

LEADERS

The rosier the news, the higher ranking the official who announces it.

— H. R. Caffyn from *The Official Explanations*
by Paul Dickson



On the Cover

This year, Russia will host the G8 summit, marking a high point in the remarkable career of President Vladimir Putin, who proves the truth of the old Russian saying, "Diligence is the mother of success."

Since first taking office in March 2000, Putin has led Russia into a new era of modernization and prosperity, shaking off the ghosts of the past by embracing foreign investment and forging partnerships with other global powers characterized by "trust, predictability, and consideration for each other's interests," and always founded "on democratic values." For, as he sees it, "relations between large and influential countries" can never be "too good" — particularly in today's world, where nations are "united by the common fight against new challenges and threats, and against international terrorism above all."

Meanwhile, national affairs have by no means been neglected. Buoyed by its "wealth of oil" and "very responsible economic policies," Russia's "currency reserves are growing at record levels," Putin reports. Concurrently, the country's notorious "bureaucratic obstacles" are being removed and corruption is being tackled "at all levels," in efforts to create a more welcoming environment for foreign investors. After all, the president asserts, "by attracting investors we contribute to Russia and its interests first and foremost." In an exclusive interview with LEADERS Magazine (page 10), Putin outlines his vision for the future of Russia, as a major player on the international stage.

Economic growth is one topic discussed by the leaders in hospitality featured in this issue's executive travel section (page 66), who highlight a return to pre-9/11 levels of occupancy and rates across the board. From spa and fitness provision to the importance of personal service, the world's leading hoteliers share their insight into meeting the needs of today's business and leisure travelers.

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