

Bureaucrats to Be Allowed to Accept Gifts of Cheap Wine

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russian bureaucrats will be allowed to keep gifts of cheap alcohol and food under a government initiative that expands the list of presents that officials can keep without having to declare them.

But costly bottles of wine, black caviar and other "highly expensive" goods would be excluded from the expanded list, part of a government drive to fight corruption, Izvestia reported Monday, citing a draft government document.

Officials would be allowed to keep gifts valued up to \$100 without declaring them, the report said. Anything worth more would have to be reported and be put up for sale, with the gift recipients getting the right to buy back the gift first.

The value of the gifts would be decided by a special commission.

An exception to the \$100 rule would be made for guns presented to rank-and-file police and military officials in recognition of their service, Izvestia said, citing an unidentified government official.

Presumably, the new rules would also apply to the president and prime minister, who have accepted a fair number of valuable gifts but usually, according to their spokespeople, handed them over as government property. For example, President Vladimir Putin accepted a diamond-encrusted Super Bowl ring from New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft in 2005, which the Kremlin later said was put into state storage with other gifts presented to Putin. But Dmitry Medvedev, who as president accepted an iPhone 4 from Apple founder Steve Jobs in 2010, was later seen using the phone.

The new government document on gifts is expected to be finalized by December.

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