

# TRANS SIBERIAN TOUR

MOSCOW TO VLADIVOSTOK



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# My experience in Russia



Having travelled in many countries of the world, either by mountain climbing in Asia and Kashmir, also traveling by motorcycle across the Americas and Europe, I still wanted more and I decided to discover Russia, which for us North Americans, we were brought up to believe that Siberia was a no man's land with forced labor camps and frozen land year round. So my first steps were to learn the language then to find someone in Russia that would guide me and also provide me with an invitation to obtain a visa. After this was done, I embarked on what was to be the Trans-Siberian tour ; a first on motorcycle. With the help of an experienced guide Alex Nikonov and his assistant Timofey Karpov. We started this adventure in Moscow to finish in Vladivostok.

I started off by entering into St-Petersburg, which I visited for approx. 5 days, then took a high speed train to Moscow to pick up my motorcycle. Russia is a most beautiful country with kind people who are ready to help. I definitely recommend for anyone to visit Russia, even if it's for a short visit, there are so many places to see.

My name is Gilles Robert From Québec, Canada.

My story...

I want to thank my amazing family for supporting me during this trip.



I dedicated this trip to Jo-Ann, loving friend, who passed away.



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**BMW Motorrad**

Thanks to Claude Gagné  
Certified Instructor BMW Germany  
On Road / Off Road / Marshal GS Trophy  
BMW MOA Amdassador World / Ridaventure.ca Ambassador



Thanks to Alain Laliberté who did technical and service work on my motorcycle.



In St-Petersburg, I visited the Peterhof Summer Palace: the greatest technological achievement of Peterhof is that all of the fountains operate without the use of pumps. Water is supplied from natural springs and is collected in reservoirs in the Upper Gardens. The elevation difference creates the pressure that drives most of the fountains of the Lower Gardens, including the Grand Cascade. The Samson Fountain is supplied by a special aqueduct, over four km in length, drawing water and pressure from a high-elevation source. In the back of the fountain is the Gulf of Finland on Atlantic Ocean.





Vodka tasting with Anastasia.





St-Petersburg underground.



The Eternal Flame in Moscow.



Two young ladies enjoying their Sunday afternoon at the Kremlin.

Visiting Moscow and the Underground before my departure across Russia.









GUM mall at Red Square.



Visited the Kremlin Garden in Moscow.

In Moscow, I met my friend Roch Lessard from Montréal, Canada who was trekking up Mont Elbrus, which is the highest peak in the European continent.





Moscow Underground.



I spent a day in the capital of Russia with Alex and Nick. Plenty of interesting places to visit, beautiful museums, cathedrals, central Gorky Park, local market, the Sparrow Hills with the best view of the city and the Night Wolves Motorcycle Clubhouse.



Started our adventure at Saint Basil's Cathedral, a great architectural wonder of the 12th century.





Looking for our route in Obuhovo village, near Chernogolovka, Alexey and his wife helped us out by guiding us to a route and then inviting us for lunch.









Our first day of off road touring.







Alex and I walked over the Volga embankment and had dinner in local restaurant.









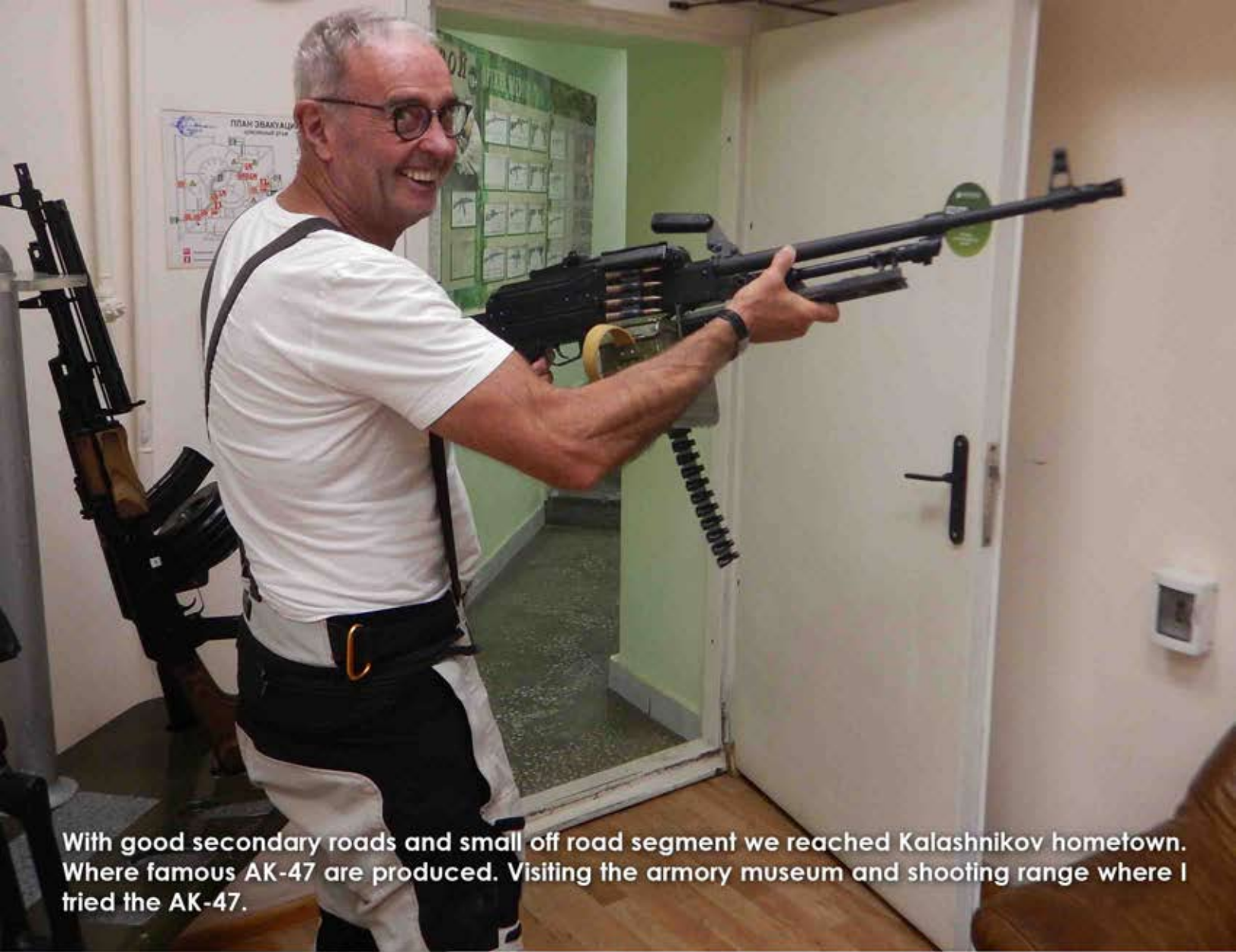
Visiting locals in a small country village.





Visited the national museum in Kozmodemyansk, then visited Kazan, an ancient city which is the third capital of Russia after Moscow and Saint-Petersburg.





With good secondary roads and small off road segment we reached Kalashnikov hometown. Where famous AK-47 are produced. Visiting the armory museum and shooting range where I tried the AK-47.







It was a long riding day with lots of picturesque roads, oil production plants, farm fields in the region of Perm. Our second breakfast from local food store: forest berries, apples and other fruits and finally shot of vodka in Yekaterinburg.







Day of rest in Yekaterinburg. Had a good sleep and some free time in the morning. In the afternoon, had a local guided tour around the city. Visited 1905 Square, Oktyabrskaya Square, the Blood Church, Historical Square and Garden of Stones.





Stopped at the Church of Blood which was built in Honor of All Saints Resplendent in the Russian Land, this church stands on the site where the last tsar of Russia, Emperor Nicholas II, and his family were executed.

In the early hours of 17 July 1918, the royal family was awakened around 2:00 am and were led down into a half-basement room at the back of the Ipatiev house. The executioners drew handguns and the shooting began.







The missile that was launched to destroy the American Spy (Powers) in the Cold War in the 60's.



The Obelisk that separates Asia and Europe.



Travelling in Russia one thing we really liked is openness of people, especially in Siberia. All travelers say that the locals are very welcoming : ask about the trip, your plans for the few days and invite you to stay in their home.

This photo was taken at the petrol station in between Yekaterinburg and Tyumen. The children were extremely happy to see us. They took many photos with us and our bikes and treated us with local treats.





Visited the motorocycle factory in Irbit and we were offered to test the motos.

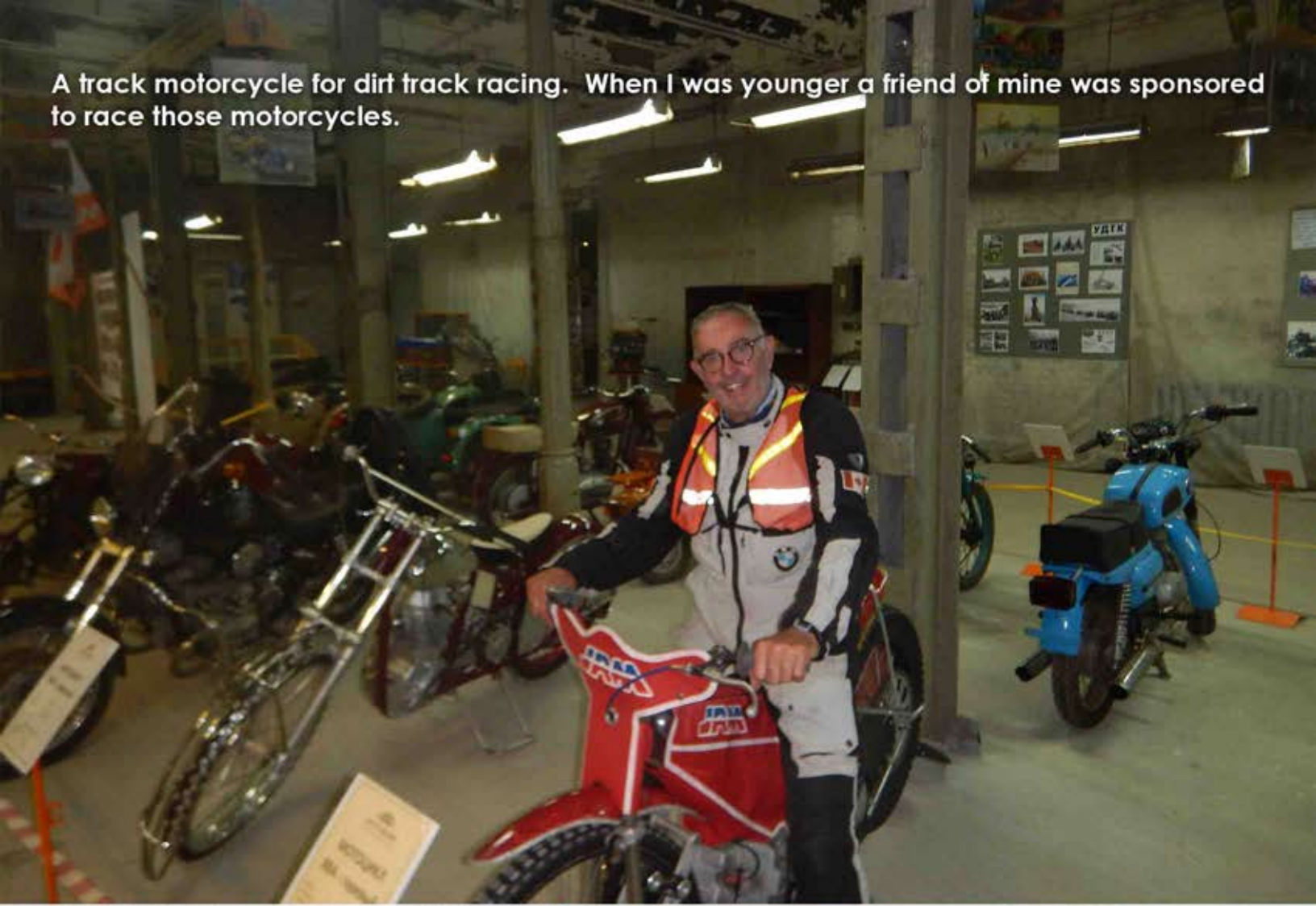


IMZ-Ural 'Irbit Motorcycle Factory' is a Russian maker of heavy sidecar motorcycles. In 1940, the Soviet Union acquired the design and production techniques for BMW R71 motorcycles and sidecars. The first M-72 model was finished in 1941. Originally, factories were to be located in Moscow, Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg), and Kharkov, but due to the approach of Nazi German troops, the Moscow facilities were moved to Irbit, and the Leningrad and Kharkov facilities to Gorkiy.



A track motorcycle for ice racing.

A track motorcycle for dirt track racing. When I was younger a friend of mine was sponsored to race those motorcycles.





Getting ready to test the URAL Motorbikes.



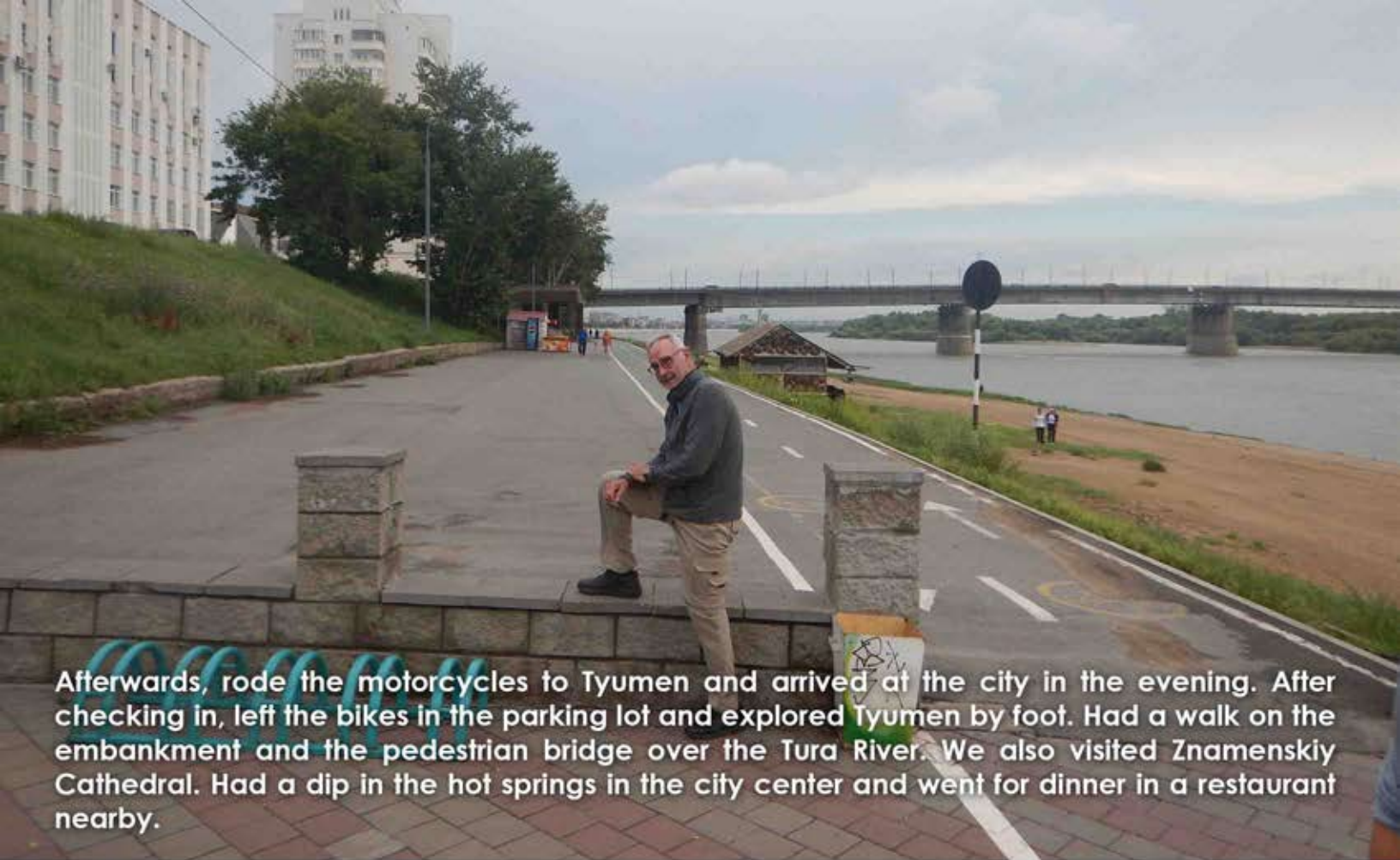
Visiting the factory.





My guides with Ken, a rider from USA and André from South Africa.



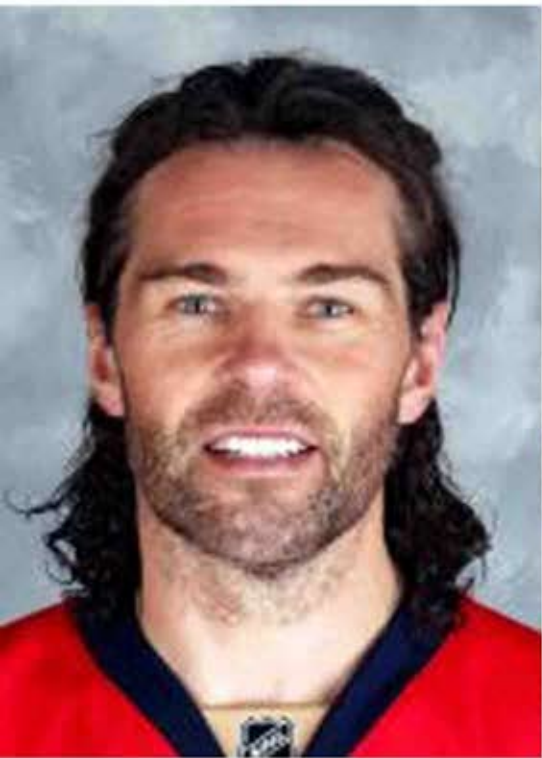


Afterwards, rode the motorcycles to Tyumen and arrived at the city in the evening. After checking in, left the bikes in the parking lot and explored Tyumen by foot. Had a walk on the embankment and the pedestrian bridge over the Tura River. We also visited Znamenskiy Cathedral. Had a dip in the hot springs in the city center and went for dinner in a restaurant nearby.



A happy man and his cup of tea.

A calm road to Omsk was waiting for us today. On our way we visited Ishim, the small city which preserved the ancient architecture of the 19th century. In Omsk we had a tour of the city and visited main places of interest.



Jaromir Jagr played for the Avangarde Hockey Team in Omsk and is now a famous NHL player.







Had tea in a small country pub.



My guide Alex doing some off road. Then we continue exploring Novosibirsk, had a walk on the Mikhaylovskaya embankment of the Ob River in the city park. We visited the old part of the bridge which was the first railway bridge on the Trans-Siberian route, a metro-bridge, the longest in the world, is situated nearby. We also visited some interesting places not far from the city park near Obskoye, Novosibirsk Academgorodok, and rode along the dam of the Novosibirskaya hydro power plant.



Russian's Railway Museum.









We stopped in a small village, picked up some flowers at the local market for Alex's sister-in-law and her family.





We were invited for lunch at Alex's in laws.





Short riding day, but still full of interesting places and people. Today we visited Urga, a small city in the center of Siberia. Here we had lunch, walked over this small provincial city. In the afternoon we arrived in Kemerovo, coal industry center of Russia. Here we visited several museums and spent the evening in a country house hotel in the forest.



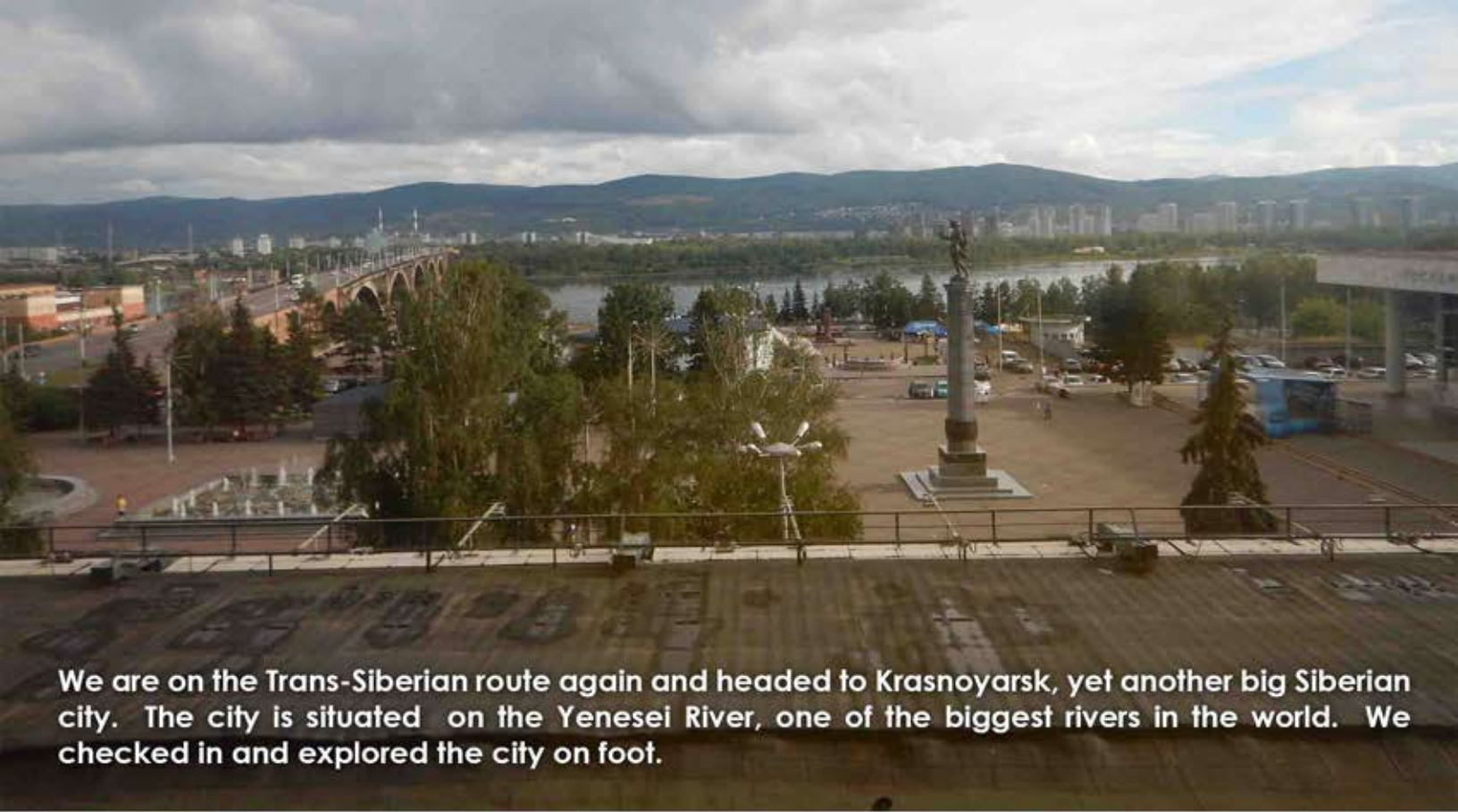




Our hotel in Urga.



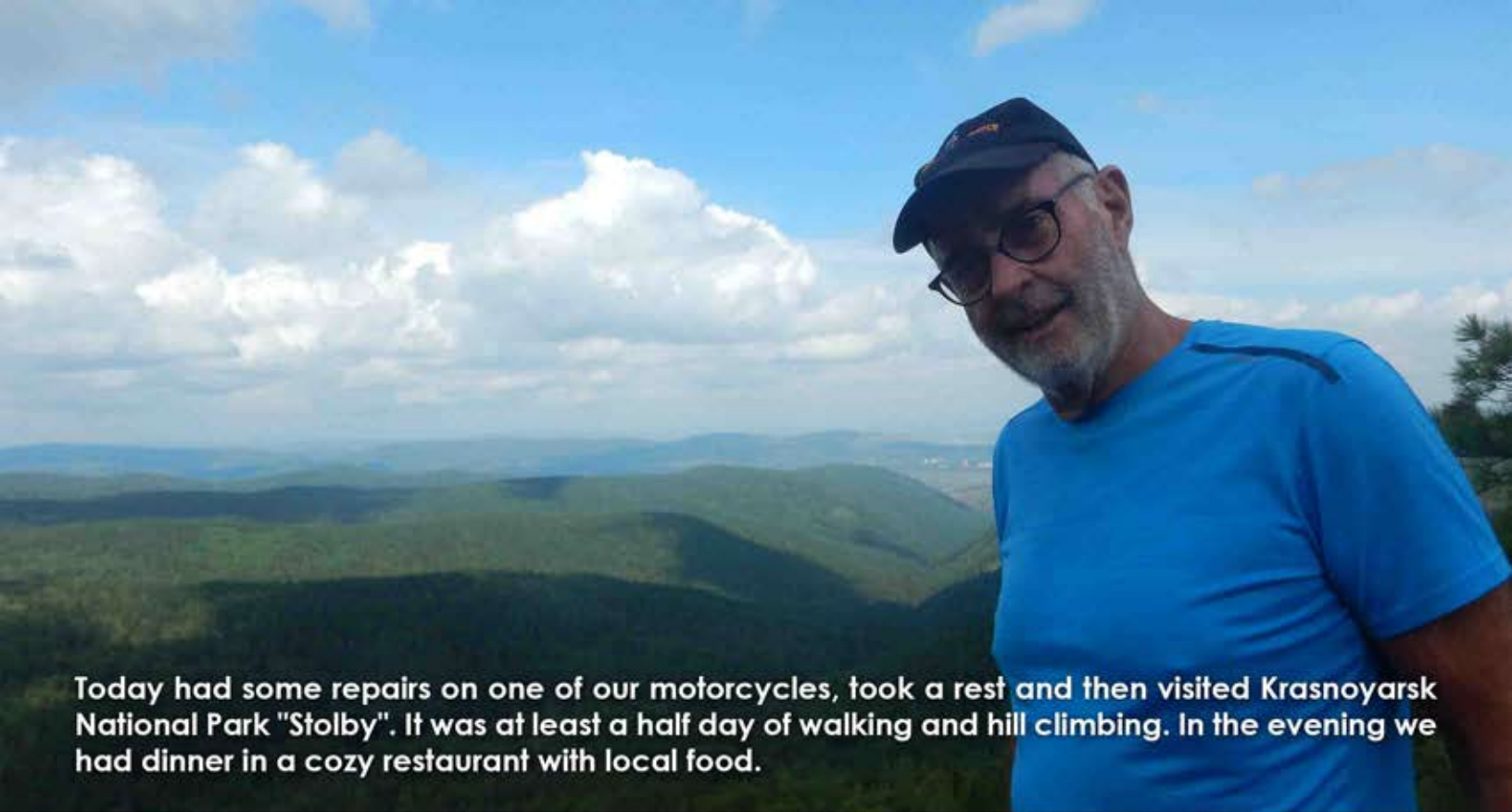
Lovely ladies for dinner service.



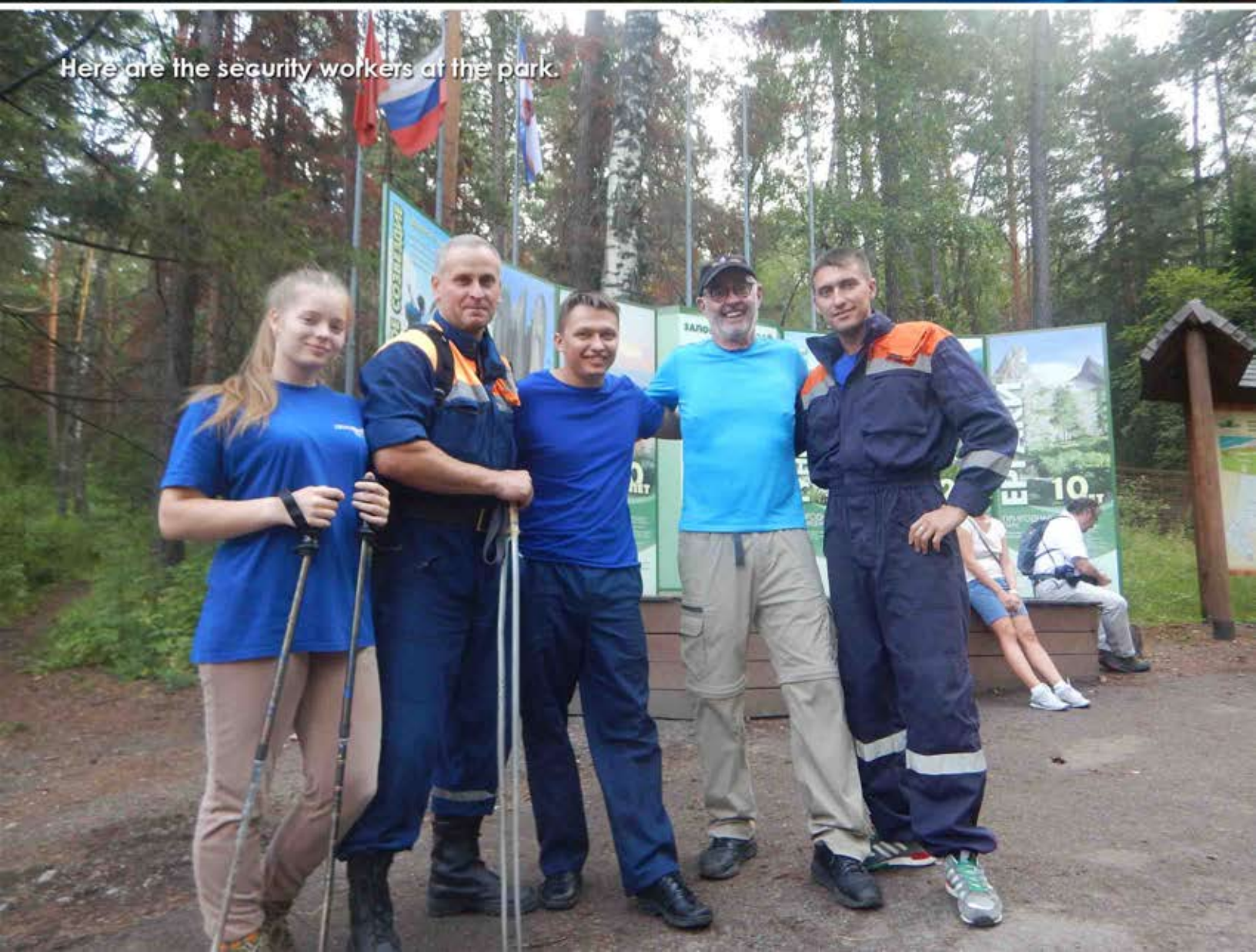
We are on the Trans-Siberian route again and headed to Krasnoyarsk, yet another big Siberian city. The city is situated on the Yenesei River, one of the biggest rivers in the world. We checked in and explored the city on foot.



I met a cyclist riding from St-Petersburg to Lake Baikal.

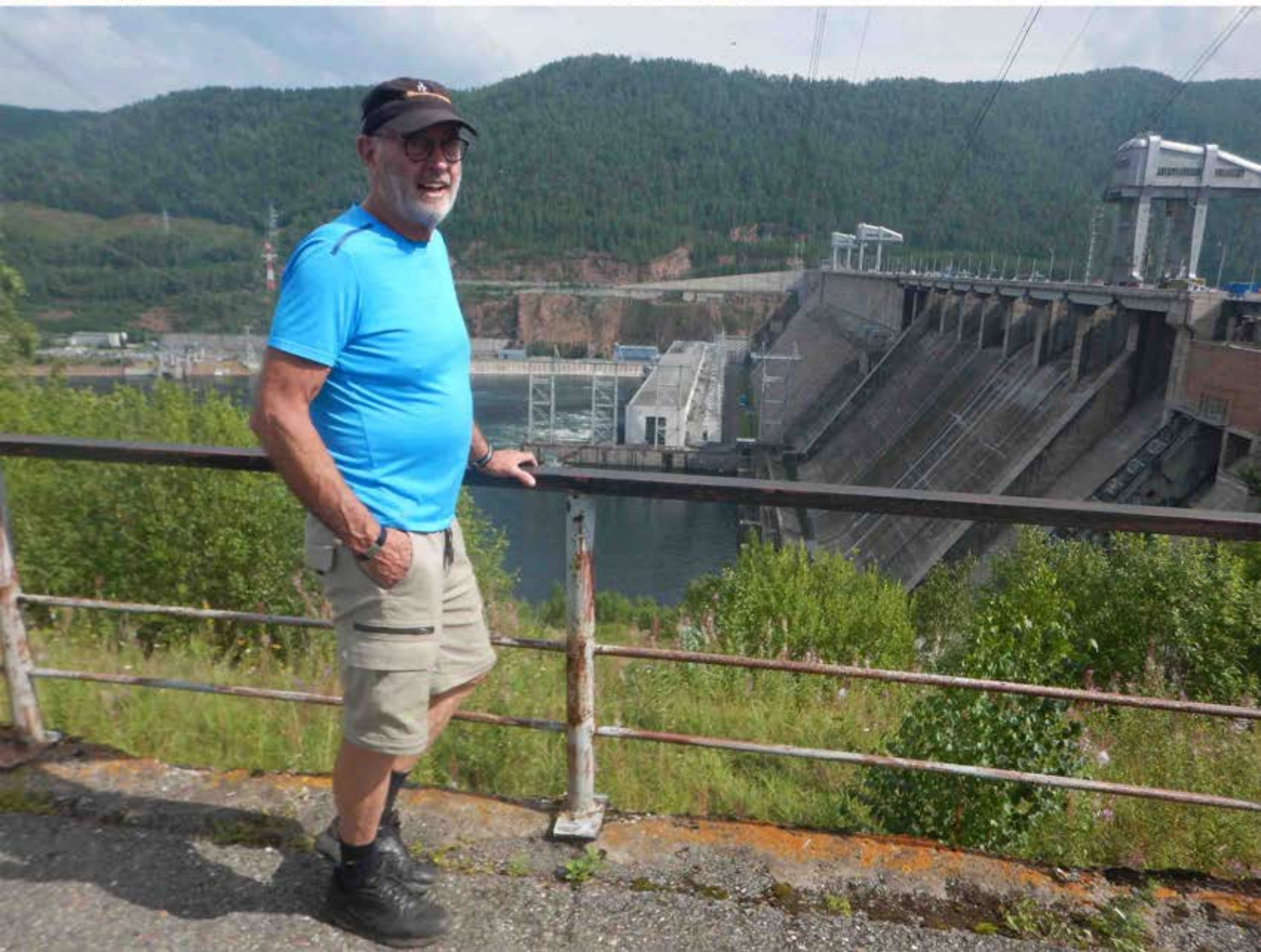


Today had some repairs on one of our motorcycles, took a rest and then visited Krasnoyarsk National Park "Stolby". It was at least a half day of walking and hill climbing. In the evening we had dinner in a cozy restaurant with local food.



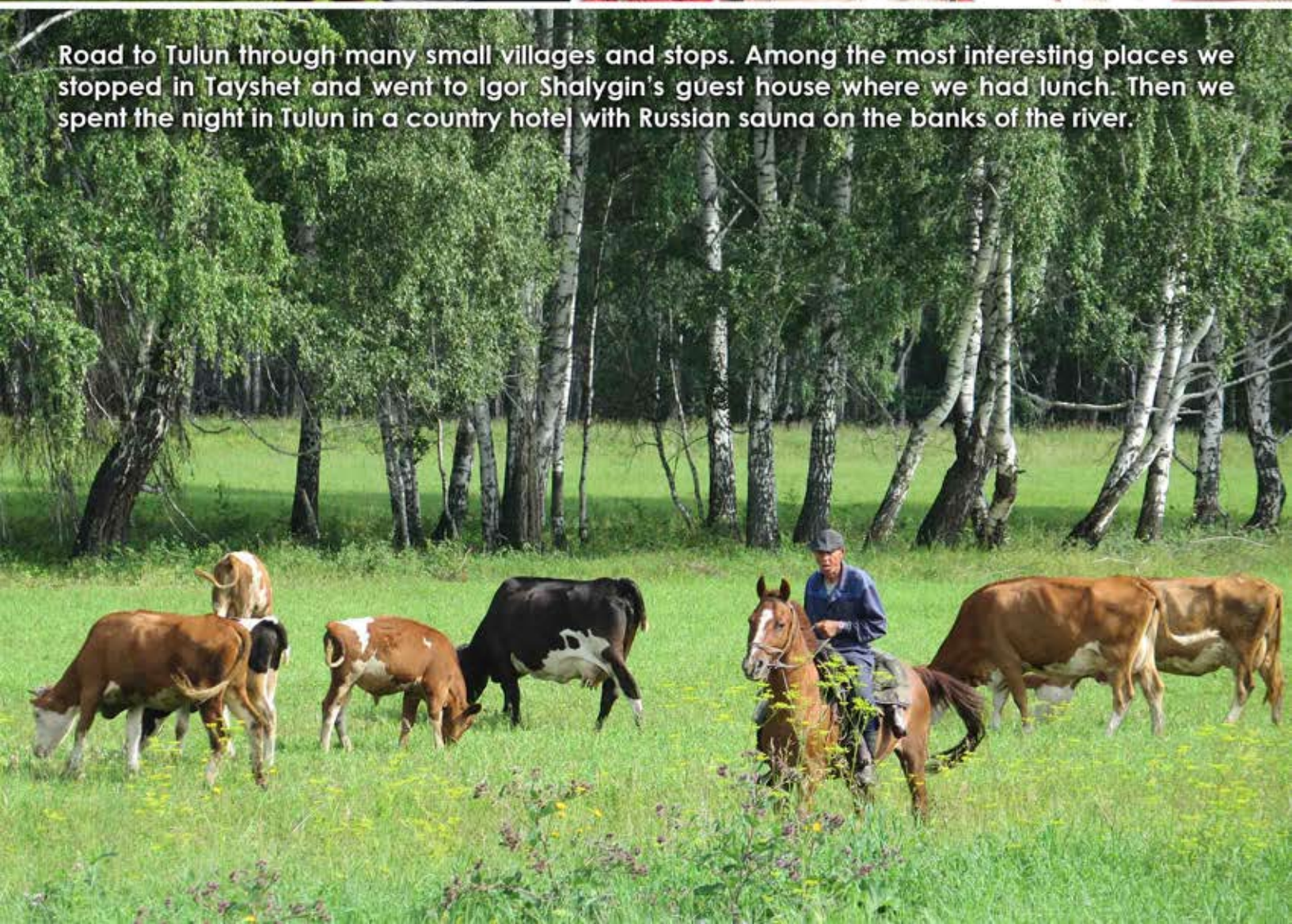
Here are the security workers of the park.







Road to Tulun through many small villages and stops. Among the most interesting places we stopped in Tayshet and went to Igor Shalygin's guest house where we had lunch. Then we spent the night in Tulun in a country hotel with Russian sauna on the banks of the river.





Beautiful country house by the Iya River in Tulun City.

Mountains on Iya River.





On the shore of Baikal Lake.



After breakfast we had a walk on the embankment and visited the main market, where you can buy souvenirs and taste the legendary Baikal fish called omul. Then we used the cableway to get to the Cherskogo Peak, where had a chance to see the Baikal from the height of 728 m. After lunch in Listvyanka, we got to the nerpa show. Nerpa is a freshwater seal, very friendly and easy-to-train animal. At the end of the day we had a dinner in the hotel.





Blacksmith shop.



Our hotel in Lake Baikal.

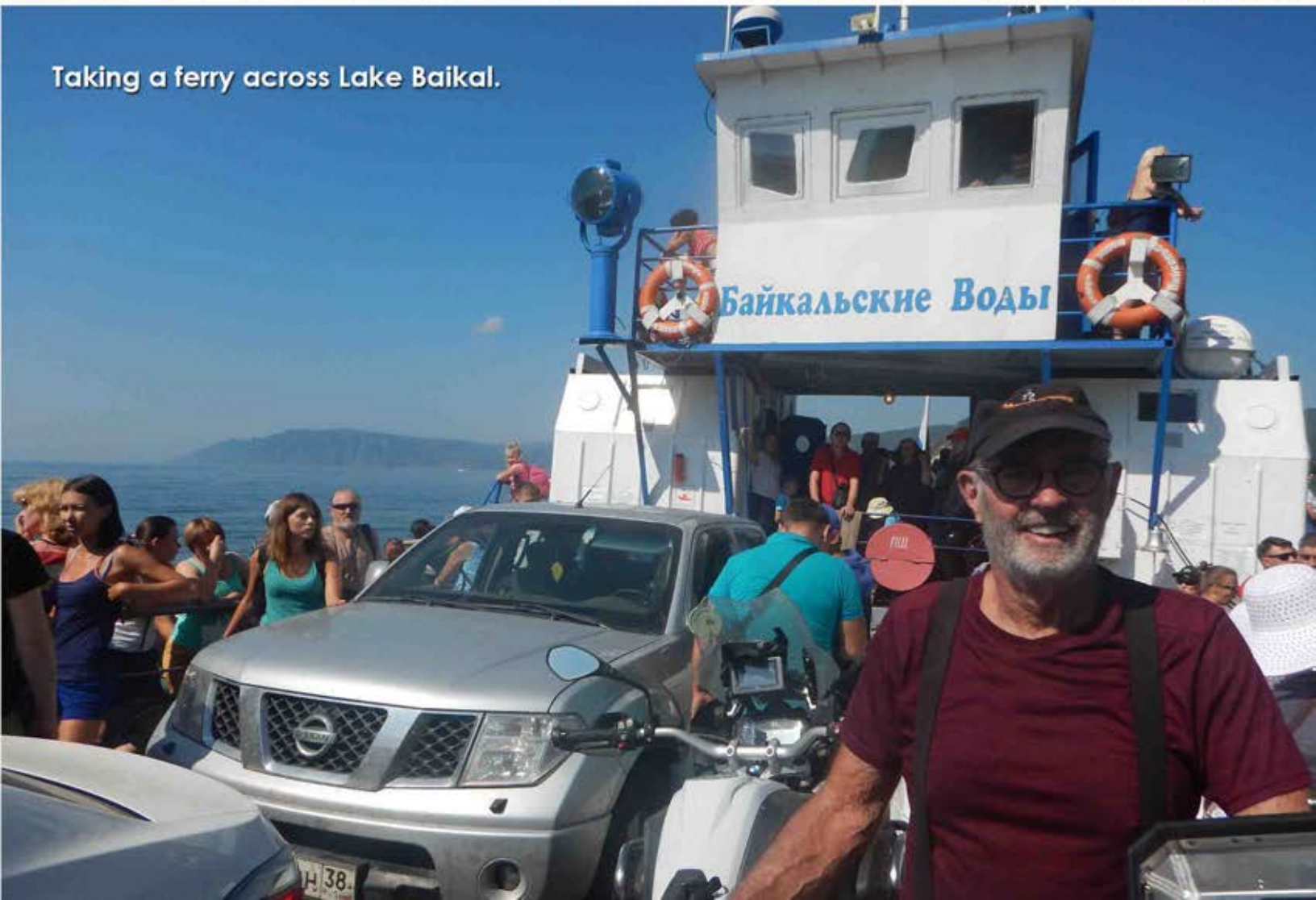


Vodka tasting.





My friend André was greeted by the owner of a local grocery store with a bottle of wine from South-Africa. It seemed as if the Owner had been on party all night long.



Taking a ferry across Lake Baikal.



Today we rode over a segment of the Trans-Siberian Railway, it is the most complicated segment that runs right along the lake shore.



Swimming in Lake Baikal.

New log home.



Food Market in Baikal.





Fish market.



Beach at Lake Baikal.



**The road to Ulan-Ude goes along the Baikal shore. A long time ago Ulan-Ude was a Mongolian city, now it's Russian. Lots of nationalities live here : Buryats, Barguzin Jews, Evenks, Mestizo.**





On our way to Ulan-Ude, we met this stranded Japanese rider who had a broken wheel, stopped a transport truck, put the Moto in and brought it to motorcycle repair shop.

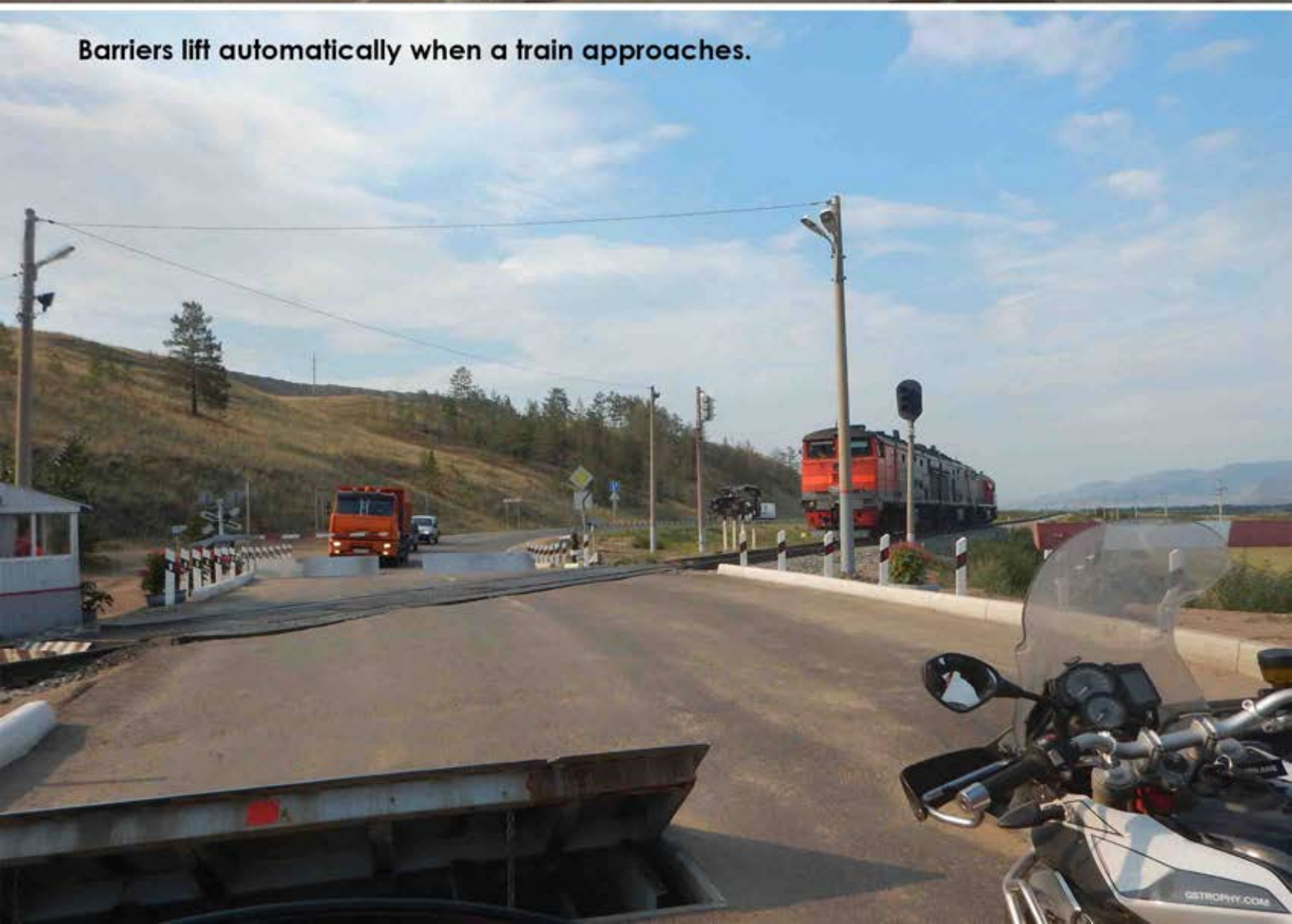


This city has many Buddhists, I visited a temple which reminded me of Kashmir in India.





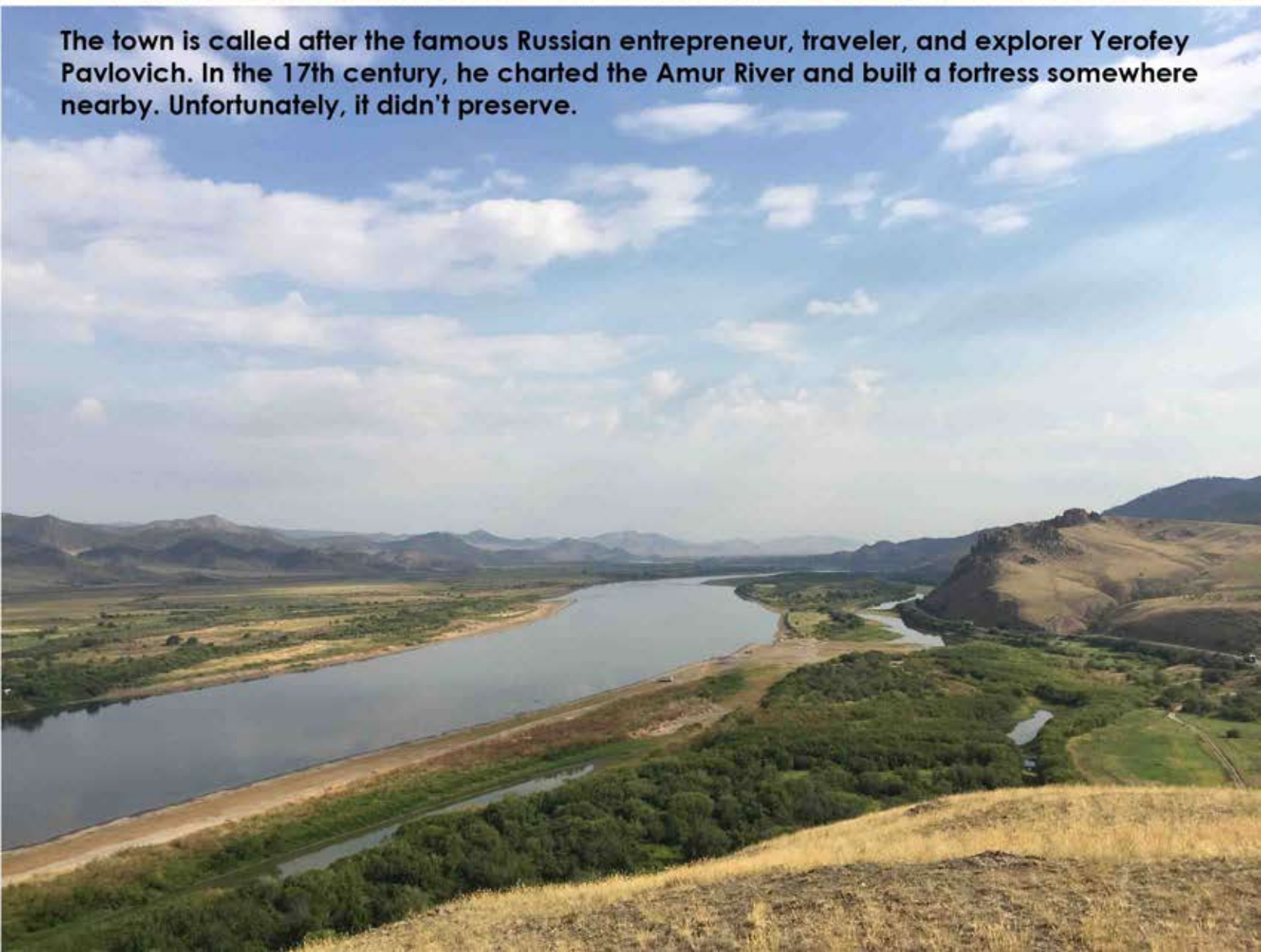
Lovely dinner at Modern Nomads in ULAN UDE.



Barriers lift automatically when a train approaches.



**The town is called after the famous Russian entrepreneur, traveler, and explorer Yerofey Pavlovich. In the 17th century, he charted the Amur River and built a fortress somewhere nearby. Unfortunately, it didn't preserve.**





Had dinner with my guide and locals:





Alex and I stopped for lunch, I was served by the owner in this Mongolian part of Russia who insisted I have his favorite cuisine.





A beautiful sunset.



The next morning we crossed the road going to MAGADAN it is called the ROAD OF BONES because of the prisoners that were forced to build it.



The Dalstroy construction directorate built the Kolyma Highway during the USSR's Stalinist era. Inmates of the Sevvostlag labor camp started the first stretch in 1932, and construction continued with the use of gulag labor until 1953. The road is treated as a memorial, as the bones of the people who died while constructing it were laid beneath or around the road. As the road is built on permafrost, interment into the fabric of the road was deemed more practical than digging new holes to bury the bodies of the dead.

After travelling in the rain late at night we found a small hotel where I slept in the same room as my guide and his assistant Timothy. We rented a three bedroom at a truck stop.





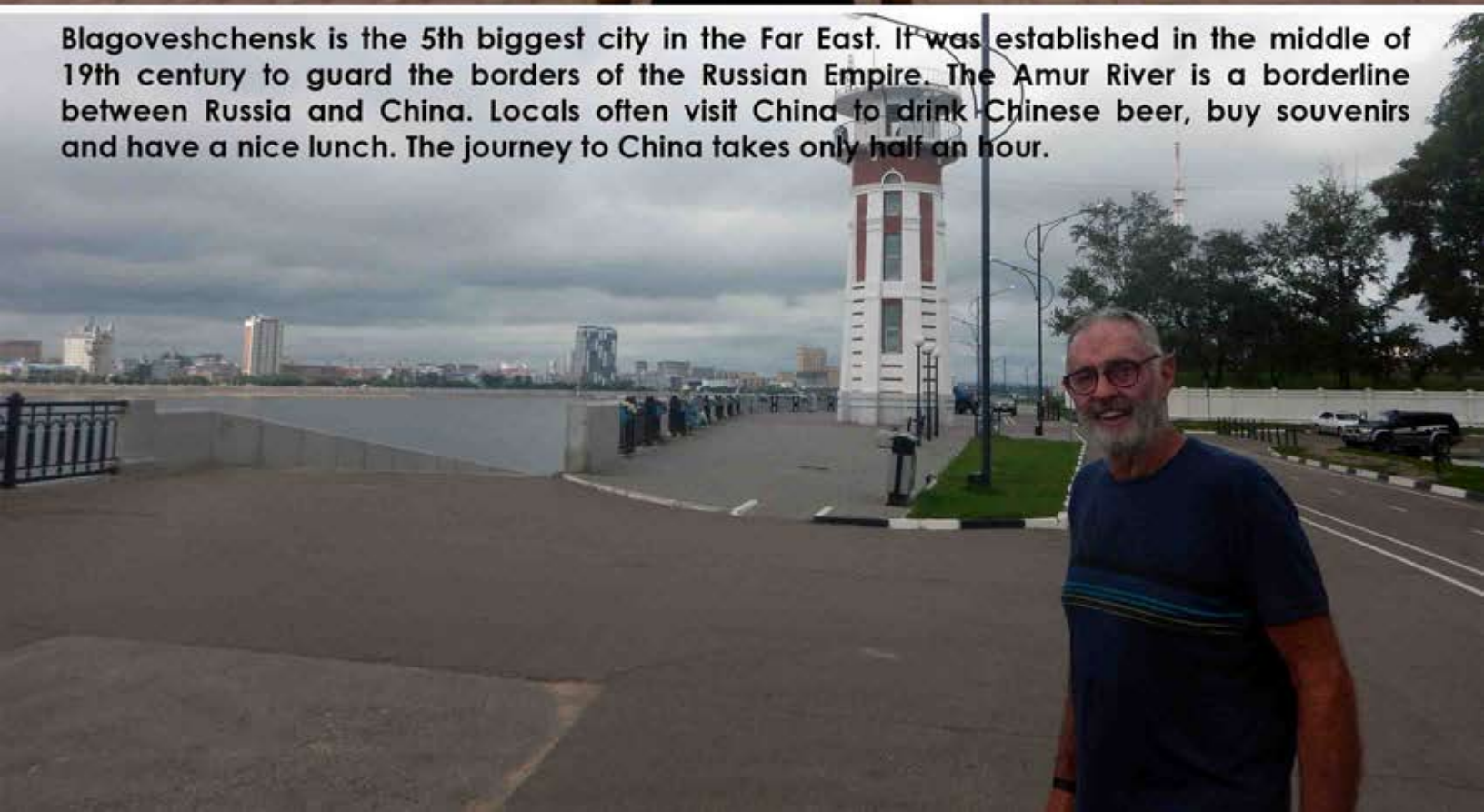
New Spatial Center in Russia.







Blagoveshchensk is the 5th biggest city in the Far East. It was established in the middle of 19th century to guard the borders of the Russian Empire. The Amur River is a borderline between Russia and China. Locals often visit China to drink Chinese beer, buy souvenirs and have a nice lunch. The journey to China takes only half an hour.





Blagoveshchensk with China in the background.





On the road we stopped by 20 or more combines getting ready to work the fields on a huge farm.





Moscow / Vladivostok Monument.



**Khabarovsk is probably the most beautiful city in the Asian part of the Trans-Siberian route. The Amur River is wide here, hills are beautiful, plenty of forests.**



Khabarovsk city center.



Never expected a bagpipe player in Russia!



Beautiful countryside on our way to the far east.



Food Market on the road.



Entering Vladivostok on Pacific Ocean coast, about 2 hour flight to Japan and 150km road distance to North Korea.



Went to the local BMW Motorrad dealership in Vladivostok.





Tokarevskiy lighthouse - one of the oldest lighthouses of the Far Eastern seas and the Gulf of Peter the Great. Founded in 1876. The beacon is mounted on the Tokarevskiy Cape. It is one of the trademarks of Vladivostok.

Strong currents and low water between the Tokarevskiy Cape and the Russian Island make it very dangerous for the ships to enter the Port of Vladivostok from this side. The lighthouse is there to mark the dangerous peninsula and lead the way to all the ships entering Vladivostok. It was built in 1876 – only 16 years after the foundation of Vladivostok city – at the end of a sand spit on Tokarevskiy Cape. Up to 1980s a wooden bridge connected the lighthouse with the mainland. Now the bridge is gone, but the remains of the bridge are still there.



I walked knee deep in the sea with my motorcycle clothes on to reach the lighthouse.



The far eastern Federal University of Russia.





Russia naval flotilla in Vladivostok.



Golden Gate Bridge, Russkly Island in Vladivostok.





A visit in Vladivostok.





In St-Petersburg where this custom was put in place in 1704, the shot was made from one of the bastions of Peter and Paul fortress. The history of the midday shot in Vladivostok originates in the 19th century. After a long break, the tradition returned in 1970: the shot was fired from a 100m cannon on a "Tiger Hill". In 1996, the cannon which had become one of the symbols of the city was silenced. Then museum "Vladivostok Fortress" picked up the baton and since 1997 the shot was delivered from a 45mm signaling cannon on the territory of the battery "With No Name". In 2008, the shots stopped again: very few of the necessary type of charges were produced, and the little museum lacked sufficient means to purchase them. After that, the cannon sounded only on holidays.

Concerned citizens gathered signatures and petitioned various authorities in defense of the tradition. Vladivostok, after all, was founded in 1860 as a military post and remains today as the main base of Russia's Pacific Fleet. In 2010, it received the status "City of Military Glory." The forts and batteries of Vladivostok Fortress, despite having lost their defensive significance are a unique feature of the city and continue to be a popular tourist and sightseeing destinations.

Ultimately, it was decided to restore the tradition, and on June 12, 2016 - Russia Day - they fired the first shot.



Rest day, packing things, taking photos, buying souvenirs. In the evening we visit a local seafood restaurant where we ate fresh crab.





On Moscow River, Gorky Park on right.



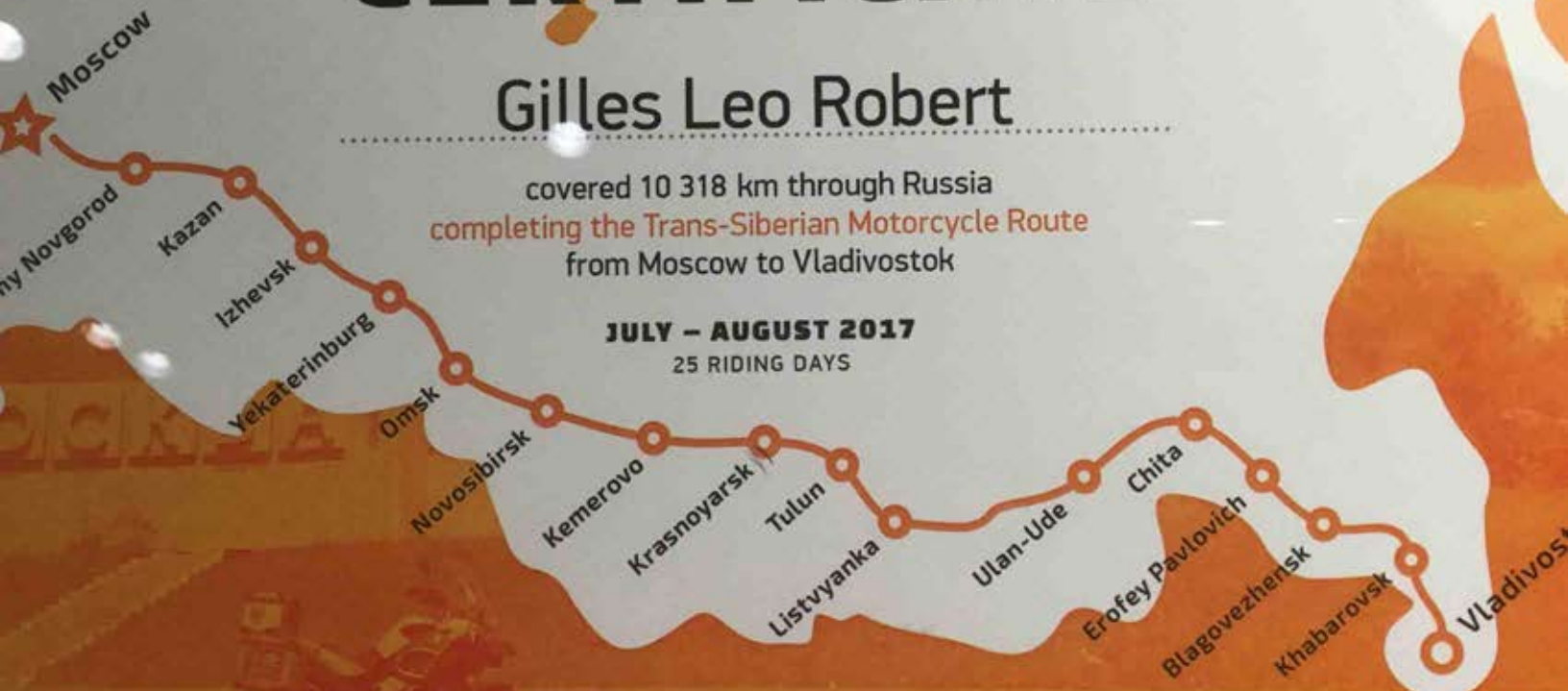
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# CERTIFICATE

Gilles Leo Robert

covered 10 318 km through Russia  
completing the **Trans-Siberian Motorcycle Route**  
from Moscow to Vladivostok

**JULY – AUGUST 2017**  
25 RIDING DAYS





**In June of 2018 I will remain in North America and travel through Several states up to the west coast in California to Vancouver visiting several small cities through western Canada and ride back to my hometown, this will be my preparation for winter 2019 for AFRICA where I will do some Road Touring on a BMW 1200 GS.**



**While I will be in Africa I will do a 10 days off-road on a KTM ENDURO in the Sahara.**

