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Sagah: Cutting a Long Story Short

Eastern flavors are served up in a refreshingly simple setting at this new restaurant

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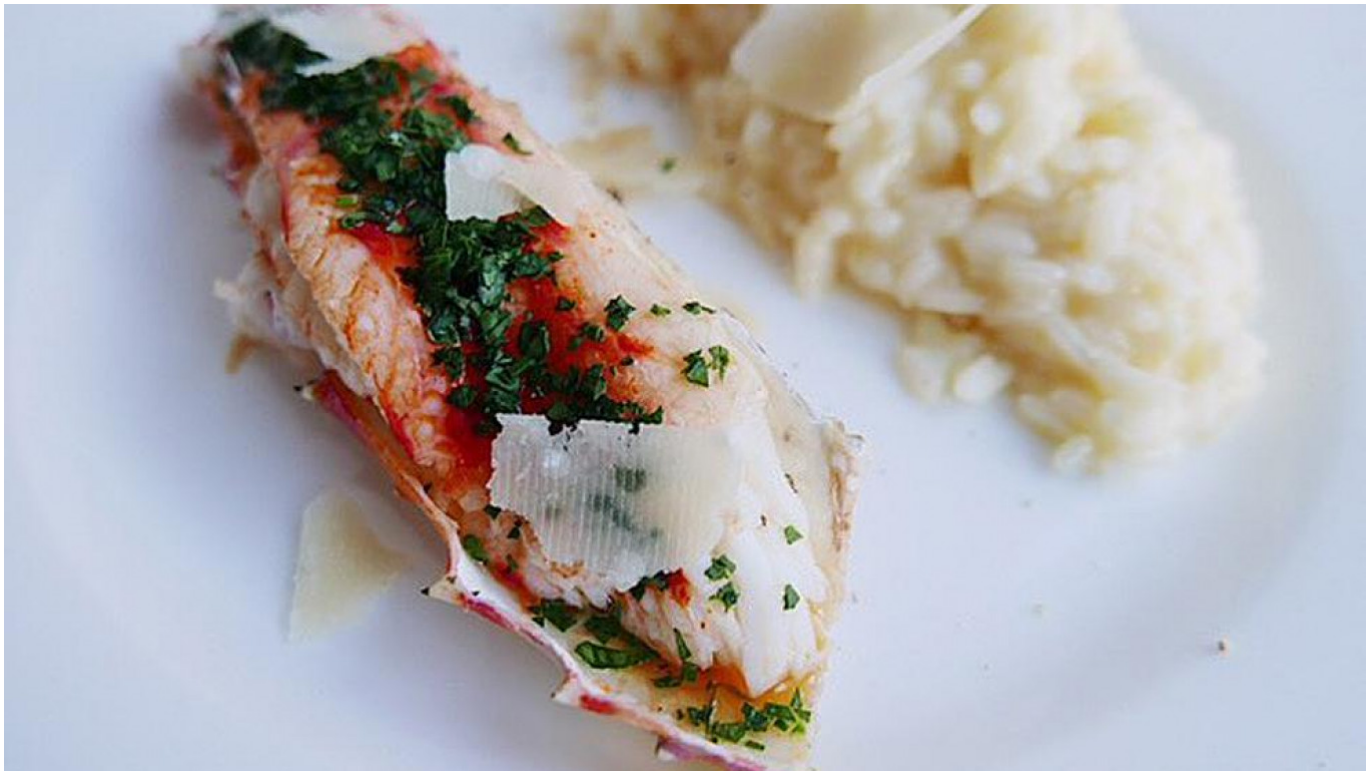

Sagah/Facebook

When the popular restaurant Crabs⊠are Coming moved to the trendy⊠Danilovsky Market, the space stayed⊠boarded up for several months.

That space is now home to Sagah, a new⊠restaurant belonging to the same owners,⊠Maria Maximenko and Kseniya Alexeyeva.

There's nothing about Sagah that says "Moscow"⊠or "Russia"—you could just as easily be in⊠Brooklyn. The whitewashed space that greets⊠the diner is an antidote to the dark lofts that⊠have become standard interior design for Moscow⊠bars and cafes of late.

But the minimalist decor, wooden ceiling⊠and brick walls will be familiar to those who⊠were

regulars at Crabs are Coming. These elements play well with the furniture, which hints at the 1970s.

The restaurant boasts a long communal table that can accommodate up to 25 guests. Potted plants inspire a distinctly homely ambience. A cactus stands outside the entrance door, next to the "smokers'" bench.

But enough about the design, let's talk about food. The menu has been developed jointly by the owners and chef Alexander Chernov, who used to work with celebrity chef Anatoly Komm. The cuisine at Sagah resists easy classification, but there are certain Middle Eastern influences, as well as elements of Indian and East Asian cooking.

The drinks menu has been crafted by Denis Kryazhev, who works with one of Moscow's most prominent restaurateurs, Alexander Dellos. This is not the first time Kryazhev has collaborated with Sagah's owners — he also worked on their basement bar Drink Your Seoul, located downstairs from Crabs are Coming.

The starters include several types of Indian chutneys with lentil and rice chips (320 rubles/$5.40 each). There's also a set of appetizers including pesto, harissa, and olive tapenade (390 rubles). They come with homemade pitas.

All of the seafood comes from the Russian Far East. Try the meaty crab legs, served with lemon risotto (890 rubles). The scallops with nori seaweed and garlic shoots (650 rubles) are also well worth investigating.

Sagah uses a charcoal grill for some of its dishes — the grilled lettuce with mint sauce and Dijon mustard (350 rubles) still retained a pleasant smoky smell when it arrived.

Also recommended are the baked root vegetables in sour cream sauce. The colors and textures of beet, carrot, sweet potato and parsnip mix in the dish to create an unforgettable palate (590 rubles).

Sagah offers some rare teas, like green tea combined with brown rice (250 rubles) or hojicha — a special type of roasted green tea (280 rubles). The desserts are just as diverse as the main menu — try the sea buckthorn mousse, cheesecake with walnuts or Indian ice-cream, all for 300 rubles.

A breakfast menu is available here until 2 p.m. on weekdays and until 4 p.m. on weekends. You can get eggs with goat cheese and portobello mushrooms or with halloumi and vegetables for 400 rubles. The eggs can be scrambled, poached or sunny-side up.

This new addition to Moscow's restaurant scene may not have a particularly elaborate design or exotic dishes, but it does provide good, no-nonsense food without the pomp.

If Sagah were a fashion trend, it would certainly be normcore.

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