



*Did You know that
once upon a time, there was
a hotel called Viru?*

The year was 1972 and a little less than 20 years remained until the end of the Soviet era. The hotel for foreigners also had to suit the national security body – the KGB...

Tiesitkö, että kerran valmistui hotelli, jonka nimeksi tuli Viru?

Vuosi oli silloin 1972 ja neuvostovallan loppuun oli jäänyt vajaat 20 vuotta. Hotellin piti olla sopiva ulkomaisille turisteille, mutta samalla myös Neuvostoliiton valtiolliselle turvallisuuspoliisille KGB:lle...

Знаете ли вы, что была когда-то построен отель, получивший название «Виру»?

На дворе стоял 1972 год, и до конца советской эпохи оставалось чуть менее 20 лет. Отель, подходивший для иностранцев, должен был подходить и для органов государственной безопасности – КГБ...

Kas teadsid, et oli kord hotell, mis sai nimeks Viru?

Aasta oli 1972 ja nõukogude aja lõpuni jäi veidi vähem kui 20 aastat. Välismaalastele sobiv hotell pidi sobima ka riikliku julgeoleku organitele – KGB-le...



Viru Hotel, one of the best hotels of Inturist and the USSR, was completed in 1972 in a record time of 3 years. The builders were Finns, who were faster and more accurate than Soviet builders. Officially, employing Finns was described as brotherly assistance by the Soviet Union to the Finnish working class, which was plagued by unemployment.



For instance, Hollywood star Elizabeth Taylor, astronaut Neil Armstrong, the Shah of Iran and IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch, not to mention the endless Soviet Party elite, *nomenklatura*, have stayed at the Viru Hotel. The picture shows the world's first female cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova at a reception.



For receiving and driving high-ranking guests, the hotel had ten black Volgas, the show cars of the time, with drivers.
To travel outside Tallinn, one needed an official permit – a foreigner could not travel elsewhere just for fun.



Level 22 housed a restaurant; these days, it houses luxury rooms with excellent views of the Old Town, the city and the sea.



Level 23, which houses the Museum now, was closed to tourists. During the Soviet era, the reason cited for it was that the floor housed utility rooms and nothing of interest. The actual reason was the KGB: at the highest point in Tallinn, they had set up radio translation premises, a part of which may be seen there even today.



During the Soviet era, there were more than one thousand people working at Viru Hotel, whereas now 250 employees get the work done. No longer a need for floor monitors sitting on every floor, huge kitchens or laundries.



Every employee had their own employment certificate based on their position, with the colour of the certificate also indicating the employee's status.



The output of the Viru's confectioners and deli was comparable to hard currency: if you managed to buy a cake at the Viru through a good acquaintance, it would be the highlight of your week, if not your month.



People travelled from far and wide to see the legendary variety shows at the Viru, which featured performances by Estonia's best performing artists. These days, once more cabaret nights at Merineitsi Show&Dinner Restaurant attract a full house – Estonia's cabaret traditions have retained their very high level.



Cuff-links containing microphones are one of the exhibits at the Hotel Viru and KGB Museum.



Welcome to the *Hotel Viru and KGB museum* –
to the world where an hour spent will help you
understand and get a sense of the two parallel
worlds of the Soviet time!