

ST PETERSBURG

TREASURES OF THE HERMITAGE

St Petersburg is the grandest of cities, built by Peter the Great to give the Russian nation access to the Baltic. The virgin territory was laid out on the grandest of scales and incorporated the Italian architect Rastrelli's great Winter Palace which houses The Hermitage, one of the grandest of art museums, with its immense riches of paintings of all schools and periods and treasures of sculpture and decorative arts. It fills the enormous Winter Palace of the Romanov Tsars and Catharine the Great's smaller Hermitage. Long gone are the days when there were no light bulbs or lavatories but the profusion of paintings is so immense that it is essential to have some idea of what you are to see and the major masterpieces including those by Leonardo da Vinci, the Italian Renaissance, treasures of British art and French Impressionism before a visit.