

# The New Criterion

## Features

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### What time is it in Russia?

by [Jonathan Brent](#)

Russia past and present.

Moscow is now the most expensive city in the world, at least according to a recent, widely publicized report. Teenagers walk down Tverskaya Boulevard with stylish new cell phones pressed to their ears; they stop before shop windows that could line Madison Avenue; they treat themselves to ice cream and coffee at a wide spectrum of new foreign and domestic establishments. Restaurants of every sort serve every kind of food from pizza and hamburgers to sushi and the finest pre-Revolutionary lamb. “Moo-Moo,” with its enormous polyethylene black and white Holstein out front, “Shesh-Besh,” “Shashlyk-Mashlyk,” “Yolki-Palki” with their colorful ethnic trappings in full display announce themselves where but ten years ago nondescript storefronts presented signs that read simply: “Shoes,” “Furniture,” or “Women’s Clothing.” Ordinary shops are packed with expensive foreign g ...

**Jonathan Brent's** most recent book is *Inside the Stalin Archives* (Atlas & Co).

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