



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

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RUSSIAN TV SHOW TO GIVE \$45-M PUBLICITY ON NMI UNIQUENESS

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) –Popular Russian television host Michael Shirvindt will feature the Northern Mariana Islands on his highly rated show beginning in September 2011, bringing an estimated \$45-million in international exposure to this beach resort destination. Saipan, Tinian and Rota are becoming increasingly popular with Russian travelers seeking a clean, quiet and safe Pacific getaway.

Shirvindt hosts the leading Russian TV tourism and destination program, "I Want to Know Everything with Michael Shirvindt," and recently concluded taping for the show on three islands. The show, called "Hochu Znat'" in Russian, airs internationally to 250-million Russian-speakers in Russia, other former Soviet states, Asia, Australia, the United States, and other areas.

"The anticipated ad exposure for this show exclusively about the Northern Marianas is the largest FAM(iliarization) tour opportunity we've seen from Russia, yet," said Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) Marketing Manager Bruce Bateman. "The MVA was pleased to partner with Hochu Znat' on air transportation, facilitation and film permitting, as Russia is an important visitors market we must capitalize on, as much as our meager resources will allow. Thanks to help from our partners and MVA members, we were able to do just that in this case."

The show will feature what makes the Northern Marianas unique in the world, based on 19 topics suggested by the MVA, including the Marianas Trench, indigenous Chamorro latte stones, the Marianas Butterfly Fish, and more. The show will run as a series until September 2012.

During their 6-day tour the show crew visited the Flame Tree Arts Festival, Managaha, American Memorial Park, Saipan Zoo, Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino, and a local farm and garden. The crew also took a submarine tour, went trolling, took island tours of Tinian and Rota, took an aerial tour of Saipan, and filmed coconut frond weaving, banana printing, Bo Jo Bo doll production, indigenous Carolinian open ocean navigation, local food preparation, local dances, *tuba* (indigenous coconut-based alcohol) making, noni production and more.

The crew lodged at Mariana Resort & Spa, Rota Resort, and Saipan World Resort during their visit and also sampled the culinary offerings of other major hotels, including Saipan Grand Hotel, Aqua Resort Club, Pacific Islands Club Saipan, and Hyatt Regency Saipan.

“Since the Northern Marianas first started marketing to Russians in 1996, we have seen this market grow to 7% of total tourism revenue even with federalization of NMI immigration,” said Bateman. “With the average Russian visitor spending 4.5 times as much as other Asian visitors, Russia remains an important and growing contributor to the Northern Marianas’ tourism economy.”

The FAM tour was also supported by Saipan Sea Venture, Subsea, Saipan Zoo, PDI, Belka Tours, Tasi Tours, Bay Breeze Snack Bar, Star Marianas, and Saipan Events.



Popular Russian television host Mikhail Shirvindt, center in orange, samples a mango and other local produce on Rota during the filming of Russian television show Hochu Znat' in the Northern Mariana Islands in July 2011. The show will feature Saipan, Tinian and Rota over a period of a year beginning in September 2011 to over 250-million viewers worldwide. Pictured from left are cameraman Shpiz Ilya, Editor/Producer Elena Igolinskay, Shirvindt, Marianas Visitors Authority Marketing Specialist Tatiana Babauta, and Director Maria Stremina.



Popular Russian television host Mikhail Shirvindt, left, describes Saipan's colorful, blooming flame trees during the filming of Russian television show Hochu Znat' in the Northern Mariana Islands in July 2011. The show will feature Saipan, Tinian and Rota in several segments over a period of a year beginning in September 2011 and will be seen by over 250-million viewers worldwide. The FAM(iliarization) tour,

supported by the Marianas Visitors Authority, will bring the Northern Marianas an estimated \$45-million in ad exposure.



Popular Russian television host Mikhail Shirvindt, center, is joined by the film crew of Russian television show Hochu Znat' and representatives of the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) at a welcoming dinner hosted by Mariana Resort & Spa in July 2011. The travel show will feature Saipan, Tinian and Rota over a period of a year beginning in September 2011 to over 250-million viewers worldwide. Pictured from left are MVA Marketing Specialist Tatiana Babauta, cameraman Shpiz Ilya, Mariana Resort and Spa's Pavel Esakov, Shirvindt, MVA Marketing Manager Bruce Bateman, Director Maria Stremina, and Editor/Producer Elena Igolinskaya.

The Northern Mariana Islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are a chain of idyllic islands in the West Pacific, offering a friendly, fun and exciting vacation in paradise. They are an excellent destination for families, adventure and sports-minded travelers, as well as business people looking for a tropical haven. Adventurous travelers from Asia, Australia, Europe and elsewhere looking for new travel discoveries will find them in the Mariana Islands, just three hours travel from most cities in Japan, and four from Asia and Australia. The Northern Marianas are served from Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka in Japan by Delta and Asiana Airlines. From Korea, Asiana Airlines provides direct flights from Seoul and Busan. Fly Guam/Fly Marianas provides direct flights from Hong Kong and soon from Nagoya, Japan. For more information visit www.mymarianas.com.

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