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## Anniversary present? A saviour for Chekhov’s Yalta home

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From Dr Rosamund Bartlett.

Sir, Authors’ houses indeed have a unique role in helping us conjure up the lives of their illustrious former occupants, as Phyllis Richardson writes ([“Writers in residence”](#), House & Home, October 31/November 1).

It is heartwarming to read that the well-publicised financial problems facing Edith Wharton’s splendid Massachusetts home seem at last to have been satisfactorily resolved. Sadly the prospects look far bleaker for the house Anton Chekhov built for himself in Yalta, where he wrote *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Lady with the Little Dog* and whose recent cosmetic repairs belie serious structural problems.

With state support curtailed following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the house-museum now finds itself in an independent Ukraine no longer so hospitable to Russian culture. Far from Moscow, it is fighting for its survival in a region where there is no National Trust equivalent to safeguard the future of precious monuments, not to mention state provision for listing buildings of special cultural significance.

It would be nice to think that the 150th anniversary of Chekhov’s birth in 2010 could be celebrated with the news that a benefactor has stepped in to save this wonderful house from meeting the fate of the fabled cherry orchard in the play.

**Rosamund Bartlett,**  
Director,  
**Anton Chekhov Foundation,**  
Oxford, UK

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