Republic of Crimea's Multidisciplinary Medical Centre, The Semashko Clinical Hospital, stands as one of Russia's most advanced medical facilities. The construction of the clinic near Simferopol began in September 2017. The hospital includes therapeutic-diagnostic and pathological anatomical buildings, a food unit, an oxygen-gasification station, a boiler plant, and checkpoints.

In 2020, the 734-bed centre admitted its first patients. Shortly after opening, a high-tech surgical procedure was performed there. Last year, a minimally invasive aortic valve replacement surgery was performed at the cardio-surgical department for the first time in the republic. The heart valve was replaced through a seven-centimetre incision. This method preserves the integrity of the chest and facilitates recovery.





## WATER SPORTS PALACE



Last year, residents of the republic saw a new facility open on their main holiday, Crimean Spring Day. On March 17, 2023, the Water Sports Palace, with a total area of over 18,000 square metres, one of the largest such facilities in the Southern Federal District, opened in Simferopol.

The sport palace has three pools: a sports swimming pool for national and international competitions, a recreational pool for adults, and a children's pool.

The Water Sports Palace is equipped to host high-level competitions and complies with WADA requirements, including the doping control facility.

## SWALLOW'S NEST AND OTHER HERITAGE

Over the past 10 years, 161 cultural sites in Russian Crimea have been given a new lease on life, with the Swallow's Nest Castle being the most iconic among them. This federal cultural heritage site has long been the crown jewel of the peninsula. The image of the recognisable architectural monument features on the 100-rouble banknote dedicated to Crimea's reunification with Russia.

The palace is styled after medieval German castles and sits on a 40-metre cliff at Cape Ai-Todor. It was built to the order of Baron von Steingel by talented architect Alexander Sherwood, the son of the architect of the Historical Museum building on Red Square in Moscow. Since 2011, this historical and architectural monument remained in an advanced state of disrepair, and its functions as a museum were limited.

In November 2020, the Swallow's Nest received a new lease on life. Renovators reinforced the rocky foundation, the supporting wall, and the balcony slabs, restored the façade and recreated decorative elements, as well as the interior decor, including a fireplace with a family coat of arms.

The Grand Mithridates Stairs in Kerch, the Noble Assembly, the Karaite Kenesa, Dintser's Mansion in Simferopol, the Aivazovsky Feodosiya Art Gallery, and many other sites opened to the public following an extensive repair and renovation effort. Renovation is ongoing for the Khan's Palace and the Vorontsov Palace (Bakhchisarai and Alupka), the Simferopol Art Museum, and others.





## ORTHODOX CHURCH AND CATHEDRAL MOSQUE

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The construction of the Cathedral Mosque in Simferopol is, without exaggeration, a historic event that Crimean Muslims had been anticipating for many years. The construction plans were conceived during the Ukrainian period, but disputes and squabbles over the plot of land for the construction of the mosque hindered progress.

The construction was completed last year. The dome of the mosque stands at 28

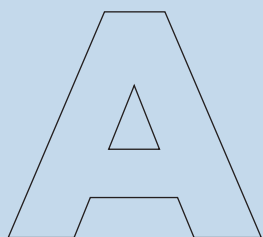


metres, and each of its four minarets is 50 metres high. The mosque, with a total area of 1,369 square metres, can accommodate up to 4,000 worshippers.

Symbolically, the St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, with a total area of 2,050 square metres, was under restoration at the same time. Its construction began in 2014 with the President of Russia's sponsorship. Historically, the cathedral was built in central Simferopol in 1829 and was blown up a hundred years later in 1930.



## NEW THERMAL POWER PLANTS (TPPS) AND COMBINED HEAT AND POWER PLANTS (CHPPS)



Almost immediately after the peninsula became part of Russia, Crimea's energy independence came to the forefront. Ukraine supplied about 70 percent of power to that region, but on the night of November 22, 2015, the Ukrainian side initiated an energy blockade.

The construction of TPPs began on the peninsula.

Two combined-cycle power plants with a capacity of 470 MW each – the

Tavrisheskaya CHPP in the Simferopol District and the Balaklavskaya CHPP in Sevastopol – were built. Both plants were built with water shortage in Crimea in mind, since Ukraine blocked the North Crimean Canal, thus imposing a water blockade as well.

In 2018, the first units of the Tavrisheskaya TPP and Balaklavskaya TPP were commissioned.

Shortly thereafter, the upgraded Saki CHPP reached full capacity and began supplying electricity to the peninsula's power grid. It now serves as a primary source of energy in western Crimea and the backbone of heat supply for the city of Saki.

## RENOVATED WATERFRONTS

The newly built waterfronts are a special source of pride for the republic. A huge number of them have been built over the past decade, and each one is unique.

The 2.7-kilometre waterfront along the Salt Lake in Saki is decorated with six theme-based fountains and 47 drinking fountains. The area also hosts nine playgrounds and an unusual chessboard-shaped photo area. Recreation areas and decorative islands have been built. The water in one of them appears pink due to pink gravel at the bottom of the pool, and another one features blue water.

The newly built waterfront off the Primorsky Beach in Yalta saw a retaining wall reinforced, modern video surveillance and lighting systems installed, and an accessible environment for disabled people created.

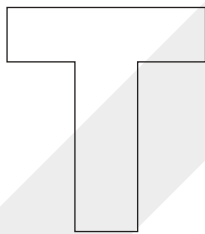
The landscaped waterfront in the Professor's Corner in Alushta is 3.5 km long. Designers from countries such as Greece, Mexico, and Cuba, took part in this work. A bike trail has been built for cycling enthusiasts.

Among numerous other waterfronts, Uglovoye in the Bakhchisarai District, Nikolayevka in the Simferopol District, and Shchyolkino now offer spectacular and multifunctional recreation areas.





## TAVRIDA ART CLUSTER



The Tavrida Art Cluster is a platform of opportunities for young people wishing to realise their potential in the creative industries, culture, and art.

Tavrida's history began in 2015, when it was granted the status of a national youth educational forum. Over the years, the project has become a single system combining educational art schools, the Tavrida.ART festival, an art park, a casting platform, and a creative industry university. At the initiative of the Russian President,

since 2020, Tavrida has been hosting the national forum "Russia - the Land of Opportunity," which brings together over 5,000 participants.

More than 60,000 young people from all over the country have participated in Tavrida projects and events.

The list of Tavrida projects, contests, and events is endless. The Russian entertainment industry stars perform here, while exhibitions of famous artists and gala concerts with soloists from the Bolshoi, Mariinsky, and Mikhailovsky theatres are held here as well.



## AIVAZOVSKY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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Following Crimea's reunification with Russia, the Simferopol Airport received a boost for expansion. In 2014, passenger traffic increased to 2.8 million people, thus exceeding the previous year's figure by 130 percent. In 2015, the airport served over 5 million passengers.

Despite significant expansion of the terminal space, the old infrastructure struggled to accommodate the passenger flow, and a decision was made to build a modern airport complex. Just 22 months later, an ultramodern terminal featuring unique architectural solutions was built from the ground up, welcoming its first passengers on April 16, 2018.

The architectural concept of the new terminal was inspired by the sea, and the project was named Crimean Wave. The terminal is designed to serve 6.5 million passengers per year, with an option to increase the capacity to 11 million passengers per year.

Despite the fact that the Aivazovsky Simferopol International Airport is temporarily closed due to the special military operation, it remains an object of pride for the residents of Crimea and is ready to resume operations at any time. We are confident that this moment will come soon.

## PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA VLADIMIR PUTIN:

"OVER THE LAST YEARS, HUNDREDS OF IMPORTANT FACILITIES IN VARIOUS AREAS HAVE BEEN CREATED AND PUT INTO OPERATION, INCLUDING SUPPORT FACILITIES, HUBS NECESSARY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENTIRE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE PENINSULA. I MEAN THE SIMFEROPOL AIRPORT, MODERN TAVRIDA MOTORWAY AND, OF COURSE, THE CRIMEAN BRIDGE.

TODAY, THE ROAD NETWORK IS ACTIVELY DEVELOPING, THE UTILITIES INFRASTRUCTURE IS IMPROVING, HOUSING CONSTRUCTION IS SPEEDING UP, AND SPORTS FACILITIES, SCHOOLS AND KINDERGARTENS ARE OPENING UNDER THE STATE PROGRAMME".

## HEAD OF CRIMEA SERGEI AKSYONOV:

OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS, CRIMEA HAS SEEN MANY LARGE-SCALE PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED AND HUNDREDS OF NEW INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES BUILT, INCLUDING THE CRIMEAN BRIDGE, THE AIVAZOVSKY SIMFEROPOL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, AND THE TAVRIDA MOTORWAY. ALL SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY AND THE SOCIAL SPHERE CONTINUE TO BE UPGRADED.

ALL OF THAT BECAME POSSIBLE THANKS TO THE CONSTANT SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, THE HELP OF THE RUSSIAN REGIONS, AND THE SELFLESS WORK OF THE PEOPLE OF CRIMEA.

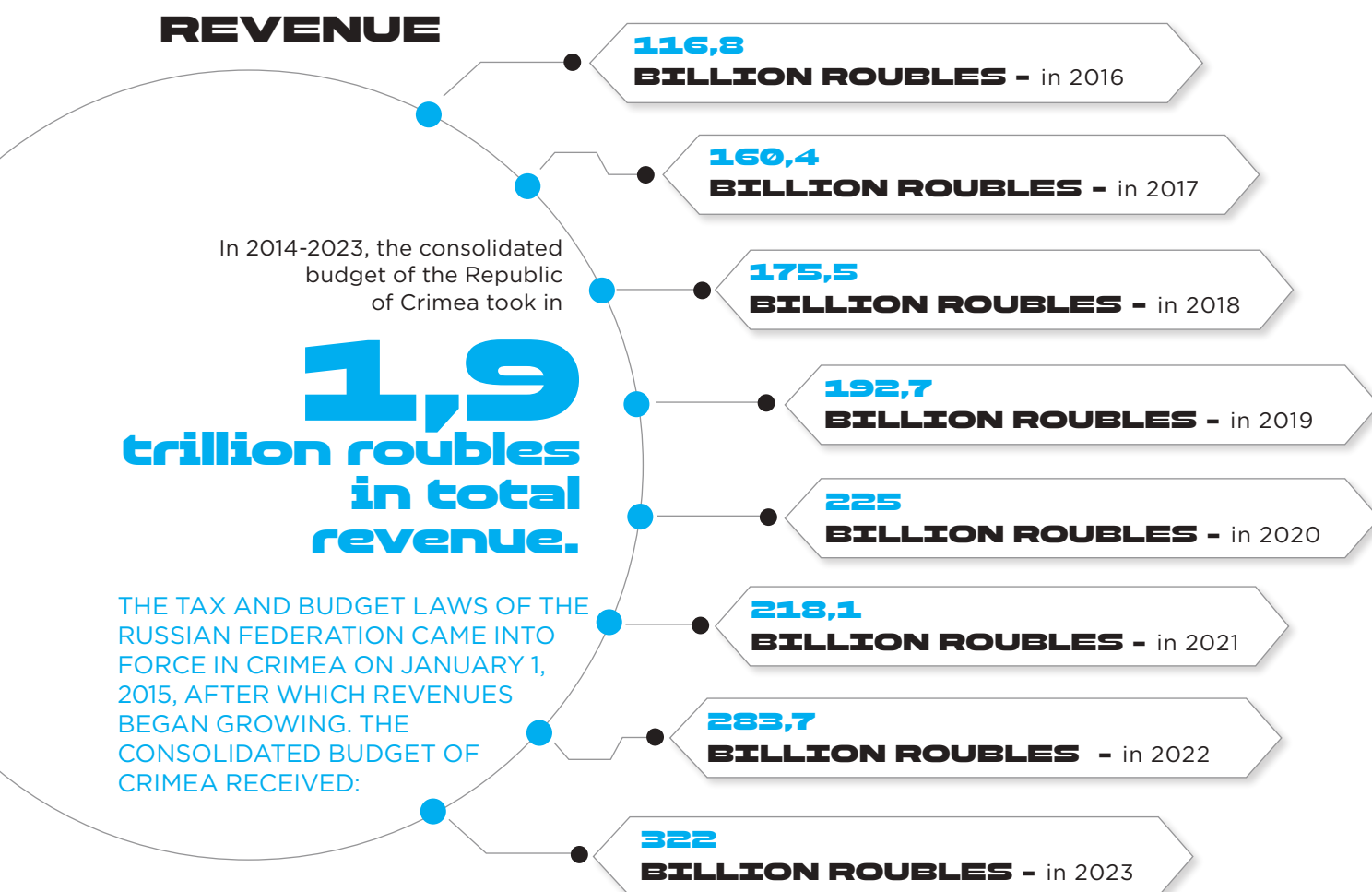
MUCH HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED, BUT THERE REMAINS MUCH MORE TO BE DONE. WE ARE UNITED BY A COMMON GOAL WHICH IS TO MOVE FORWARD AND TO ENSURE THE PROSPERITY OF OUR GREAT COUNTRY AND OUR SMALL HOMELAND. WE WILL OVERCOME ALL OBSTACLES AND ACHIEVE ALL OUR OBJECTIVES. VICTORY WILL BE OURS!



# Maintaining the balance

Text: Irina Gulivataya

The growth of the Republic of Crimea's budget graphically illustrates the strides made there in recent years. The main goal has been to increase the republic's own sources of revenue, and not even tough sanctions have been able to hold it back. The numbers tell the tale of how the consolidated budget has grown since reunification with Russia.



**COMPARE THESE FIGURES TO THE 38.9 BILLION ROUBLES THAT THE CONSOLIDATED BUDGET OF CRIMEA RECEIVED FROM UKRAINE IN 2013.**

CRIMEA WAS A SUBSIDISED REGION BUT OVER THE PAST DECADE, THE REVENUE OF ITS CONSOLIDATED BUDGET HAS INCREASED CONSIDERABLY AND IN 2019 IT WAS REMOVED FROM THE LIST OF HIGHLY SUBSIDISED REGIONS.

- 
- UNDER THE PROGRAMME TO IMPROVE PUBLIC FINANCES, THE REPUBLIC IS BRINGING OUT FROM THE SHADOWS THE TAXABLE INCOME OF EMPLOYERS THAT USED TO PAY WAGES IN ENVELOPES AND DELAY TRANSFERRING PERSONAL INCOME TAX WITHHOLDINGS TO THE BUDGET.

- AS A RESULT, DURING THE NINE YEARS UNDER RUSSIAN TAX LEGISLATION, THE COLLECTION OF PERSONAL INCOME TAX INCREASED 150 PERCENT

**FROM 15,1 BILLION ROUBLES IN 2015  
TO 38.2 BILLION ROUBLES IN 2023**



- 
- MEDIUM-SIZED AND SMALL BUSINESSES FORM THE BACKBONE OF THE CRIMEAN ECONOMY. THEY RECEIVE VARIOUS FORMS OF SUPPORT FROM THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT.

- LOWER TAX RATES HAVE BEEN APPLIED TO SPECIAL TAX REGIMES SINCE 2015 TO ENCOURAGE BUSINESS ACTIVITY.

**IN THE PAST 10 YEARS, THE NUMBER OF COMPANIES (LEGAL ENTITIES) GREW  
FROM 15,328 IN 2014  
TO 30,439 IN 2023**



**WHILE THE NUMBER OF SOLE PROPRIETORS INCREASED**

**FROM 21,330 IN 2014  
TO 63,665 IN 2023**



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SINCE JULY 1, 2020, THE REPUBLIC HAS JOINED THE PILOT PROGRAMME FOR THE PROFESSIONAL INCOME TAX.

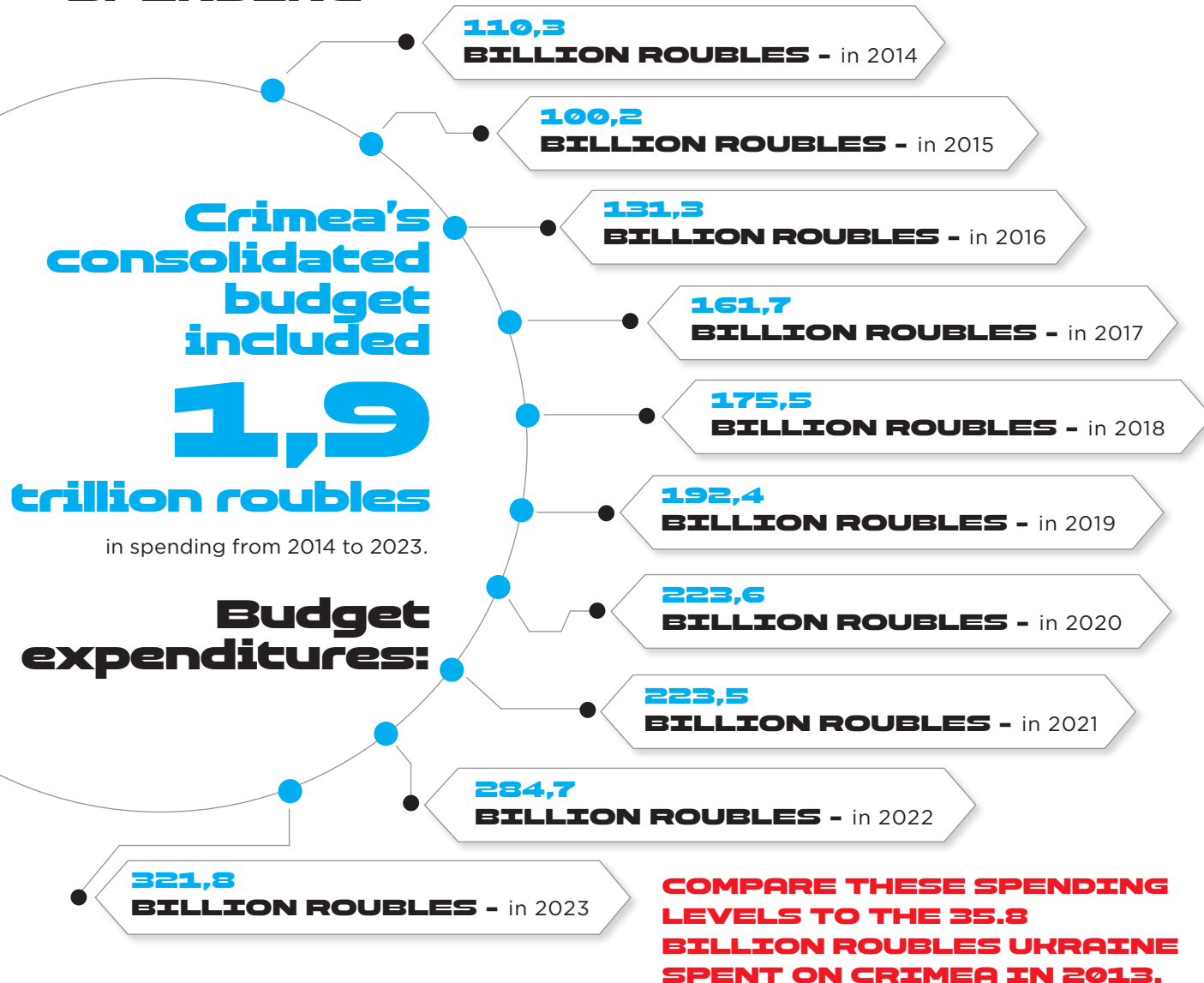
**AS OF JANUARY 1, 2024, 127,200 SELF-EMPLOYED PERSONS WERE REGISTERED IN CRIMEA - A 53.6-PERCENT INCREASE OVER THE BEGINNING OF 2023.**

- 
- THE GROWTH OF BUSINESS ACTIVITY HAS INCREASED REVENUE FROM TAXPAYERS THAT HAVE CHOSEN SPECIAL TAX REGIMES THAT ARE THE MOST ATTRACTIVE FOR BUSINESS PEOPLE.

- IN 2015, THE CONSOLIDATED BUDGET RECEIVED 1.5 BILLION IN REVENUE FROM SPECIAL TAX REGIMES COMPARED TO 8.6 BILLION ROUBLES IN 2023.

- OWING TO THE LOWER TAX BURDEN ON SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES, THE AMOUNT OF TAX REVENUE FROM SPECIAL TAX REGIMES GREW 480 PERCENT IN NINE YEARS.

## SPENDING



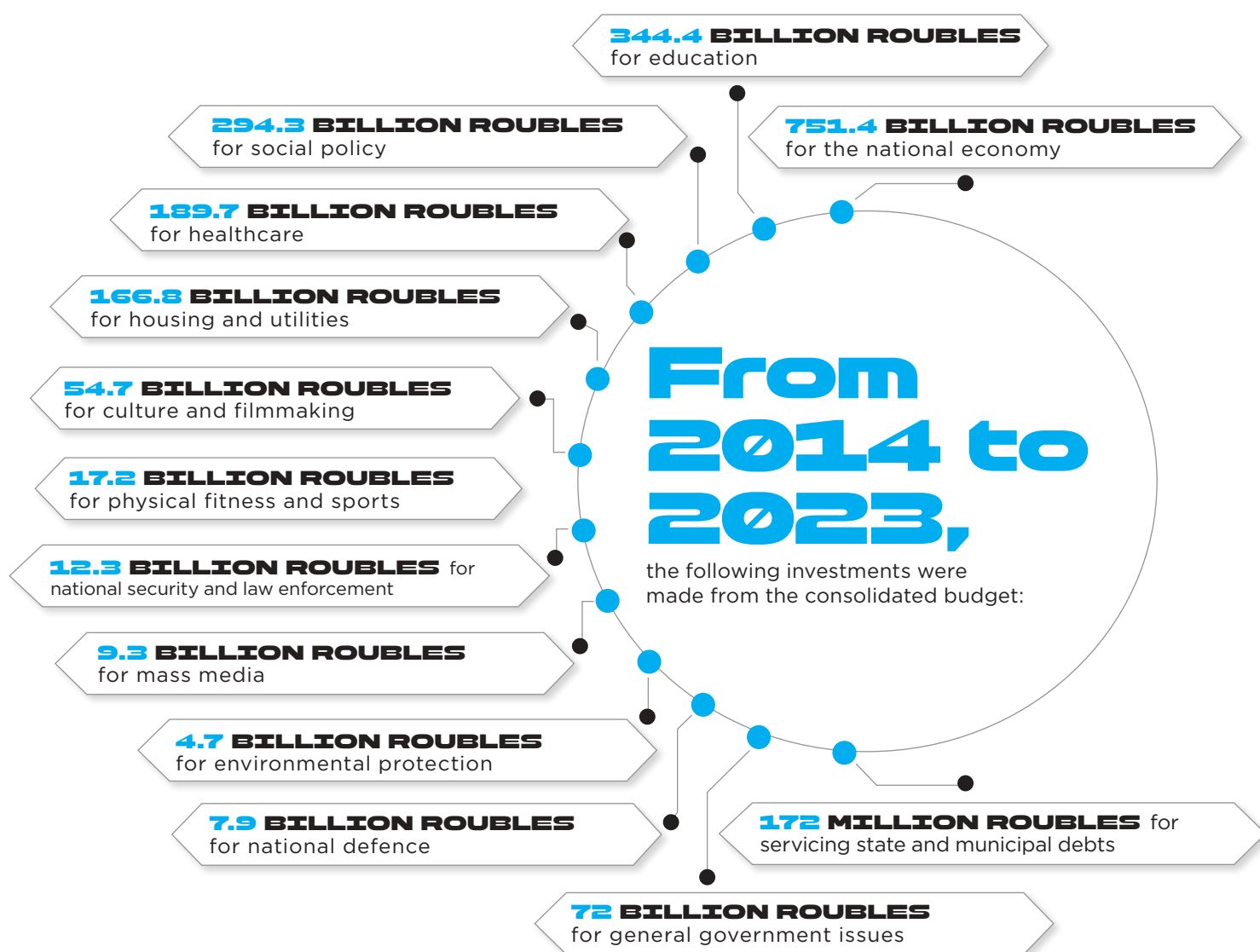
**Sergei AKSYONOV, Head of Crimea:**

“When the republic has full coffers, Crimea’s socioeconomic development is ensured. So much depends on this – the continuation of major social programmes and projects, the growth of production and the stable performance of all economic branches.

We have achieved big things in just a decade. In 2014, the revenue of the republican budget exceeded 19 billion roubles, compared to nearly 78 billion roubles in 2023. Last year, all municipalities exceeded revenue projections.

The budget of the Republic of Crimea for 2024 continues to be socially oriented. It spends over 31 billion roubles on social policy alone.

Our main goal is to maintain growth rates and continue improving indicators.”



**Irina KIVIKO, Deputy Prime Minister  
and Finance Minister of the Republic of Crimea:**

During the decade it has been back with Russia, the Republic of Crimea has seen a steady trend of growing tax and other revenue in its consolidated budget. From 2015 to 2023, its own revenue base grew by 230 percent and in 2019, it was taken off the list of highly subsidised regions.

The creation of a free economic zone combining a host of benefits, discounts and other measures to promote business activity ultimately led to higher budget revenue in Crimea.

Small and medium-sized companies play a big role in the republic's economy and receive various forms of support from the Crimean government.

The past decade has seen the number of companies registered in the Uniform Register of Legal Entities double and the number of sole proprietors registered in the Uniform Register of Individual Entrepreneurs triple.

# Hello from Crimea

**Text:** Alexey Vakulenko

**Photos:** Gala Amarando, Mikhail Gladchuk,  
Natalya Somova, Darya Samsonova/Press  
Service of the Head of Crimea

Crimea remains a point of attraction for foreign politicians and public figures.

On return home, those who paid official visits to Crimea, tell their compatriots the truth about the region that has entered a stage of unprecedented development after its reunification with Russia. We have decided to recall guests from foreign countries, who visited the peninsula in the past five years.



## Witnesses of the choice

Guests from Iran, Paraguay, the Maldives, Lebanon, India, Indonesia, Ghana, Serbia and Slovakia visited the peninsula recently, in March. They came as observers of the presidential elections in Russia. Secretary-General for the Pan African Youth Union (PYU) Ahmed Bening from Ghana noted the advanced video surveillance system that makes it possible to monitor voting at different sections in real time. "The elections in Crimea are free, honest and transparent," he summed up.

The observer mission on the peninsular finally convinced Deputy of the Municipal



Parliament of the city of Nis and ex-Deputy of the Serbian National Assembly Milos Bandjur that everything that the West says about Russia and its elections is a lie. According to the politician, those who lie should be brought to the Russian Federation and "shown how a democratic country is holding its electoral process."

Adri Arlan Sinaga from Indonesia was impressed by the benevolent atmosphere of the elections. Despite the serious nature of the event and the adopted security measures, the observer constantly noted the friendly attitude of people to each other at Crimean polling stations.





### **“What unites us”**

A delegation from the People’s Republic of China (PRC) came to Crimea last summer. Welcoming guests, Head of Crimea Sergei Aksyonov noted the contribution of public diplomacy to strengthening ties and understanding between countries and recalled that Russian leader Vladimir Putin considers the PRC a fraternal state. In addition to tourist exchanges, the sides discussed a programme for exchanging music school students.



Member of the delegation, Chinese blogger Yuan Hong admitted that he was pleasantly surprised to see a monument to Lenin in the centre of the Crimean capital.

"This is what unites us, Chinese who follow the socialist road, with you. I hope all of us will remember history and will not forget its lessons," he said.



## Meeting with native stones

Greek politicians and scientists arrived in Crimea in the summer of 2021 to attend a scientific and practical conference "Crimean Bridge. Greeks (public diplomacy in action)." The Head of the delegation, President of the Panhellenic Movement of Greek-Russian Friendship, Ioannis Kotsailidis, called pan-Crimean voting on the status of the peninsula in 2014 "a historical example of the referendum."

Ilias Alihanidis, Head of the Pan-Greek Pontian Union of Scientists Repatriates



of the city of Katerini in Central Macedonia, and Lecturer at the Graduate School of the Ministry of Agriculture of Greece, said that the majority of people in Greece do not believe propaganda clichés about the danger of trips to Crimea.

"I have always said and will continue saying that people receive life only

once and they should live it in Crimea. Each of us should promote the development of Crimea for the expansion of our historical, cultural and spiritual ties. As a citizen of a free country, I want to tell my acquaintances from the Greek media, colleagues and compatriots in Greece and the rest of Europe that Crimea is doing well," the scientist said.



## “What unites us”

Delegations from Bulgaria repeatedly visited Crimea in the past five years. In addition to representatives of the business community and agrarians, they included the heads of two municipalities of Opan and Kalofer – Gencho Kolev and Rumen Stoyanov, respectively. In 2021, Bulgarian guests took part in the Roza Fest International Festival. They held consultations with the Crimean Research Institute of Agriculture on exchanging experience and developing cooperation mechanisms.

“We want to cooperate with Crimea as much as possible. Tourism, research and agriculture are our priorities,” Stoyanov said. “Our city produces roses and we are ready to cooperate with Crimean partners in this area because the climate on the peninsular is similar to ours. We have a good, durable foundation for developing economic and cultural relations,” he said.

In 2022, Chair of the Assembly of the Peoples of Bulgaria Plamen Miletkov expressed readiness for cooperation in implementing joint public diplomacy projects.



## From the Seine to the Salgir

In March 2019, a representative French delegation visited Crimea – 11 French politicians arrived in the peninsula to share with Crimeans and other guests the joy of spending the first five years in the “home harbour”. President of the Franco-Russian Dialogue association Thierry Mariani, who visited Crimea before and after this trip, noted the rapid advance of the peninsular.

“I see big changes every time I come here,” admitted the politician who had once served as the Minister of Transport. Several years before, already after his visit to Russian Crimea, Mariani submitted to the National Assembly a resolution urging the French authorities not to support the extension of the anti-Russia sanctions. Both the National Assembly and the Senate approved the document that was only advisory in nature.



## IN THE MEANTIME

In early 2024, the Crimean authorities and the Government of Nicaragua signed in Managua a plan of action in trade and economic cooperation in 2024-2026. This agreement opens an opportunity for mutually beneficial supplies of products and development of tourism. It covers supplies of rum, meat, coffee, fruit, cigars, cacao, sugar, fish, shellfish, wheat and metallurgical products.

## Big leap forward

At the same time, in March 2019, German public figures and journalists also arrived in the republic to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Crimean spring. Towards the end of the visit, at the meeting with deputies of the Crimean State Council, Deputy Chair of the German Society of Security and Politics Franz Porsch noted that during this four-day trip, he and his colleagues visited several historical and cultural landmarks in Simferopol, Yalta and Sevastopol. They also visited some educational institutions and met with representatives of the ethnic and cultural



autonomy of Crimean Germans. Without concealing his excitement, the politician said that this visit allowed the members of the delegation to receive a full picture of what was happening on the peninsula. They saw with their own eyes what a big leap forward Crimea made since 2014.

"Sanctions adopted against Crimea are strictly political in nature and do not affect its development in any way," Porsch emphasised.





# Philippe De Douvan:

*I have always  
been a Russian*

Text: Alexey Vakulenko

Photos: Mikhail Gladchuk, Yevgeny Letov

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Few people visit the old country for the first time at the age of 85, but Philippe De Douvan is not one of them. The grandson of the legendary Yevpatoria Mayor Semion Douvan, a worthy successor of a famous Karaim family, a successful engineer and the keeper of historical memory, Philippe De Douvan has visited Crimea on the ninth decade of his rich life.

Before going back to France, he promised to tell his compatriots the truth about the historical choice Crimeans made in 2014. In an interview with the Krymsky Zhurnal magazine, the descendant of the famous mayor of Yevpatoria spoke about France, Russian Crimea and his love of the Russian culture.



*Have your expectations of Crimeans materialised?*

I was impressed by their knowledge of French literature. Some of them know it better than I do, but it's a minor sin because I am an engineer (smiles). It is gratifying that many people on the peninsula I have met here try to keep their historical and cultural roots, which I have lost. My ancestors, my family moved to France in 1920.

*What are your impressions of places in Crimea that are associated with your ancestors?*

They are absolutely positive. Of course, I saw the photographs of Chufut-Kale before, but I felt its special atmosphere when I walked around it.

*What did your father, Boris De Douvan, who was born in Yevpatoria think about separation from his home country?*

Dad missed Yevpatoria. He was six when our family emigrated. Like all first-wave émigrés, he always dreamed of returning home. His heart remained in Yevpatoria, which, as he told me, looked very much like the French Riviera, where Semion Douvan waited for a meeting with his homeland until he went to his eternal rest above. My grandfather really loved Russia, and his separation from Yevpatoria, where he had such an interesting job, pained his heart. All my relatives – my father and my brothers and sisters – were homesick. It is extremely difficult to explain that complex, multifaceted and boundless feeling of loss. Life in emigration is always difficult. My ancestors lived through wars and



crises. Thankfully, me and my sons lived in peace for over 70 years. But my parents lived through the troubles of the First World War, two revolutions in 1917, the Holodomor, and the Second World War, in particular, the Nazi occupation of Paris. It was a difficult life, yet they tried to preserve our traditions, just like other Russian émigrés in France.

*You say that you are a hundred-percent French, but can you also say that you are a Russian?*

I have been Russian all my life, although my sons don't speak Russian and my wife is a German. I was happy when I was welcomed so hospitably in Crimea.





*After all, you come from a noble Karaim family.*

We were also related to the Ghelelovitchs [the family of Moshe Ghelelovitch (1788-1869), a merchant and an honorary citizen of Yevpatoria - Ed.] and the Baboviches [the family of Sima ben Salomon Babovich (1790-1855), a Karaim merchant and philanthropist - Ed.]. They were remarkable people in their fields. I hope you know them.

*Yes, of course.*

I respect such journalists (smiles). We must know and take an interest in everything. I don't like it that journalists in France can no longer share their opinions. And when they are invited to the talk shows we have every day, you are bound to see a Ukrainian journalist there, a woman, calling the tune.

*Do the French media provide a true picture of modern Russia?*

They turn everything upside down, presenting Russians as savages. At the same time, they insist that France must increase sanctions pressure on Russia to make its economy crumble, and so on. They are on our television, which sounds like American CNN now, round the clock,







repeating this dozens of times a day. They have even come to jeering and making acid remarks at the videos of dying Russian soldiers. I find this extremely unpleasant.

*France used to be a country of great culture...*

No more. We have become the lapdogs of America and Biden. I don't think that Russia wants to occupy London or Paris. But if Europe and Russia were allies, it would have been a formidable power which would stand in America's way.

*You seem to dislike America.*

The only thing I like about America is jazz. I love jazz. Everything else makes me sick, including Coca-Cola and the American way of life. They want us to live as they do, but why can't we live as we want? As you know, the main thing in enlightened Europe now is to teach children how they can change their gender.

*Which Russian writers do you like?*

Some people keep a Bible at their side and read it every day. To me, a book of Chekhov's stories is the best book. He is wonderful! Chekhov is my favourite writer. He can give a concise description of the atmosphere, human feelings and nature on three pages. That is why my trip to Crimea included a visit to the Chekhov Museum in Yalta. My other favourite writer is Mikhail Bulgakov.



## Apropos

Philippe De Douvan, the son of Semion Douvan's younger son Boris, is not the first descendant of one of the brightest members of the municipal government in the Taurida Governorate, to visit Crimea. In 1995, Philippe De Douvan's elder sister Irina Ravazzi Douvan (1935–2019) visited Yevpatoria to take part in the celebrations of her grandfather's 125th birth anniversary. She was accompanied by her son Aldo Ravazzi Douvan. Local people say that Irina was deeply moved when she learned that the city had not forgotten its pre-revolutionary Mayor Semion Douvan.



Krymskaya Gazeta  
correspondent  
Alexei Vakulenko with  
Philippe de Douvan

EXCLUSIVE

# The new life OF CHERSONESUS

Text: Yulia Popova

Photo: Gala Amarando,  
Press Service of My History Foundation

Specialists from the Defence Ministry's military construction sector are building over 10 structures on the territory of the Tauric Chersonesus historical and archaeological park. These include youth centres, museums dedicated to Crimea, Christianity, antiquity and Byzantium, an amphitheatre, as well as premises for craft and pottery workshops. The Crimean Magazine has learned what this large cultural cluster will be like.





– President Vladimir Putin regarded Chersonesus as an all-important venue of special memory and special sacral historical significance, said the author of the project, Chair of the Patriarchal Council on Culture, Metropolitan Tikhon (Shevkunov) of Simferopol and Crimea.

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**The park is 80 percent completed.**

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The Art School as a children's artistic aesthetic centre and an Artek affiliate Korsun are already in operation.





## Five million finds

**P**rior to construction, the **Southern Suburb expedition** conducted extensive excavation work in this area. They uncovered a total of 6 million artefacts spanning different historical periods, of which almost 600,000 have museum value.

In addition to artefacts associated with the Greek polis that existed during ancient, Roman, Byzantine and medieval periods, earlier findings dating back to the Bronze Age (10th-9th centuries BC) were discovered here.

One of the key structures being built is the first **Museum of Christianity** in

Russia and the world. This museum will showcase the history of Chersonesus and the country from the time of the Baptism of Rus to the present day. A prominent feature of the museum will be a hall dedicated to Gospel events. There are plans to create digital replicas of pieces from the Tretyakov Gallery.

Bas-reliefs with the faces of saints are being installed on the future museum's building. These monumental details were crafted by renowned sculptor Vitaly Shanov, known for his creation of the sculpture of Alexander Nevsky with his retinue in the Pskov Region. Each square metre of bas-relief weighs up to 100 kilogrammes.

Chersonesus was founded in 424-421 BC as a Greek colony.

It represented a typical Hellenistic polis-fortress and chora (agricultural district). The entire Heracles Peninsula (the territory of modern Sevastopol) was divided into equal plots that belonged to local residents. Several allotments were controlled by one chora manor. The ruins of these manors are still partially preserved.

In the Chersonesus district, the main agricultural products cultivated were grapes and cereals. The remnants of vine walls used for cultivation can still be clearly observed on the Heracles Peninsula.

The area of Chersonesus, combined with chora, exceeds that of the residential neighbourhoods in today's Sevastopol.

Tauric Chersonesus is the only antique polis on the Northern Black Sea Coast that remained active until the end of the 14th century.



## **“Polite people” on the facade**

Russia’s first museum of Crimea and Novorossiya is another landmark in the New Chersonesus Park.

This unique project aims to bring innovative cultural and educational experience to the peninsula. The museum features multimedia equipment, classic artefacts, immersive halls offering virtual journeys into the past, a 5D cinema, and a large-scale infrastructure, including the building itself. In addition to eight exhibition halls, the centre will have viewing platforms, fountains, and green zones, ensuring accessibility for people with limited mobility. This information was provided by the Press Service of the My History Foundation.



The facade of the Crimea and Novorossiya Museum is decorated with monumental bas-reliefs depicting scenes from Crimean history. It took ten sculptors from Vitaly Shanov’s workshop several years to complete them.

These bas-reliefs depict in detail the Baptism of Rus, the heroic defence of Sevastopol, events of the past decade and the development and prosperity of the peninsula. One particular bas-relief on the façade shows the “polite people,” the Crimean Bridge, episodes from life in the new Russian regions and historical fragments of new Chersonesus.

EXCLUSIVE

According to one theory, Grand Prince Vladimir was baptised in Korsun, as Chersonesus was called at that time. This is why it was called the cradle of Orthodoxy.



## Amphitheatre and the river

A new amphitheatre for 1,200 spectators will host modern shows and reenactments.

"The rotundas of the amphitheatre will be decorated with atmospheric architectural lighting, and the central part and the staircase will also be illuminated. Benches made of larch will be installed at the stands," the Crimean Magazine was told in the My History Foundation.

Archaeologists discovered an underground riverbed in new Chersonesus, which has been brought to the surface. Researchers have reported finding a large burial at the excavation site by the river. Based on the nature of the findings, it has been identified it as a heroon.





Heroon is a shrine or grave of an important person, often a hero.

Scientists believe this is a burial of one of the first governors of Chersonesus. Metropolitan Tikhon suggested naming the river in honour of this sensational discovery. The artefacts found during the excavations, along with a plate from the burial, will be displayed in the new museum.

Currently, walkways are being built along the river, including a bridge, and plans are in place for water planting.

Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill said:

“It is impossible to deny that by accepting Christianity, Rus took a step towards the truth. However, baptism does not mean that our ancestors entered some special, exclusive community of peoples. Christ has no chosen peoples – he loves and waits for everyone. He loves those peoples who accepted Christianity in apostolic times, those who were baptised during Prince Vladimir’s rule and those who learned the good news much later.



## Garden City

New Chersonesus will be home to 26,000 plants.

“During excavations, 50-year-old trees including Red Book Crimean pines were successfully replanted. The landscape was not only preserved but improved through meticulous work. The future park will feature a wide variety of plants, including several varieties of junipers, weeping willows, thuyas, cedars, cypresses, blue spruces, lilacs, maples, magnolias, dogwoods and barberry. Additionally, fruit trees will be planted, including apple, cherry and plum, to name a few. They were grown especially for this project in Tula, St Petersburg and Moscow,” the My History Foundation said.

In 2015, President of Russia Vladimir Putin and former Prime Minister of Italy Silvio Berlusconi visited St Vladimir Cathedral in Chersonesus.



“This is one of the main sources of our spirituality. Indeed, Prince Vladimir not only baptised himself and his retinue in Chersonesus but also spiritually united and brought together all Slavic tribes living in this territory. In fact, this became the foundation for building a unified centralised Russian state. In this sense, this place is sacred and very important for the Russian state,” Vladimir Putin emphasised.

# A GAME OF SPECIAL MENTALITY

Text: Alla Dovgan

Photo: Yevgeny Letov

Born six centuries ago, golf seems to be a game of many mysteries. But in reality, most challenges are just assumptions and all you need to do is come to a golf course and hit a golf ball into 18 or 9 holes with as few strikes as possible.

The Crimean Magazine explored golf courses on the peninsula, training fees and gear.



## Early years



Golf was first mentioned in Russian history during the Romanovs' reign. Emperor Nicholas II and his family liked to play mini-golf, or putt-putt, taking training sessions in their summer residence in the Finnish municipality of Virolahti. The first golf course in Russia was created in the late 19th century in Murino, a trendy suburb of St Petersburg. It was first mentioned in 1891, making the year supposedly the time when Russian golf originated.

After the revolution, the sport of aristocrats was forgotten for a long time. The first golf course in the Soviet Union was not built until 1987. Pelé, Mike Tyson, Sven Tumba and Alexander Ragulin made symbolic swings at the foundation ceremony.

When golf became an Olympic sport in 2016, the world learned that Russia plays golf. Russian golfer Maria Verchyonova set a record by playing the best round among men and women. Despite the professional success, the game did not gain much popularity in the country.



## Where to play

The first training golf course in Crimea was built at the Incomsport Sports Centre in Kuibyshevo, Bakhchisaraisky District. The first tournament took place on its opening day, November 7, 2010.

Director of the sports centre Igor Kashperko says that he has been a golf enthusiast for quite some time. He started working on his strikes on a football pitch with little knowledge about the game. In 2006, he began visiting classic golf courses where he met owners and learned from their experience.

*"Those encounters determined my future. At the opening of the training course at Incomsport, my colleagues who had shared their expertise with me, presented me with a golf cart that works to this day. We never managed to build a full-size golf course with 18 holes. We have six holes on 10 hectares so we play in three rounds,"* Igor Kashperko explains.

Incomsport holds competitions once or twice a year. Alexander Novosad from Yalta, multiple winner of international tournaments, won the Sevastopol championship last April. The Taurida Cup is coming up on November 5.

Playing golf at Incomsport is an aesthetic pleasure. The course is located in the heart of the Belbek Valley, surrounded by mountains and woods. It is a good place for a weekend getaway, with a hotel, a banquet hall, fitness facilities and barbecue spots.

**A 90-minute training session at Incomsport costs 1,500 roubles, and a game 1,000 roubles.**



Crimea's second golf course opened last year in the Baidary Valley in Shirokoye, Sevastopol. Baidary Golf Country owner Maxim Molodshy received an investment offer ten years ago to open a golf club on the peninsula. The project never came through so Maxim decided to proceed without an investor.

*"The Baidary course is about 35 hectares, with nine holes. There are some artificial hazards such as a sand-filled bunkers and rocks. More hazards make the game more challenging and exciting. Water obstacles and moats are particularly valuable. Some courses have an incline of several dozen metres. Our course is mostly flat with no natural hazards, so we created artificial ones. Now we are building one more site on a slope,"* Maxim shared.

Baidary Golf Country has a unique location in the "Switzerland" of Crimea. There is a restaurant with a summer terrace on site and a large parking lot.

*"We have a special microclimate. Grass is often covered in dew, which is good for irrigation. Our grass stays green until February when it "goes into hibernation" for the cold season. However, we can easily play in January and February,"* Maxim Molodshy adds.

**A training session with an instructor at Baidary Golf Country costs 1,500 roubles; a session with rental equipment costs 2,500 roubles. A three to four-hour game will also cost 2,500 roubles.**

\* The prices listed on the official website are for informational purposes only and do not constitute a public offer.

## Rules and training

It may appear that all you do in golfing is stroll across a course. In reality, it is an energy-consuming sport for all muscle groups. Playing an 18-hole game requires walking almost 10 km. It is also an intellectual challenge just like chess when you must be able to calculate your own and your competitor's hits.

Maxim Molodshy says there are many rules in golf but the two primary ones are play the ball as it falls and accept the course as it is; and when both are impossible, do what's fair. The goal is to hit a ball into a hole with as few strikes as possible. The player must always track the ball's trajectory.

Training sessions will help improve posture and ball striking technique. For example, Maxim Molodshy films his trainees on his smart phone while teaching strikes and then reviews their posture during a strike, club movement and ball flight.

One day is enough to get a good hang of the game, learn how to hit balls and score several holes. The technique will be built after several sessions, and you are ready to play.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED  
TO OPT OUT OF ACID  
COLOURS OR BRIGHT  
GRAPHIC**

**THE CLOTHING YOU WEAR TO PLAY GOLF  
SHOULD BE COMFORTABLE, WEATHER-  
APPROPRIATE AND ALLOW YOU TO MOVE  
FREELY. MEN USUALLY WEAR POLO  
SHIRTS, LONG-SLEEVE SHIRTS, JUMPERS,  
GILETS, SHORTS OR TROUSERS.**



**WOMEN'S CLOTHING  
IS LESS DEMANDING.  
FEMALE GOLFERS CAN  
WEAR SLEEVELESS TOPS,  
SUMMER GOLF DRESSES  
OR SKIRTS WITH BUILT-IN  
SHORTS, CAPRI TROUSERS,  
BERMUDA SHORTS OR  
CROPPED SHORTS NOT  
SHORTER THAN 10 CM  
ABOVE THE KNEE.**



## GOLF TRIVIA

- The word “golf” comes from the Dutch language although the game itself originated in St Andrews, Scotland. “Kolve” or “kolf” mean “club” in Dutch. Scots borrowed the word in the 14th century as “gof” and later “golf.”
- Golf started as a way for bored shepherds to pass time. They used sticks as clubs and rocks instead of balls.
- A ball can fly as fast as 150 kmph. Professional golfer Tiger Woods’ strike is so powerful that a ball can reach 200 kmph in flight.
- Every golf ball has 336 dimples. The pattern never changes and contributes to flying properties.
- Every golf course is unique. There are no identical courses as there can be no identical strikes.
- Golf is in the top ten of most popular sports, especially among businesspeople.



## Golf as a lifestyle

Both Igor Kashperko and Maxim Molodshy say that golf is a sport of special mentality. It bears no hassle. Communication is another important skill as players learn to establish dialogue with their partners. It is also a good place for networking and socialising.

*“Golf is my life. I play almost every weekend and make annual trips to a play on a big golf course. Almost my entire*

*family loves this sport. I often play with my grandson,” Igor Kashperko shares.*

Maxim Molodshy plays with his wife and their teenage sons.

*“We play in a flight, or a grouping of three to four players moving together across the course. My sons are 10 and 15. I have heard stories of a two-year-old toddler picking up a club and starting to play at three. Our plan at Baidary is to open a children’s golf academy.”*

## Golf as business

Golfing can contribute to the economic growth of the tourist industry. Golf courses add investment appeal to a region, prompting construction of new hotels and housing communities, restaurants, shopping facilities and other infrastructure, which creates jobs. It is still too early to talk about the rise of the golf industry in Crimea and in Russia in general.

According to Maxim Molodshy, there are currently around 3,600 professional golfers in Russia. For this sport to become an industry, there must be at least two million. Some believe half a million may be sufficient. Golf is still an exotic pastime for Crimeans. The main goal today is to attract as many players as possible. Incomsport Director Igor Kashperko believes that not everybody warms up to golf after one lesson.

*"We like to say that you need to catch a golf bug. We hold master classes for schoolchildren to spike interest in the game. I can immediately see if a child has potential for success in golf," he says.*

Baidary Golf Country attracts new visitors with entertainment programmes. There are concerts on the golf course on weekend nights. A jazz festival is planned for late August.





**PINK, BRIGHT, AND YOURS!**


**Photo by Vladislav Filippov**

Located in Yevpatoria, Lake Sasyk-Syvash is a natural wonder of Crimea, famous for its mesmerising colours, therapeutic muds and pink salt.



CRIMEA IN THE SPOTLIGHT



An aerial photograph showing a vast, dense vineyard in the foreground, with rows of green grapevines stretching across the landscape. In the background, the deep blue waters of the Black Sea meet the horizon under a clear sky. A small, blue agricultural machine is visible in the lower right section of the vineyard.

## **TWO SEAS**

The vastness of the Black Sea meets the sweeping beauty of Crimean vineyards, creating a landscape of stunning contrasts. We can only envy those who work here, surrounded by this breathtaking view every day.

**Photo by Alexander Shinkarevsky**

# PLOUGHING THROUGH THE WAVES



Text: Alla Dovgan

Photo: Yevgeny Letov, Alexander Safonov's archive,  
Mriya Resort & SPA press office

Crimea offers a variety of seafaring experiences – both Crimeans and tourists are welcome to embark on a sea adventure and test their resilience against the elements. Yacht tours, skipper training and sailing regattas are available in almost every coastline town.

## Have fun

You can set sail with an experienced crew and go on an excursion, or just cruise leisurely on a motor-propelled beauty – every opportunity is available in Crimea.

Motor-propelled yachts are more often chosen for leisurely onboard pastimes such as admiring the sights from the water, sunbathing on the deck, diving, and taking beautiful photos. One of the advantages of yacht tourism in Crimea is the endless variety of scenic bays and harbors. In addition, a yacht can be chartered for a party or a picnic.

According to Crimean travel blogger and event organiser Andrei Safonov, the offer of onboard activities and water toys is expanding every year.



THE MOST FAVORABLE AND POPULAR  
MONTHS FOR YACHT CRUISING ARE  
JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER.



## SEA OF PLEASURE

*"We have available on our yachts. We offer towed tubing, too. The crew includes the captain as well as a professional chef who will cook mussels and other seafood for the group. Once a month, we throw big parties where three yachts are fastened to each other at sea, and guests can move freely between them. One has a bar, another one, a grill, and the third one, a dancefloor. Participation is 5,000 rubles per person. We also offer yacht rentals for photo shoots, birthdays and other events, as well as sunset cruises. We can let clients steer the boat if they want to," Andrei Safonov says.*

Every year, yacht charter is becoming more and more popular among tourists who want to enjoy a sea voyage. What are some tips on making the right choice? Typically, you start with deciding on the type of boat that'll suit your needs. Do you want a sail- or a motor-propelled yacht? For how many passengers? Do you want it to have cabins, a kitchen, a shower, etc.? These details will influence the cost of your charter – whether you'll pay 5,000 rubles per hour, or 40,000, or 120,000 rubles. It all depends on the boat's class.

Balaklava Bay is considered the home port for most yachts in Crimea, but berths are also available in Yalta, Sevastopol, Yevpatoria, Cape Tarkhankut, Koktebel, Novy Svet and Sudak.

Charter services are provided by boat owners as well as by large hotels. Guests can choose a vacation to suit any taste, from fishing on small boats to traveling on luxury yachts with impressive interiors and first-class service on board.



THE WORLD'S  
FIRST YACHT CLUB  
WAS ESTABLISHED  
BY PETER I IN ST  
PETERSBURG ON  
23 APRIL 1718  
AND NAMED THE  
NEVSKY FLEET. THE  
EMPEROR WROTE  
ITS CHARTER WITH  
HIS OWN HAND.

## Become a captain

Crimea has several yachting schools that offer a variety of courses and programs for any level. Black Sea School in Sevastopol offers a ten-day program to obtain an International Yacht Training license. Its founder and head Vadim Denisov says yachting had been his hobby before it evolved into a career and his life's passion.

*"In 2015, I moved from St Petersburg to Crimea to create a yacht rental company. Crimea offered great conditions for starting a business – a free economic zone with boat import privileges, so I took the opportunity. I raised some investment, and imported the first three boats as soon as 2016. The delivery accidentally coincided with an anniversary of Crimea's reunification with Russia, 18 March, and the yachts entered the bay to an orchestra playing – that was quite symbolic. On the same*

*day, we registered the Black Sea Charter Company. The initial plan was just to expand the fleet and rent out boats. At some point, we had 27 yachts; some of the contracts have expired, so now we only have 20. We are the largest yacht charter in Russia. Even in Europe, an average charter company has only about 15 vessels,"* Vadim shares.

Tourists that are into yachting ensure a good influx of money to a resort.

*"We decided to get busy attracting yachtsmen to Crimea. Our ambition is not just to teach our clients how to sail a yacht. We want them to become familiar with the company, the team, the local water area and infrastructure, so that they want to come back here. It is always easier to make your first independent sortie in a place where you have practiced,"* Vadim adds.

The cost of a practice period varies from 39,000 to 54,000 rubles, with accommodation on a yacht included. Participants can obtain a crew member's or a captain's license, or update and improve their seamanship skills. In addition, the company offers a guest sailing service, for those who wish to try their hand at yachting, for 5,000 rubles per person per day.



THE NUMBER OF SAILING  
YACHTS IN THE WORLD  
SIGNIFICANTLY EXCEEDS  
THE NUMBER OF MOTOR  
YACHTS: 94% TO 6%.

## SEA OF PLEASURE

In 2023, History Supreme was recognised the most expensive yacht in the world, with an estimated cost at \$4.8 billion. The 30-meter-long superyacht was created by British high-end designer Stuart Hughes. Her keel and hull are made of gold, which should provide eternal protection against corrosion.

History Supreme has two helipads, a solid gold pool, a cinema, a wine cellar, and other luxuries.



- Yachts are classified into different types according to size. A boat's length determines the number and size of cabins, bathrooms and other premises, its ceiling height, deck space, and speed (engine power, water resistance, sail area) etc.
- There are small yacht types such as two-meter dinghies, and there are multi-deck mega yachts that are more like ocean liners.
- The length of seagoing vessels is measured in feet. (1 foot equals 30.48 centimeters)
- Most charter agencies will offer 30 to 53 feet (9 to 17 meter) yachts. You will be allowed to steer it yourself if you have an international license with minimum qualification of Bareboat (Day) Skipper for sailing yachts up to 60 feet. Larger yachts are rarely rented out, or they are chartered with a captain/crew.

## Yachting as tourism

The yachting season lasts 24 weeks in Crimea – from May 1 until the end of September. But in fact, some go yachting in April, or in October, and some even make sorties in November.

*"When we began offering yacht charter and training, the region received a whole new group of customers specifically interested in yachting. We have estimated how much a tourist like this spends in Russia from the moment they board a plane to Crimea. About 100 charter boats secure 1 billion rubles that remain in Russia, as revenue of related businesses including caterers, gas stations, and others," Vadim says.*

Yachting is an additional source of income for the regional tourism industry; it brings in a cohort of tourists with a higher level of spending.

*"In fact, the local infrastructure cannot even offer enough services yet compared with how much yachtsmen are willing to spend. But this is what stimulates growth," Vadim explains. "In fact, the region cannot even offer enough services yet compared with how much yachtsmen are willing to spend. But this is what stimulates growth," Vadim explains.*

## New berths

Crimea has a shortage of yacht mooring places. To address this problem, a marina is planned to be built in Balaklava. The construction is taking place in stages – after the work is completed on Tavricheskaya Embankment, Nazukin Embankment will be redeveloped as well. The modernisation project also includes replacing local utilities networks, expanding the embankment, and erecting an administrative building for the future marina. After the former Metalist plant's facilities are demolished, the two embankments will be linked into a 2.4 km pedestrian area.

According to the Ministry of Construction, Housing and Utilities, plans are in place to create a 200-hectare recreational complex, Yacht Village, next to the marina.

Other plans call for opening a yacht marina at Mriya Resort & SPA.



# WHAT'S YOUR GAME? *Wild game menu*

Text: Anastasia Zaplotneva

Photo: Yevgeny Letov, from Alyona Shafiyeva's archive, Doctor Whisky restaurant.

Crimea's residents and guests now have the opportunity to tantalise their taste buds with more than just traditional fare. While dishes like pheasant and wild boar have long been cherished for their flavours, the introduction of ostrich meat adds an extra layer of exoticism to the region's culinary offerings. However, the key to truly experiencing these delights lies in knowing where to find them. Just as every keen hunter seeks out reliable spots for pheasants, every discerning gourmet should be aware of the establishments that offer these unusual dishes.





## Pheasant nesting sites

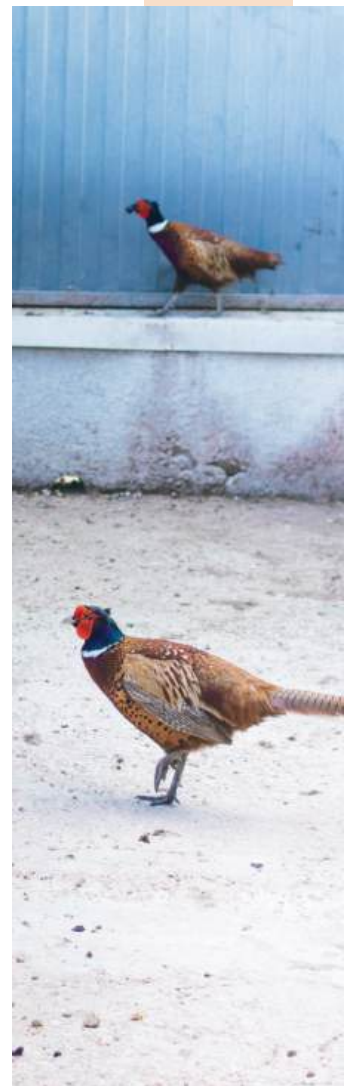
Pheasant, esteemed as a prized hunting trophy, boasts meat renowned for its exceptional flavour. Even though pheasants formally belong to the order of gallinaceous, typical broiler chickens cannot be compared to them.

But what are you supposed to do if no one among your family or friends is a hunter willing to share their prized catch or extend an invitation to a sumptuous pheasant dinner? Fear not, for in Crimea, you can easily experience a pheasant these days. Good thing there is a farm in Crimea with an unorthodox name "Agrobelka" (Agrosquirrel), which specialises in the breeding of valuable birds. What do squirrels have in common with pheasant? The answer is simple.

*- "I used to work as a wedding photographer and went by the name Red Squirrel. When the question of choosing a name for the farm came up, we decided to use my name. We decided not to tie ourselves to pheasants in case we decide to pursue different lines of business," farm owner Alyona Shafiyeva said.*

Her husband, who is a hunter, introduced Alyona's family to the delicacy of pheasant meat. Unfortunately, though, having a pheasant on the dinner table involved a hunting trip, whereas a better solution would be just to go to a grocery store and buy one, if you fancied a special meal. This led them to the idea of building their own pheasant farm. This way, they would always have access to their favourite food, and other people in Crimea would have the chance to diversify their diet without wasting time tracking down the prey.

Pheasant meat develops exceptional flavour through a process of extended fermentation. The carcass, cut into pieces, is vacuum-sealed and kept for three to six days at a temperature of 1-3°C



## A HUNTER'S DREAM PHEASANT

### Ingredients:

- 1 pheasant
- 200 g mushrooms
- 1 onion
- 100 ml white wine
- 50 ml vegetable oil
- your favourite seasonings (or a store-bought seasoning mix for game)
- salt

Carve the pheasant and sauté it in vegetable oil until a golden crust forms. Transfer it to a baking dish, add salt and seasoning.

Coarsely chop onions and mushrooms (use forest mushrooms as your first choice, but you can also use store-bought button mushrooms), and sauté them in the oil left after cooking the pheasant. Add the vegetables to the bird, pour in the wine, cover with a lid or a piece of aluminium foil, and leave it in the oven for another hour at 220°C.



**Pheasants are striking birds. The owners of many tourist sites buy chicks to have these amazing creatures walk around their grounds**

Without a doubt, raising pheasants is not the same as raising broiler chickens. Wild birds require free range conditions and special care. Today, there are 350-450 breeding stock birds living on the farm, with over 2,500 being sold each year.

- "We release some of the pheasants we raise into hunting grounds, so we need to create an environment where they can survive in the wild. Our website highlights the fact that our birds can fly. Also, pheasants, like any other wild bird, have highly developed instincts. They can be aggressive and kill the weak; these qualities are especially strong in

young birds. It is important to spot this moment and ring them. Besides, we create a soothing atmosphere for the chicks. We keep them in semi-darkness, without bright daylight, and we turn on green lamps," Alyona says.

These valuable birds are in high demand, not only on the hunting grounds, but in restaurants as well. In addition, pheasants and pheasant eggs can be purchased in retail stores. Of course, pheasant dishes are not an everyday meal. However, they are a wonderful choice for a special dinner or a festive occasion.



Meat contains beneficial extractives such as glycogen, creatine, carnosine and certain nitrous acids, which have a positive effect on digestion, gastrointestinal health and pancreatic function

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Ostrich meat is known as a low-calorie product (98 Kcal per 100 g) with low cholesterol (about 32 mg per 100 g) and high protein content (22 percent)

## Prehistoric meat

For many years, ostriches were a curiosity to our countrymen. These huge birds, whose ancestors include dinosaurs, could only be seen in a zoo. Today, not everyone can boast about eating an ostrich steak or scrambled eggs made with a giant egg that is reminiscent of the Jurassic period. Of course, there are no full-fledged meat farms specialising in year-round ostrich meat supplies in Crimea yet, but there are places where you can sample the exotic African meat.

Not long ago, an ostrich farm named Shveitsarsky Dvor (Swiss Yard) opened in Crimea. At first glance, there might not seem to be a connection between the giant





bird and the small mountainous country, but it all makes sense: firstly, the farm is located in the Baidar Valley, which is often referred to as Crimea's Switzerland, and secondly, it was founded by a couple who moved to Crimea from that country.

*"I am a Russian citizen, and my parents live in Crimea. My husband is a Swiss national, and we lived in his homeland for many years. Several years ago, we moved to Crimea and decided to fulfil my husband's lifelong dream of opening an ostrich farm," the owner of the farm Yelena Fontana said.*

According to Yelena, breeding these giant birds is a promising business. First, ostriches gain weight very quickly, even quicker than pigs. Second, their meat and feathers, as well as its skin, which is used to make numerous items, are valuable products. This niche is still relatively unoccupied, so you can expand your business without facing intense competition.

The ostrich business holds several advantages, one of which is the birds' robust immune system. They are immune to common infections like bird flu. But there's a downside: if a bird falls ill, finding a knowledgeable veterinarian in Crimea is almost impossible. The only option is to consult with colleagues from other regions, study the international experience and occasionally rely on one's best judgment when choosing the medicine. Another important





An ostrich farm was a long-standing dream of this family, which became a reality in Crimea. Zoos, farmers and enthusiasts of exotic things are lining up to get ostrich chicks.

consideration is the grounds: ostriches need space to run.

They cannot be confined to cramped poultry houses, and require spacious enclosures instead. The couple decided to open something bigger than a farm – a breeding centre. They raise chicks for sale. The farm has been in business for just three years, so the Swiss Yard is home to only two ostrich families, eight birds in all.

*"Our project was supported by the state since its inception. In 2021, we received a grant under the state agricultural support*

*programme. Last year, the ostriches had problem laying eggs because they were moved to a new place, but we are gradually bringing things back to normal. There is no shortage of customers. We receive inquiries from zoos and farms, not just in Crimea, but from other regions as well," Yelena Fontana says. "We have taken up tourism as a separate business line. We offer gastronomic tours, and treat our visitors to ostrich goulash and omelettes. Restaurants cannot offer such exotic dishes, because they need a steady supply, and there are no large enough ostrich farms in Crimea that could meet that kind of demand.*

Ostrich meat is rich in magnesium, iron, calcium, phosphorus, copper, cobalt, potassium, vitamins PP, E and most of the B group vitamins

## Hooves and horns

Game is not limited to birds. An average resident of Yakutia may think of venison as staple diet, but many people in Crimea will find it to be a rare dish, just like wild boar meat. By the way, both can be hunted. However, if tracking prey is not your thing, you can sample these unusual dishes at a restaurant.

*"The meat of wild animals is fairly tough, and its taste greatly depends on the habitat and the food they consume. That's why we use slow cooking techniques when preparing game. We first soak it in cold or salted water, and each specialty has to be soaked for a specific amount of time. After that, it can be stewed or braised, or weighed down, which is what we do to cure the meat for venison tartare. By the way, just like beef, venison can be eaten raw, but it must come from a trusted supplier to avoid any issues,"* the chef of Doctor Whisky restaurant Andrei Savenkov says sharing the secrets of cooking game.

For special occasions, game is sourced from local hunters. We purchase licenses for them. The meat comes from different places: wild boar meat is supplied to the Crimean cooks from the Tver Region, and venison comes from Yakutia. Stewed at low temperatures and then roasted venison is one of the restaurant's favourites, as is the boar leg, which takes 24 hours to cook.

*"Perhaps, that is why game is no longer served today. Time is a valuable resource, and not everyone is willing to spend hours cooking a single dish. However, I wouldn't say game is an entirely*



Venison is rich in calcium, potassium, copper, selenium, zinc, magnesium, phosphorus, sodium, iron, vitamins PP, B1, B2 and antioxidants that prevent the formation of cancer cells. Regular consumption of venison reduces the risk of atherosclerosis, diabetes, and hypertension.



*exotic dish: hunting remains a popular hobby, and hunters usually share their kills with their families and friends. Many of our clients even treat us to the food they make themselves and compare it to our restaurant dishes,” Andrei Savenkov said.*

In addition to the time invested, prices and lack of knowledge play a role as well. Most home cooks rely on short videos from social media, and you’d be hard pressed to find a recipe that

starts with “take the saddle of a deer...” Considering this, it is better to get your first taste of unfamiliar meat in a trusted place where you can have a taste of properly cooked game and not be disappointed. But if you really want to cook something exotic at home, you can order rare meats from specialised websites or make arrangements with hunters through their communities on social media, or at a game ranch.

Connoisseurs say that boar meat tastes like lean pork, but is much tastier because wild animals feed on acorns, mushrooms and berries. By the way, 90 percent of the wild boar meat is absorbed by the human body, whereas beef is absorbed by only 60 percent.

#### SKEWERED BOAR MEAT

##### Ingredients:


- 2 kg boar meat
- 3 onions
- 2 tsp paprika
- 2 l water
- 10 peppercorns
- 5 bay leaves
- 2 tsp ground black pepper
- salt

First make the marinade: pour water into a pot, and add bay leaves and pepper. Boil the mixture, then allow it to cool to room temperature.

Next, remove the silverskin and veins from the meat and cut it into cubes. Put the meat cubes into a bowl and pour in the marinade. Leave the meat in the refrigerator for at least three hours. You can leave the meat marinating overnight (the older the animal, the longer you will need to marinate the meat).

Slice the onion into rings or half rings. Drain the marinade from the meat and mix the onions with the meat, squeezing hard enough for the onions to release their juice. Add salt, pepper and paprika, and mix again. Allow the meat to marinate for at least 1-2 hours, or longer if desired. Remember to keep the meat in the refrigerator during this time.

Finally, thread the marinated meat onto skewers and grill until ready.

A photograph of a cave interior. The wall is made of light-colored, porous limestone with many small holes and indentations. A paved path made of small, square tiles runs along the bottom right corner. The lighting is warm and focused on the wall.

CRIMEA AWAITS YOU

# The Lost WORLD

Text: Irina Gulivataya

Photo: Gala Amarando

Step into the enchanting world of Tavrida Cave, an underground city filled with streets, alleys, main roads and intersections. This extraordinary cave, once home to prehistoric predators, offers a mesmerising experience. You will be captivated by the magical ambience, the delicate limestone walls sculpted into rounded shapes over millions of years, and, the unique archaeological finds that make this place truly one-of-a-kind.



CRIMEA, WITH ITS 2,000 CAVES CURRENTLY ON THE MAP, IS RENOWNED FOR ITS SUBTERRANEAN LANDSCAPES, BELIEVED BY SOME TO BE PART OF A SINGLE EXPANSIVE SYSTEM OF UNDERGROUND CORRIDORS EXTENDING BEYOND THE PENINSULA. THE LIST OF CAVES IS CONTINUALLY GROWING, SHOWCASING THE REGION'S RICH GEOLOGICAL DIVERSITY.

ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE RECENT DISCOVERIES IS TAVRIDA CAVE, LOCATED NEAR THE VILLAGE OF ZUYA, IN THE BELOGORSK DISTRICT. UNCOVERED DURING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TAVRIDA MOTORWAY IN 2018, THIS CAVE HAS BECOME A UNIQUE TREASURE FOR SPELEOLOGISTS AND PALAEONTOLOGISTS.

## A cave in reverse

Descending into the cave, you'll find that space and time seem to shift. Your every cell takes in clean, moisture-rich air, and time feels as if it stands still. Cave guides often joke that they appear much younger than their years because the unique underground environment slows down the biological clock, helping to preserve youthful looks.

- "When the cave was discovered, it was 14 metres deep. It was an absolutely pristine place, where no man had ever set foot," says **Gennady Samokhin, Deputy Director for Research of the Tavrida Cave complex.**

Even though a busy motorway runs right above the cave, the cave remains silent. Builders and scientists have installed 96 bored piles into the cave walls, supporting a robust 1.5-metre foundation that serves as a bridge beneath the road.

They successfully preserved this unique find, transforming it into the Tavrida Cave Research Speleological and Paleontological Complex. This preservation effort was crucial, as the cave contains ancient fossil cave fauna dating back 1.5 to 1.8 million years, remarkably unchanged to the present day.

- According to guide Yekaterina Samokhina, this is the warmest cave in Crimea, with a year-round temperature of +13°, and humidity exceeding 99 percent. Unlike typical caves, Tavrida Cave does not have stalactites, stalagmites, or other formations usually found in caves. It is known as "a cave



EXPLORE TAVRIDA CAVE WITH A ONE-HOUR GUIDED TOUR, FOLLOWED BY A VISIT TO THE MUSEUM SHOWCASING FASCINATING DISCOVERIES. MARVEL AT ANCIENT FINDS ON DISPLAY, INCLUDING PAINTINGS CREATED WITH CLAY FOUND IN THE CAVE.

Open daily from 9 am to 4 pm, without break periods.

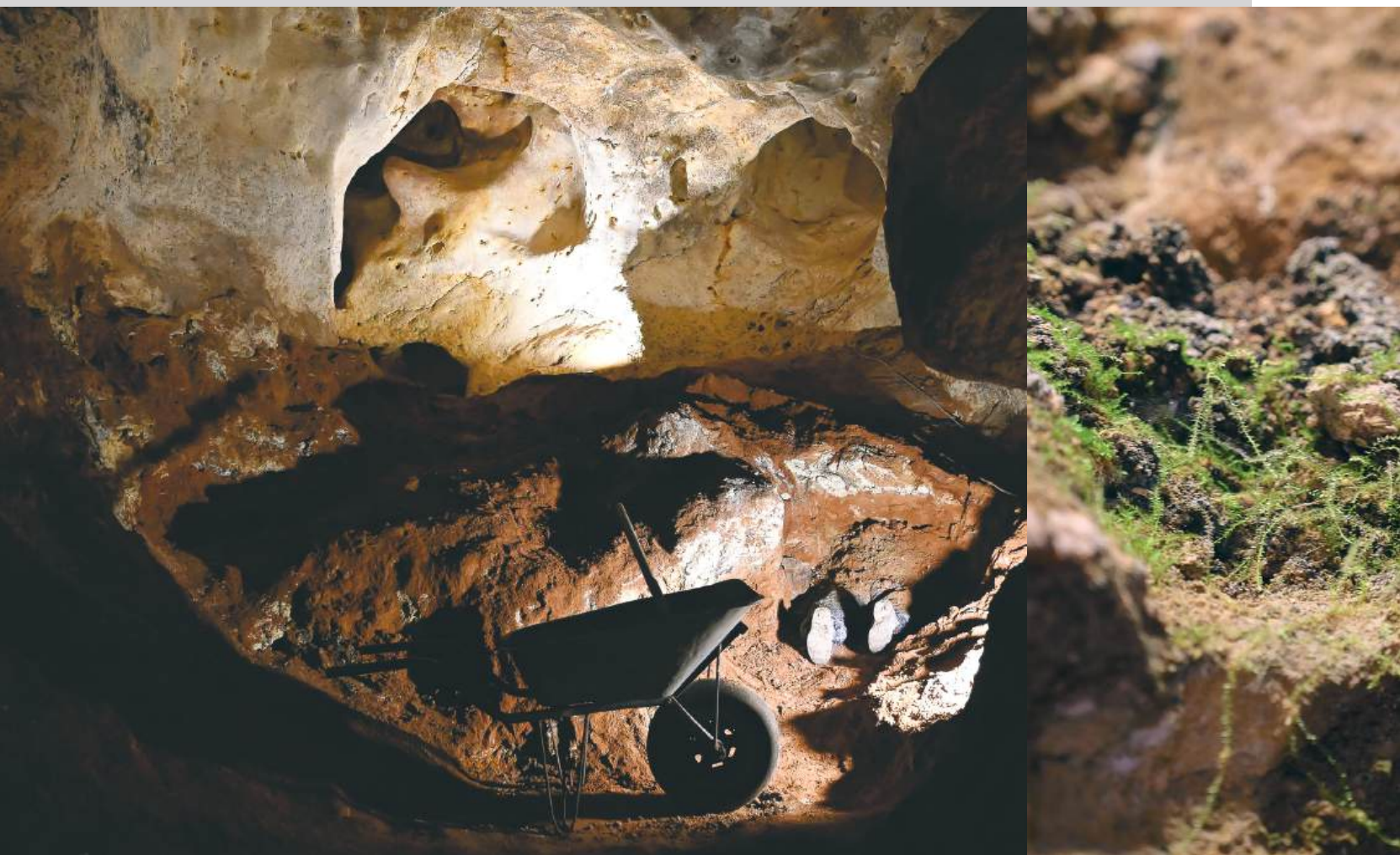
Ticket prices  
Starting May 1:  
children 500 roubles,  
adults 700 roubles.

Location:  
Zuya, Republic of Crimea.

in reverse," because it was formed from bottom to top through artesian processes. Once a large artesian basin, the water, under pressure like a geyser or a fountain, forced its way upward, creating wells, domes and other negative circular forms. It is quite soft and almost dry.

Today, the total explored length of Tavrída Cave stands at 2,050 metres,

with a tourist route spanning 485 metres. The cave features lofty vaults, occasionally reaching heights of up to 15 metres. Remarkably, its wide passages, absence of steep flops and paving stone flooring render it accessible to wheelchair-bound visitors and mothers with young children in strollers. Yekaterina suggests that the cave will return to its pristine state once the paving is removed.



### If you go to the left...

Tourists begin their cave exploration journey by following the path that goes to the left.

– For over a million years, Tavrida Cave was home to a vast colony of bats. Since the cave was sealed all that time, bat droppings combined with inorganic limestone, forming new types of minerals.

**– THIRTEEN TYPES OF MINERALS PREVIOUSLY UNSEEN IN RUSSIA HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED IN THE CAVE. ONE OF THEM IS BEING STUDIED BY SCIENTISTS, WHO BELIEVE IT WAS DISCOVERED FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, THE GUIDE SAID.**

Tavrida Cave boasts a wide array of minerals, including kingsmountite,

robertsite, whitlockite, apatite, gypsum, and goethite.

Marvel at the captivating rock formations crafted over time by the bats within the cave. Among them, the vault known as The Heart of Tavrida is shaped like a heart, while another, The Globe Upside Down, strikingly resembles an overturned globe, featuring clearly discernible boundaries of Russia, India, China, and even Crimea.

The enchantment of Tavrida Cave extends beyond its natural wonders. Children are invited to unleash their creativity by drawing on the walls with ultraviolet flashlights, a unique experience where bright green fluorescent drawings mysteriously



Palaeontological excavation site, natural entrance to the Tavrida Caves



Copies of Bronze Age mural paintings from the Bakhchisaraisky District

appear under the beam of light and immediately disappears.

The cave is an acoustic wonder where no echo can be heard. The porous limestone naturally traps sound, fully absorbing it, as if you were inside a vast recording studio. It is a challenge for many musicians to play music in a place that has no acoustics. The sound must be crystal clear, and every sound out of tune will be instantly discernible. Musicians from the Crimean State Philharmonic often perform on the small stage of the cave.

## FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT CRIMEA'S CAVES

Crimea's largest and most picturesque cave, the Marble Cave, spans an impressive 270,000 square metres. The karst formations here are the largest in Eastern Europe.

The Soldatskaya Cave is the deepest and the most meandering cave in Crimea. It features a fascinating labyrinth of wells, inclined passages, grottoes and narrow horizontal corridors. The cave also contains an underground river and lakes, reaching a depth of 517 metres.

The Red Cave, or Kizil-Koba, holds the title of the longest karst cave, with a total length of passageways exceeding 26,000 metres.

The Tarkhankut Cave is Crimea's lowest cave, located 10 metres below sea level.

Perched on Chatyr-Dag Mountain at an altitude of 1,490 metres above sea level, the Treshchinnaya (Crack) Cave is the highest cave in Crimea.

Perched on Chatyr-Dag Mountain at an altitude of 1,490 metres above sea level, the Treshchinnaya (Crack) Cave is the highest cave in Crimea.

The Cascade Cave is known as the most dangerous cave in Crimea. It has a history of five recorded accidents, two of which were fatal.

Estimated to be about five million years old, Tavrida Cave is the oldest karst cave.

Little-known caves of Crimea include Lisiy Khvost (Fox Tail) in the Wolf Cliff, Agarmysh Mount; Pogreb (Cellar) on Mount Shpil near the Simferopol Quarry; Habazi-Khosar and Lestnichnaya (Staircase) on the yayla (mountain pasture) of Chatyr-Dag Mountain; Syundyurlyu-Koba in the Baidar Valley. There are also Mushinaya, Grina, Fassa, Mamina, Kilse-Chekh, Karani-Khoba, Tumannaya, Boyaryshnikova and Hadjikhoba caves, as well as Druzhba on the Karabi-Yayla mountainous massif. caves.





Replica of a North American  
Smilodon skull

## If you go to the right...

The right portion of this ancient cave was once home to predators. Archaeologists have uncovered nearly 500 kg of bones, including those of southern elephants, antelopes, horses, scimitar-toothed cats, hyenas, camels, porcupines, and even a giant ostrich that stood four metres tall.

More than a million years ago, the cave was inhabited by an array of fascinating creatures such as the giant hyena *Pachycrocuta*, the scimitar-toothed cat *Homotherium*, the Etruscan bear, the giant porcupine, the prehistoric rhinoceros *Elasmotherium*, the giant camel, the Stenonine horse, antelopes, Eobison, and the Leptobos bull.

Archaeologists also discovered a small recess in the cave that served as a "canteen" where hyenas and other predators brought their prey. This area is rich with the bones of large animals.

## Adrenaline and tranquillity

With over 1000 caves, Crimea offers a captivating array of subterranean wonders. These range from modest 5-metre to 10-metre deep pits to vast underground cavities stretching over many kilometres. The beauty of these hidden realms is revealed only to the most determined and adventurous travellers. While some caves require special knowledge and equipment, making them inaccessible to ordinary tourists, there are options for beginner cave explorers as well. For those just starting their spelunking journey, a descent into the Gugerdzhin cave/well is highly recommended.

Why go down a cave in the first place? What drives people to venture into the depths of the earth?

– According to Gennady Samokhin, there are numerous motivations ranging from research to sports. Caves are captivating worlds, offering an extreme and unusual setting that fosters unique relationships among fellow explorers. Historically, monks sought the solitude of caves to look deep within themselves. Renowned traveller Fyodor Konyukhov wanted to spend two weeks in the Red Cave and asked us to set up a camp for him there. Many people share this fascination. I am more interested in discovering new caves. I've uncovered a couple hundred caves and many new galleries in my lifetime. The era of great geographical discoveries continues below the surface, as there is much to uncover underground despite our extensive knowledge of the world above.

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