

Q & A with



CHRISTINA KUZNETSOVA

GENERAL MANAGER, DOMINA PRESTIGE ST. PETERSBURG

CONSIDERING THAT LUXURY FLOWS IN RUSSIA'S CULTURAL VEINS, CHRISTINA KUZNETSOVA, GENERAL MANAGER, DOMINA PRESTIGE ST. PETERSBURG, DISCUSSES RUSSIA AS AN ELITE DESTINATION AND THE ROLE OF THE HOTEL IN THE HIGH END HOSPITALITY SCENE.

TRAVEL TRADE EUROPE: From which countries or regions do most of your affluent clients come?

CHRISTINA KUZNETSOVA: Taking into account that we belong to an Italian hotel chain, the majority of our guests are Europeans, primarily German, French, British and of course, Italian. Also, the percentage of US visitors is steadily high, and this number did not decrease, even during the period of obvious coolness in foreign policy between Russia and the US. We noticed a gradual increase of interest among the guests from the UAE, with exclusively individual visitors.

Every year we are listed among the Best 10 Luxury Hotels of Russia according to TripAdvisor. Our target audience is not a tourist group but individual travellers aspiring to discover Russia and in particular, St. Petersburg.

TRAVEL TRADE EUROPE: What are the latest luxury tourism trends in Russia?

CHRISTINA KUZNETSOVA: Luxury is a very broad concept so we attentively monitor the options that would be really interesting for the guests and respond to their demands. During the four years of the hotel's existence it is perceptible how the idea of luxury evolves. It is becoming more various, and it is excellent because today, especially Russia, is ready to offer the diversity of special travel impressions. There is a classic Russian luxury that glorified the breadth of Russian souls across the world, and our concierges can arrange such truly unforgettable experience for our guests.

TRAVEL TRADE EUROPE: Do you offer personalised experiences or special packages to luxury seekers who are visiting?

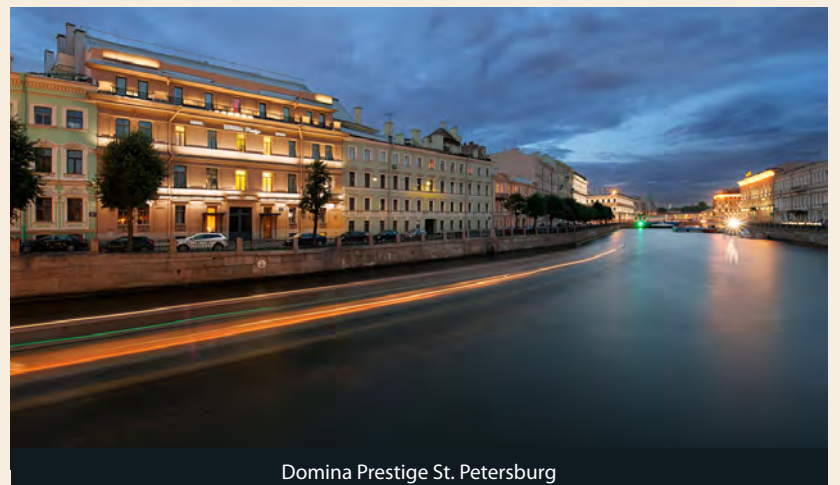
CHRISTINA KUZNETSOVA: There is another trend and requirement among the guests conscious refusal from the conspicuous consumption. When choosing a hotel, they are primarily looking for a guarantee of absolute privacy during the stay, adherence to incognito and the most personalised service. A hotel for them, is almost a speak-easy place, private favourite resort where you can escape for a few days or weeks. And their request when visiting St. Petersburg is an opportunity to attend such private characteristic places - art galleries, concerts, and tiny local restaurants. We provide this truly unique experience of staying in the city.

We build our relationship with guests in the way we are always there for helping them without importunity at the same time. You may come and stay at your room for some days sleeping off and recovering - the staff will be considerate, and the Russian cuisine dishes are easy to hold right in the room. Spending time in the most intensive way include excursions with a personal guide and visiting places closed to the public. It is even possible to organise a visit to the tzar's lounge an hour before the performance begins, there are no closed doors for our concierges.

TRAVEL TRADE EUROPE: Are there any interesting plans in the hotel's future that visitors should look forward to?

CHRISTINA KUZNETSOVA: Russia dynamically diversifies, extends its touristic product. Today you will be surprised when visiting St. Petersburg, not in the season of famous white nights but in winter, for example. In the snowy city there are plenty of things to do. Cultural life is in full swing - the most exciting theatrical and ballet premieres are held in this time. A stone throw away from the hotel there is a gorgeous new ice rink where you can feel like a child again or show your kids the mysterious Russia. When you stay in the thick of events in the historical city centre, you can feel as locals. In my mind, diving into the country fully, being not just a part of a tourist attraction but a part of the city's life - is the element of new luxury as well.

The truest indicator for us, which we constantly check, is a number of regular guests. They make a third of the total, and we are planning to increase this index. In today's standardised world the home warmth is the most valuable element. People with pleasure return where they could feel it.



Domina Prestige St. Petersburg