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# Akademiya by Denis Calmis Does a Star Turn

## Akademiya by Denis Calmiś, former head-chef of the Garage café, serves up an innovative take on old favorites.

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The hard part is defining what those favorites are. The cuisine is an artful balance of classic Russian flavors with Mediterranean and Indian sauces and spices. Here you can find a nonstandard but delicious borscht with white beans and mushrooms (400 rubles), as well as juicy ceviche (620 rubles) and baked vegetables with sea salt and hummus (480 rubles).

There are never more than eight options in each section of the menu, intentionally done to guarantee theofferings are always seasonal. The ingredients are sublimely fresh and their natural flavors are allowed to shine through.

Spices or sauces never overwhelm, and by an infusion of flavor or an unexpected sprinkle of nuts, thedishes feel healthy, but not self-consciously virtuous. Portions are generally medium sized, and you leave the meal feeling full, but never guilty.

For breakfast — which seems to be very social-media-friendly among the Instagram community — theapple pancakes with mascarpone, maple syrup and blueberries seem to be a huge hit, judging by the number of snap-happy diners.

Among the starters, go for the tandoori chicken with yogurt and fennel, a crowd-pleaser that also doubles as a main dish if you are not too ravenous. Salads are also incredibly simple yet flavorful, like azucchini salad with lavender-infused olive oils, fresh peppers, walnuts and blue cheese (480 rubles).

The star of the main dishes is salmon cooked in coconut (850 rubles). The classic flavors of a tom yum broth compliment the fresh salmon, and the hot peppers add a nice kick to the noodles hiding underneath.

The children's menu is also a nice touch, with macaroni and cheese (420 rubles) as well as thetraditional Russian cutlets (500 rubles) and steamed salmon (500 rubles).

The interior is modern and sleek, waiters are attentive and food is served at a brisk pace. All in all, this is an excellent addition to the restaurant-rich Patriarch's Pond neighborhood.

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