

VODKA MUSEUM INVITES TO A “NEW” RUSSIAN VILLAGE



A Russian village destroyed in WWII has been revived and become a popular tourism attraction. Traditional houses, craftsmen at work and Russian vodka museum with the most vodkas lure crowds of tourists every year.

Relatively near (from the Russian point of view) to St. Petersburg is a small village named **Verkhnie Mandrogi** boasting interesting history. The village was completely destroyed in World War 2 and it was not until 1996 that you could even hear about it.

In 1996 a St. Petersburg entrepreneur introduced an idea to rebuild the village as a tourism attraction. He started with the construction of a small hotel made of pine logs, equipped and decorated in traditional Russian style. However it also has some modern day equipment such as private bathrooms, telephones, and Internet.

With the growing popularity the revived village has expanded. Nowadays there are several traditional Russian houses where the visitors may observe potters, weavers, carvers and painters at work and buy souvenirs. The visitors can also go fishing or hunting, practice archery or ride a horse. There is also a mini-zoo as well as a moose farm and bread museum.

What is however the most attractive for many (especially male) tourists is the local **vodka museum which boasts with 2700 different kinds of Russian vodka**. They have bottles in all possible shapes. There are bottles in shapes of guns, swords, crowns, busts or submarines. What more - the collection of vodkas keep growing so anytime you get to the museum they have something new. Tourists usually visit the village in summer by cruise boats from St. Petersburg and Moscow. In winter the transport is more difficult and visitors need to use train, bus or helicopter to get to Verkhnie Mandrogi. For many however the vodkas are worth it.

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