

## Ravizza Sees Market for Lighter Furs

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Italian designer Simonetta Ravizza posing in her boutique in Moscow's TsUM with some of her lightweight fur coats. **Grigory Dukor**

Italian fur designer Simonetta Ravizza is hoping to carve a niche in Russia's fashion market by offering lightweight fur in bold colors in a country more accustomed to heavy, old-fashioned fur coats.

Ravizza, an heir to her family business, has opened a boutique at Moscow's plush TsUM department store, a central point in the world's fourth-largest luxury market.

"My new proposal is fashion: easy fashion, youngish fashion," she said in an interview, adding that until now fur in Russia has been synonymous with a traditional woman.

Although Ravizza has been selling her fur in 40 cities in Russia and Ukraine for five years, this is her first permanent boutique.

"Her fur may not offer much warmth, but it is very aristocratic," said actress Yekaterina

Drobysh, 28, eyeing a black goat coat with three-quarter sleeves costing 114,000 rubles (\$3,700).

The love affair with the indispensable winter wear is centuries-old in Russia, where temperatures regularly plummet to minus 30 degrees Celsius.

With a recovering economy and a jolt in consumer demand, Moscow's luxury shoppers are coming back to the world's top designers.

"The Russian woman buys these days what is the best in the world," said Alla Verber, TsUM's fashion director and vice president of Mercury, the Moscow-based luxury retail company that brought Ravizza to TsUM.

Global fur sales fared relatively well during the 2008-09 recession, coming to about \$13 billion worldwide last year, which is a slight increase on 2008, according to the International Fur Trade Federation.

The fur industry seems to be undergoing a renaissance in global fashion. Insiders say it is no longer frowned upon to wear sable jackets or mink earmuffs.

For the fall/winter 2010-11 catwalk shows, more than half the designers used fur, in forms and shapes that were both traditional and daring. Fur covered heads, hands, bodies and legs.

Ravizza may also benefit from Russia's fondness for foreign luxury. According to a poll by the Levada Center, nearly 80 percent of Russians between the ages of 16 and 45 have at least two items by Western fashion designers.

"Fur is trendy now; it wasn't before," said 20-year-old Anna Khomutova, sporting a gray fox vest and browsing through Ravizza's boutique.

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