

**Taos Art Museum at Fechin House & A Private View of Europe Present**  
***The Splendors of St. Petersburg***  
**September 11 – 18, 2015**

Deadline for reservations: April 20, 2015

[www.taosartmuseum.org](http://www.taosartmuseum.org)

575-758-2690



*Interior: Polovstov Mansion (House of Architects)*

## **Itinerary**

### **Friday, September 11**

#### **HOTEL ASTORIA**

#### **Academy of Fine Arts**

The Russian Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, informally known as the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts, was founded in 1757 by Ivan Shuvalov as the Academy of the Three Noblest Arts. In 1764 Catherine the Great renamed it the Imperial Academy of Arts and commissioned a new building which was completed 25 years later, on the Neva River. The Academy adhered to the conservative principles of Neoclassicism – conceived as a revival of the classical art of Ancient Greece and Rome – and sent its most promising students to Europe for further study. Training at the Academy was a virtual requirement for a successful career as an artist. Scholar Julia Korn will discuss Academic training at the time of Nicolai Fechin's studies at the Imperial Academy of Arts (1901-1909).

#### **Private visit to the studio of contemporary figurative artist Olga Tobreluts**

#### **Private visit and dinner at Polovstov Mansion, known as the House of Architects**

This mansion, named after the 19th century senator Alexander Polovstov the Elder, is located in the very center of St. Petersburg. Its unostentatious Neoclassical exterior contains genuine masterpieces of interior design, displaying all the luxury and magnificence of their era. Now known as the House of Architects, the mansion preserves much of its rich decoration, including fine wood paneling, marble, plasterwork, exquisite parquet flooring, and an utterly unique fireplace.

**Saturday, September 12**

**Visit to Petropavloskaya Krepost (Peter and Paul Fortress) and  
Petropavlosky Sobor (Peter and Paul Cathedral) – Tombs of the Romanovs**

St. Peter and Paul  
Fortress (right) is the  
birthplace of St.  
Petersburg and the  
heart of the Old City.  
It was founded on  
May 27 in 1703 by  
Peter the Great in  
order to protect his  
new capital and port  
city from Swedish  
attack in the



Northern War. Completed in earth and timber within a year, it was rebuilt in stone by Domenico Trezzini from 1706 to 1740. The Fortress has a varied history, having served as a base for the city garrison and as a prison. In 1876, Prince Peter Kropotkin became the first prisoner to escape the fortress, also known as the “Russian Bastille.” Other fortress prisoners included the Tsarevich Alexei Petrovich, the Decembrists, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Maxim Gorky, Leon Trotsky, and Vladimir Lenin's older brother Alexander Ulynov. During the Revolution many nobles, including the Romanovs, met their end there.

Within the fortress, the Cathedral is the burial place of all of Russian emperors and empresses from Peter I to Nicholas II. Construction on the Cathedral began in 1712, the year that Peter the Great moved the capital from Moscow to St. Petersburg. Its most notable feature is its thin spire, designed to be the tallest structure in Russia. Today, as in Imperial times, no building in the city center may be higher.

**Birzevaja Ploscad (The Old Saint Petersburg Stock Exchange and Rostral Columns)**

The Stock Exchange (or “Bourse”) is located in the very heart of St. Petersburg on Vasilevskiy Island. Designed by French architect Thomas de Thomon, who was inspired by the Greek Temple of Hera at Paestum, it was constructed from 1805 to 1810. The Rostral Columns on each side of the Exchange were completed in 1811.

**Lunch in a Restaurant**

**Visit to Menshikov Palace**

The Palace was founded on Vasilevsky Island as the residence of Prince Alexander Menshikov, first Governor General of St. Petersburg, in 1710, and opened in 1711. It was the first stone building in the city and once served both residential and administrative functions. Construction continued until 1727 when Menshikov and his family were exiled. The unique appearance of the building and its courtyard evolved over the course of construction through the influence of European architects and artists (Giovanni Mario Fontana, and later Johann Gottfried Schadel, Domenico Trezzini, Carlo Bartolommeo Rastrelli, Georg Johanns Mattarnovi, and Jean-Baptiste Alexandre Le Blond) and the Russian artisans who realized their ideas. Thus the palace combines traditional Russian elements and European innovations.

**View of the façade of Academy of Science**

**Visit to the workshops of selected jewelry artists, textile and fashion artists**

**Dinner in a restaurant**

## **Sunday, September 13**

### **Walk through Ploschad Iskusstv (Arts Square)**

Arts Square exhibits the excellence of St. Petersburg's original city planning. It was designed by the Italian Carlo Rossi (1775-1849) who spent most of his life working in Russia and is therefore widely considered a Russian architect – known to historians and to his contemporaries by his Russian name, Karl Ivanovich Rossi. He was responsible for all of the most prominent buildings on the square including the Mikhailovsky Palace, which today houses the Russian Museum. In the Classical manner of the time, all the buildings lining the square are similar in design, forming a harmonious architectural ensemble.

### **Visit to Rusky Museum, Church of the Savior on Spilt Blood**

This marvelous church was built on the spot where Emperor Alexander II was



assassinated in March 1881 and is dedicated in his memory. After assuming power in 1855 following Russia's disastrous defeat in the Crimean War with Great Britain, France, and Turkey, Alexander II undertook an unprecedented program of military, judicial, and urban reforms including the historic emancipation of the serfs in 1861. Between 1866 and 1880 Alexander survived five separate attempts on his life, including an explosion in the Winter Palace and the derailment of a train. He was finally assassinated in 1881 by "People's Will" revolutionaries, who threw a bomb at his royal carriage.

Unlike the Baroque and Neoclassical structures elsewhere in St. Petersburg, the Church of the Savior on Spilt Blood evokes medieval Russian architecture and intentionally resembles the celebrated St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow.

### **Lunch at restaurant 22.13**

### **Walk through Marsovo Polye (Field of Mars)**

Named for the Roman god of war, the Field of Mars is a park of more than 22 acres in the center of the city. It dates back to the beginning of St. Petersburg, when it was called the Great Meadow. Toward the end of the 18th Century it was transformed into a military parade ground and ornamented with monuments commemorating the victories of the Russian Army.

### **Visit to Solanoi Pireulok – Museum of Applied Arts, Stiglitz Academy**

In 1878 the philanthropist Baron A. Stiglitz built a museum for the Central College of Technical Drawing which he had founded in 1876. Based on Stieglitz's private collection of rare glassware, porcelain, tapestries, and furniture, the Museum's collection has now grown to more than 30,000 holdings of fine art and antiques.

### **Dinner at leisure**

**Monday, September 14**

**Dvortsovaya Ploschad (Palace Square) and Aleksandrovskaya Kolonna (Alexander Column) with Dima Liubin, Curator of Arms and Armor at the Hermitage**

Palace Square was designed from 1819 to 1829 by Carlo Rossi who was also responsible for one of its most monumental buildings, the General Staff Building. The focal point of the square, the Alexander Column, was designed by the French-born architect Auguste de Montferrand and built between 1830 and 1834. The monument is 155' 8" tall, topped by a statue of an angel holding a cross – the face of the angel is said to be modeled on the face of Emperor Alexander I. The body of the column is a single monolith of red granite, which stands 83' 6" high and about 11' 5' in diameter. In a terrific feat of engineering before the advent of modern cranes, the enormous column weighing 1,322,760 pounds (600 tons) was erected in less than two hours. The monument, whose pedestal is decorated with symbols of military glory, is particularly impressive on a sunny evening shortly before dusk, when the last beams of sunlight are reflected in the polished red granite of the column.

**Special visit to the Hermitage (Museum closed except to private tours)**



From the 1760s on, the Winter Palace was the main residence of the Russian Tsars. Magnificently sited on the Neva River, this palace is perhaps St. Petersburg's most impressive attraction. Many visitors also know it as the main building of the Hermitage Museum, one of the largest and most respected art museums in the world. The green-and-white three-story palace is a marvel of Baroque architecture and boasts 1,786 doors, 1,945 windows, and 1,057 lavishly decorated halls and rooms. The Winter Palace was built between 1754 and 1762 for Empress Elizabeth, the daughter of Peter the Great. Elizabeth died before its completion and it was Catherine II (Catherine the Great) and her successors who enjoyed Elizabeth's sumptuous home. Many of the palace's impressive interiors were restored after 1837 when a huge fire destroyed most of the building. Today the Winter Palace, together with the Menshikov Palace, Museum of Porcelain, Storage Facility at Staraya Derevnya, and the eastern wing of the General Staff Building, houses the stellar Hermitage collections.

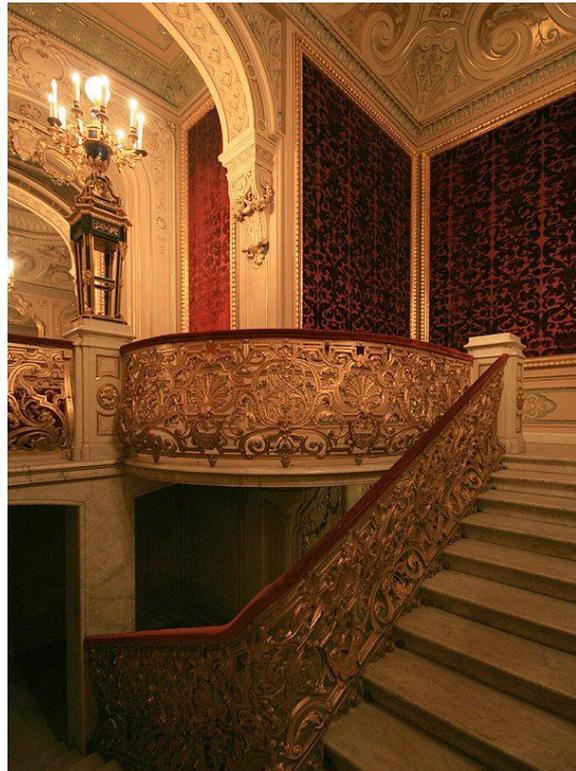
**Lunch at the Hermitage**

**Private tour of Russian Imperial porcelain in storage with Curator Tina Khmel'nitskaya**

**Tour of the Palace of Peter the Great – 18<sup>th</sup> Century Collections**

### Visit to the Palace of Grand Duke Vladimir Romanov (now known as “Scientists’ House”)

The last Imperial palace to be built in St. Petersburg, Vladimir Palace is one of those special places that remain undiscovered by the average tourist. The Grand Duke Vladimir, one of the eight children of Tsar Alexander II, was President of the Academy of Arts and a prominent patron, sponsoring many great artists including Sergey Diaghilev. His exceptional collection included Ilya Repin's magnificent *Volga Barge Haulers*, said to have been purchased from the painter for 3,000 rubles. Designed by Alexander Rezanov, the palace took 20 years to build, from 1867 when the Grand Duke was 20, to 1872. The opening was dedicated to an important event in the life of the Russian court: the marriage of the Grand Duke and Princess of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. The Palace exhibits the



eclecticism typical of the time: a monumental façade patterned on the Florentine Palazzo Strozzi and luxurious apartments each in other styles, from Renaissance to Rococo. Until 1917, the palace was a center of social life in St. Petersburg and the setting for countless musical and literary events. Princess Maria Pavlovna was regarded as one of Russia’s most illustrious socialites; her salon was frequented by Rachmaninoff, Chaliapin, and many other celebrities. After the October Revolution the palace was converted to the “Academics' House.” In consequence, its extraordinary interiors have been better preserved than those of other Romanov family residences. They include the magnificent Louis XV salon, the Russian Revival Oak Room with a fireplace and “wood” carvings completely made of plaster, and the Oriental Room where guests smoked hookahs, with a portrait of Maria Pavlovna's daughter on the wall. Most importantly, however, the Palace preserves the feeling of a private residence. As the parquet floor creaks under your steps, it feels as if the owners only just stepped out.

### Dinner cruise on the Neva



Peter the Great expected boats to be the main mode of transportation in his new capital and had many canals dug through the islands. This private boat tour is your chance to see the palaces of St. Petersburg as they were meant to be seen: from the water. The long sunsets of the White Nights of summer shed a magical illumination.

**Tuesday, September 15**

**Visit to Peterhof (depart by private boat)**

The Lower Gardens of Peter the Great's time, now known as the Lower Park, are a masterpiece of 18<sup>th</sup> century Russian garden design and landscape engineering. The park features a labyrinth of paths and ornate iron footbridges as well as several small pavilions and gazebos.

**Visit to Monplaisir**

Peter the Great's original summer palace Monplaisir is a charming Baroque mansion overlooking the Gulf of Finland. Its French name and restrained style reflect Peter's European tastes. Even after the Great Palace was built, Peter preferred this lodge on the water's edge.

**Lunch in a restaurant**

**Visit to the Catherine Block and the Royal Bath Pavilion.**

Peterhof ("Peter's Court" in Dutch) is a stunning formal summer palace, modeled on Versailles, and competing with it in grandeur and scope. Situated close to Kronstadt on the shore of the Gulf of Finland, it is a masterpiece of architecture and landscape design. The Great Palace, built in 1715 by Jean Baptiste Le Blond, was known in Peter's time for its summer fêtes, when guests were free to explore the Tzar's domain. The Catherine Block is a spacious palace created by Catherine the Great on the site of a tea house built for the Empress Elizabeth in 1748-49. Catherine lived there as the wife of Peter III for 15 years before the *coup* of June 28, 1762 that made her Empress. It was from the Tea House that she left to ascend the throne.



Peterhof's fountains are legendary. The Grand Cascade is equally beautiful whether viewed from the palace and framed by the greenery of the park, or from the park toward the palace façade. The Samson Fountain depicting the biblical hero tearing open the jaws of a lion symbolizes Peter's victory over Sweden at the battle of Poltava in 1709, which helped secure Russia's hold on this region.

**Return to St. Petersburg, visit to St. Isaac Cathedral (Isaakievskij Sobor)**

St. Isaac Cathedral was originally the city's main church. It is the largest cathedral in Russia, built between 1818 and 1858 by the French Neoclassical architect Auguste de Montferrand as one of the most impressive features of the Imperial capital. 180 years later, St. Isaac's gilded dome still dominates the city's skyline.

**Dinner in a restaurant**

## Wednesday, September 16

### **Architectural tour by private boat, guided by a scholar of architecture**

#### **Walking tour with architectural scholar**

#### **Nevsky Prospekt, St. Catherine Church, Kazansy Sobor (Cathedral)**

Nevsky Prospekt is St. Petersburg's main corridor, one of the best-known avenues in Russia. It runs from the Admiralty to the Moscow Railway Station and thence to Alexander Nevsky Monastery. Though originally it was just the start of the road to ancient Novgorod, it was quickly adorned with beautiful buildings, squares, and bridges and became the heart of the bustling, growing city.

#### **Lunch at restaurant Terrassa**

#### **Aleksandrinsky Theater**

Since 1832, the theater has occupied this Empire-style building, designed by Rossi and built from 1828 to 1832 on Nevsky Prospekt's Alexandrinsky Square. Both the theatre and the square were named after Empress Consort Alexandra Feodorovna.

#### **Ulica Rossi (Rossi Street)**

#### **Dinner at leisure**

## Thursday, September 17

### **Visit to the Catherine Palace of Tsarskoye Selo ("Tsar's Village")**

Walk through Park to the Catherine Palace followed by a short walk to visit the Cameron Gallery, the Lower Bath House, the Grotto, and the Hermitage Pavilion

In 1708, Peter the Great gave a Swedish noble's former residence to his wife, the future Empress Catherine I, and named it after her. Catherine began to develop the palace as a royal country residence, but it was primarily her daughter, Elizabeth, and the architect Bartolomeo Rastrelli (who also designed the Winter Palace) who built the Catherine Palace and gave it its impressive Baroque façade. Many of their Neoclassical interiors were later remodeled by Catherine II (Catherine the Great). Rastrelli intended Catherine Palace to rival both Versailles and Peterhof. More than half a mile around, and 984' in length, it is the longest palace in the world. 1,000 pounds of precious amber decorated the Amber Room. The stunning mosaics created by Florentine craftsmen were looted by



Nazis in World War II (only one, "Smell and Touch," was rediscovered, in 1997) but the room has been meticulously restored. The Great Hall is a grand ballroom lined with two tiers of windows interspersed with mirrors, luminous on mid-summer nights.

With Catherine Palace at its heart, Tsarskoye Selo became the formal summer residence of the Russian imperial family and noble society. It was here that the country's first railway line was laid in order to carry the nobility 15 miles to and from the center of St. Petersburg for summer balls. The train station itself is an Art Nouveau gem, with murals of each station along the route. Tsarskoye Selo was renamed "Pushkin" in the Soviet era in memory of Russia's beloved poet Alexander Pushkin who studied at the lycée here and later had a dacha in town.

### **Lunch in the restaurant Podvorje**

### **Visit to Pavlovsk Park and Palace**

In 1777 Catherine the Great gave hunting grounds and a residence on the bank of the Slavyanka River to her son, Grand Duke Paul, later Emperor Paul I. Decades later this became one of the most beautiful estates of Russia, with an austere and graceful Palace that featured the work of Russia's most prominent architects and their various interpretations of Russian Classicism. In 1780, Charles Cameron began construction of the central building of the palace and several pavilions and small bridges, and the layout of the park. In the 1790s, Vincenzo Brenna enlarged the palace and continued designing the part, a task completed in the early 19th Century by Andrey Voronikhin, Carlo Rossi, and Thomas de Thomon. Balancing the strictly geometric palace is a 1,500-acre park filled with scenic views of the Slavyanka River in the manner of English landscape design. Though named for Grand Duke Paul, the palace – particularly its interiors – bears the stamp of his widow Maria Feodorovna, an enlightened woman who loved the Palace and lived there for many years. Its opulence is understated, the ensembles gently harmonious, and the overall impression ineffably uplifting.



### **Dinner at restaurant Vodka Room No. 1**

This classic Russian restaurant offers the city's widest choice of vodka; meals are served with traditional vodka accompaniments.

**Friday, September 18**

Departure

**Total price per participant includes all of the following:**

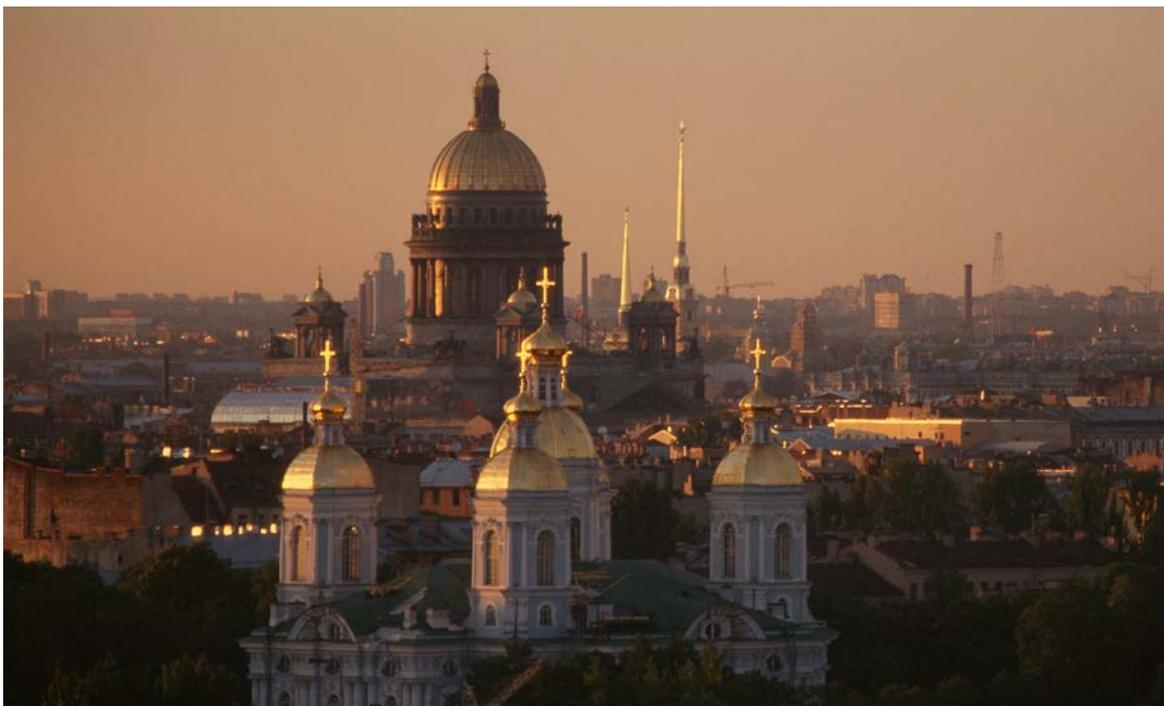
- Hotel accommodation double occupancy (including breakfast) in Junior Suites with a view of Bolshaya Morskaya Street or St. Isaac Square for seven nights at Hotel Astoria in St. Petersburg
- One transfer on arrival, from the airport to the hotel by private bus (for a selected flight)
- One transfer upon departure from the hotel to the airport by private bus (for a selected flight)
- Lunch and dinner as mentioned in the itinerary
- All transportation by private bus according to the itinerary
- Private boat for architectural tour
- All tours and private visits
- Special visit to Hermitage on the day reserved for private tours
- The presence of one staff member of A Private View of Europe
- The presence of a lecturer for all visits, and several museum curators
- Leather-bound booklet with the detailed itinerary for each participant
- Taxes
- Visa

**The price does not include:**

- Airfare from and to USA
- Any personal insurance
- Meals at leisure or not mentioned
- Individual transfers arrival/departure
- Any unpaid participants

**Price per person includes travel costs plus Museum contribution as follows:**

• Travel costs	Euro	5,500
• Museum contribution, tax deductible	US \$	500
Extra: single room supplement for all seven nights	Euro	770



See reservation form for payment instructions  
Costs based on 20 participants and double occupancy