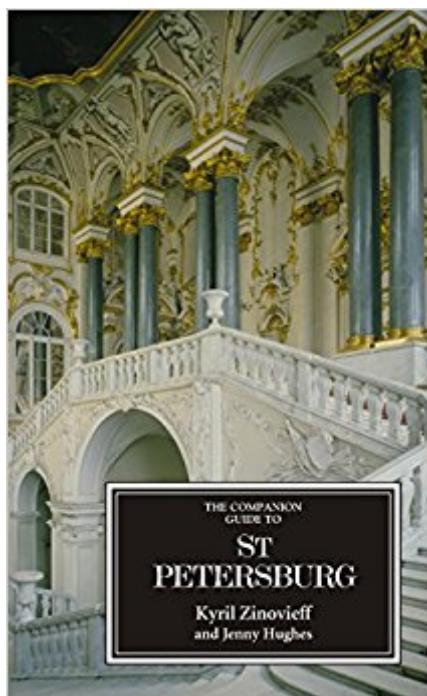


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The Companion Guide To St Petersburg (Companion Guides)



Synopsis

The Companion Guide to St Petersburg was first published in spring 2003 to coincide with the tercentenary of the founding of the city. Most visitors to St Petersburg have heard at least four facts about it: that it is 'the Venice of the North'; that a vast number of workmen, perhaps a hundred thousand, died in the early years of its construction; that it was built on uninhabited marshes; and that it was founded on territory which did not and never had belonged to Russia. These 'facts' have one feature in common: none of them is true. Few people can say this with more authority than Cyril Zinovieff, who comes from a family associated with the administration of St Petersburg since the eighteenth century. He recalls being taken as a child in 1917 to see the damage done to the Winter Palace - which he found regrettably unspectacular. And more: 'My sister and I may have been two of the last people still alive to have seen Rasputin' is the startling beginning of another chapter. His knowledge of the history of his city, where every stone tells a story, is encyclopaedic; his respect for the spiritual strength of its inhabitants unbounded; he has produced a work of charm, humour and erudition with a unique insight into this amazing city.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Lit up by many insights into Russian history, attitudes and customs: in short, the best kind of stimulus for the interest and enjoyment of visitors... His book is a goldmine. --Country Life
Suffused with a wealth of anecdote and drama... both knowledgeable and succinct. --History Today
Exceptionally well-informed... Cyril Zinovieff fills every palace with its former occupants and

makes every event, including the siege of Leningrad, seem like yesterday. --Sunday Telegraph

KYRIL ZINOVIEFF, as Cyril Fitzlyon, has made noted translations from the Russian, including the Diary of Vaslav Nijinsky; this book has been written with JENNY HUGHES, formerly of the Economist and the Guardian.

For decades, the Companion Guide series has presented the most sophisticated English-language city guides on earth. I've never seen one which was not as good as one could want in the space at the author's disposal. Writers are always profoundly knowledgeable, either natives or foreigners with long, very deep experience of the city at hand. Zinovieff is such a writer in spades. His aristocratic ancestors owned one of the great palaces of St. Petersburg, and he knows the city inside out. So he fills his guide with delightful, often beautifully ironic, historical and biographical tidbits which give the reader as broad a grasp of the city as one could get from a book of this size. The forte of the Companion Guide series is that the writers truly are wonderfully companionable for the knowledgeable and sophisticated. On a totally different plane from, say, Lonely Planet. These books are for worldly people, not backpackers. Highly recommended.

This book is perfect for those who are interested in going beyond the standard tourist guides. It is not about knowing where to eat or sleep. The authors offer a fantastic tour through a wonderful city, weaving architecture, history, and urban stories in an accessible way. If you have time and interest, this book will offer you a different perspective on the city, and will help you make sense of its fascinating and troubled history which jumps out in every corner, told by canals, bridges, and wonderful buildings.

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