

Cozy Cafe Yarmarka Celebrates Ten Years

BY MEGAN LEE

As of November Cafe Yarmarka, in the Post Alley Building across from SBC, celebrates a decade of bringing a their taste of Russia to the Pike Place Market.

Born in 1995, Cafe Yarmarka is named for Rozalia Nazarova's brother-in-law Fandous Matichev who first came to Seattle in 1991, as a dancing performer in our city's annual Folk Life Festival. He and his singing, dancing troupe called "Yarmarka" (named for the Russian word describing the popular Russian holiday markets) were so well liked that their Yarmarka was invited back the next year. Again in 1992, they wowed the crowds but this time the traveling wore him out. Matichev became very ill and had to stay for awhile. While here Matichev feel in love with Seattle. He sent for Sania, his wife. She came. The couple knew they needed to earn a living so decided to open a restaurant, Russian of course. Sania sent for her sister, Rozalia Nazarova, to come over and help.

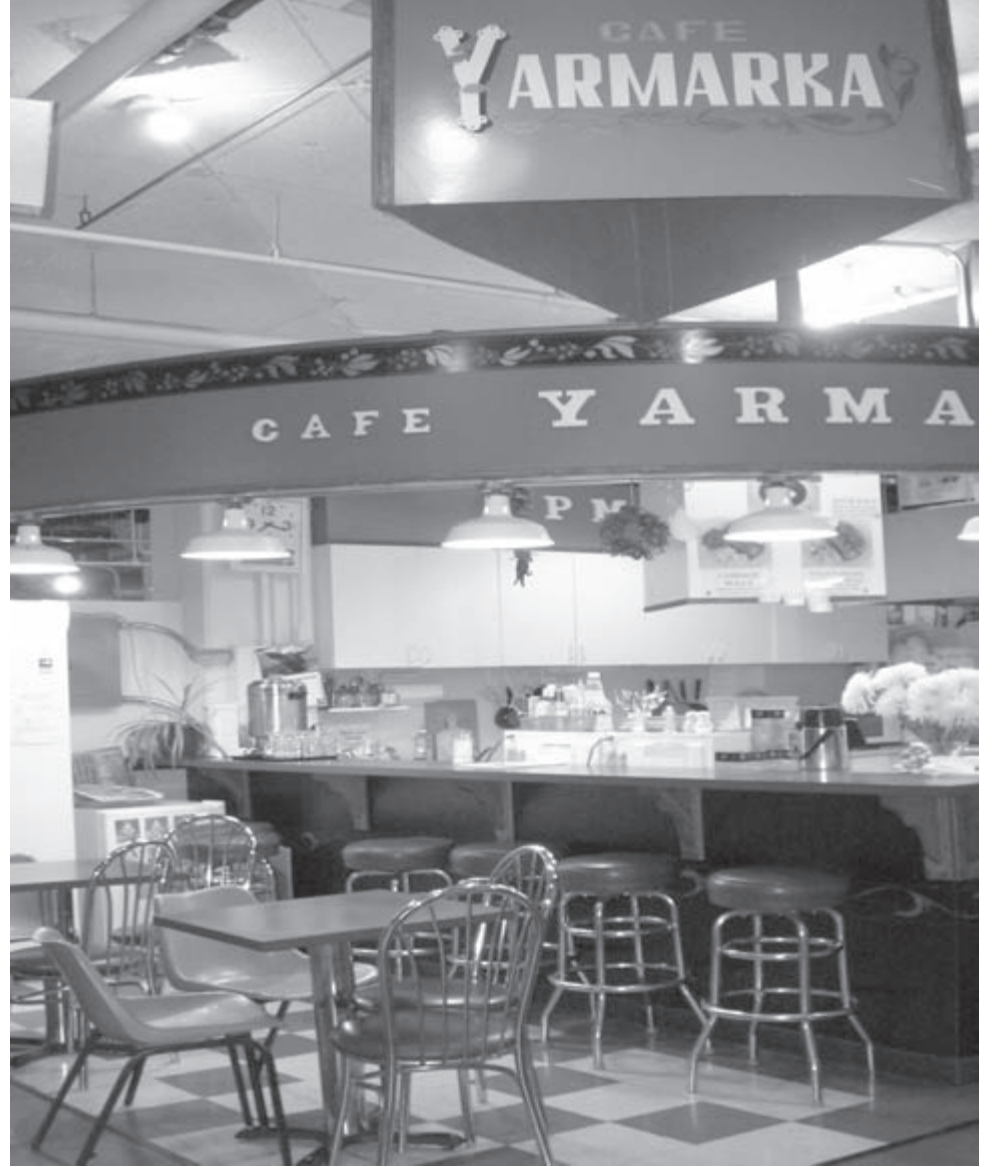
The story reads like Russian literature.

"I remember being amazed at how

nice everyone was," Rozalia Nazrova shyly recalls. "I didn't speak much English at that time, I was just smiling. People would tell me what to do by pointing and politely explaining."

Over the years the family's endearing cafe has become a Market destination. People love the tasty Russian food, though Nazrova explains that when Russian people come they sometimes ask why there is so much garlic in the tomato sauces and sour cream, she explains this is how they like it here. Some recipes are adapted for American tastes (for example in Russia piroshki are usually deep fried, here they tend to be baked), but overall the family remains purist to Russian tradition. Very few items have been added or taken off over the years. Staples like the cabbage, borscht, stuffed peppers, beet salad, pelmeni (round dumplings), pierogies (the smaller crescent ravioli like dumplings) and sometimes Seattle-esque salmon piroshki. The displays of half moons and mystical shaped pastries with unfamiliar contents, matrioshka and Cyrillic lettered sign add to Yarmarka's authentic ambience.

"Our beet salad is very popular



The inviting Cafe Yarmarka, in the Post Alley Building; pull up a stool.



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- Sam Sifton, Travel Writer, New York Times

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because no one else here makes it," Nazrova added. "Sometimes people are afraid to eat anything that looks so red—but they like it when they try it. They come back, again."

In 2002 Fandous and Sania Matichev decided to move again. This time they went to sunny Hawaii.

Over the years Nazarova had fallen in love with the business and her customers and couldn't leave. She stayed and took over the business. She diligently maintains the daily freshness, friendly smiles and fantastic food, to which the Market community is accustomed.

She remembers people and what they like to eat. Regulars who move away are surprised when they return years

later and she remembers them and just what they order. Uncountable families regularly pick up packages of the frozen pierogies to take home. A hundred pierogies—available in two meats or cabbage—run about \$17. Nazarova winks and says, "It's a very good price."

Weddings and catering are big part of her business. Cafe Yarmarka has fed casts of thousands at parties over the years. She says she feeds children of people she watched be married. She loves it.

The restaurant pops up many places, on FoodBanter.com it is recommended as a culinary must to people with only a couple days in

(YARMARKA continued page 14)

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