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Obratnaya Tyaga: A Labor of Love From an Eminent Moscow Foodie

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Obratnaya Tyaga **Obratnaya Tyaga/Facebook**

Obratnaya Tyaga is the project of longtime Afisha restaurant critic and all-round Moscow foodie Alexander Ilyin. After years of sampling the best bites in the city, Ilyin has taken the plunge and opened his own eatery on one of the lanes branching off from historical Sretenka Ulitsa.

A firefighting term, it's ambiguous whether Obratnaya Tyaga (backdraft) is named after a nearby fire station or the eponymous 1990s film with Robert De Niro. The menu is modest, but the owners promise that dishes will change often. Ilyin focuses on a no frills, no fuss principle. "The restaurant has to feed the people first, and search for new meanings second," he said in a statement to the press about the new eatery.

The journalist-turned-restaurateur is no stranger to the kitchen, having earlier tried his hand as a chef at Noor Electro, where he developed the breakfast menu, and Saperavi Cafe. Start

with the zucchini draniki (Belarussian potato pancakes) with sour cream mixed with Serbian bryndza cheese and pike roe (250 rubles). Move on to the duck, which has been baked for 10 hours at a low temperature to tender, mouthwatering effect. The bird in question is served with walnut sauce, pickled apples and black rye bread, which acts as a kind of Russified bruschetta (350 rubles).

Alternatively, opt for the pork neck with Gurian cabbage — Georgian style cabbage pickled with beets and cumin — which offers a dash of bright red color to your dining table (350 rubles). Obratnaya Tyaga also offers a new take on the millennial Moscow classics — Caesar salad and pasta carbonara. The former is pared down to its base components of salad, anchovies, croutons and dressing, with no chicken in sight. The carbonara includes grilled bacon, but without the traditional creamy sauce (500 rubles). The bargain of the menu is the filet mignon steak with baked parsnip, carrots and zucchini which for 1,100 rubles is a veritable steal in Moscow.

Pair your meal with a signature cocktail from skilled mixologist Vasily Zheglov. The barman adds a dash of the unexpected to his drinks, such as a Bangkok sour (460 rubles) based on bourbon infused with coconut cream and a margarita with smoked pear infused tequila (560 rubles).

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