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Moscow Restaurants: Feeding Time at the Zoo (Beer & Grill)

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Zoo Beer & Grill

Be assured, dinner time at this new restaurant is certainly a more civilized affair than it would be across the road at Moscow Zoo. The only nod to the wildlife attraction is the eatery's name and a panoramic roof terrace which overlooks the site.

Zoo Beer & Grill is the latest offering from restaurateur Arkady Novikov, whose tentacular reach has seen him open more than 50 restaurant projects in Russia and further afield. The stylish decor is masterminded by popular interior designer Natalya Belonogova of Mendeleev fame. Think concrete walls, cast-iron lampshades, heavy furniture and lots of low-hanging lighting. Due to the season the terrace is currently a "winter garden."

If you're a beer-lover you've come to the right place—Zoo has latched on to the Moscow craft-beer revolution with gusto. Alongside 20 different beers on tap, there are over 50 different bottled beers, hailing from Ireland to Japan. The tap beer itself is cooled in

a glass chamber on the second floor of the restaurant and transported to the bar through a piping system. It's like an adult Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory.

The house brew — "Original ZOO" — is worth some attention while you wait for your order to be taken (300 rubles). The restaurant, as the name would suggest, specializes in fish and meat grilled, smoked or roasted in the restaurant's wood oven. Head chef Andrei Revunov, previously of Blackberry and GQ bar, surveys proceedings.

The pork ribs, halibut and many other items on the menu are prepared by the chef in the onsite smokehouse. The lamb and beef shish kebab is particularly good (from 500 rubles) and beautifully presented with a fresh and zesty salsa. Feel yourself getting the meat sweats? Pair your main with the refreshing house salad (300 rubles) which is crisp, light and tasty.

Thumping background music makes this a fun place to gather with a group of friends, but probably not the best spot for an intimate romantic date as you'll find yourself shouting at one another across the table. Ignore the self-declared "masculine spirit" of the restaurant, and trust us, it's a nice, relaxed spot for drinks and eats — zoo visit optional.

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