

A Modern Polish Culinary Perspective: Unique Food Attitudes in Old East Village

Barbara Czyz has operated Unique Food Attitudes as a catering business for 24 years. Her seven-year-old bistro in Old East Village across from the Palace Theatre and the Ark Aid Mission has been an ongoing success due to its accessible modern Polish culinary perspective. The bistro with its black slate counters, chrome accents, comfortable seating, window seating and large storefront windows with lots of natural lighting continues to draw clients from all over the city for the food and the warm and friendly vibe.

Czyz and her husband, Jaroslaw (Jarek), immigrated to London from Poland via Greece in 1989. When Czyz graduated from Fanshawe College's Culinary Management course in 1996, she and two classmates formed a catering company. One partner left after six months and the other after two years, leaving Czyz as the sole proprietor. Czyz really upped the ante when she signed exclusive catering contracts with Delta Emco and Trojan Technologies, where she operates

the employee cafeterias, aided by Chef Julianna Guy.

The menu and chalkboard offerings at the Unique Food Attitudes bistro feature traditional Polish cuisine with a seductive, clean and minimalist flair. This is the cooking of Czyz's mother, the food that speaks the



Owner Barbara Czyz

Photo courtesy of London Free Press

truth of her family. The kitchen showcases its versatility with house specialties such as traditional *kurek* soup with kielbasa and egg, and earthy red borscht with a distinctive



Traditional Polish cuisine with chalkboard specials and minimalist flair



- 1 Breaded Pork Cutlet with potatoes and mizeria (cucumber salad)
- 2 Polish Poutine (cheddar pierogies covered with goulash sauce and Cheddar cheese) and surówka z czerwonej kapusty (red cabbage salad)

sweet and sour flavour. There is goulash ladled over crispy *placki* (potato pancakes), *krokiety* (crepes), *bigos* (sauerkraut-mushroom-meat stew) and tender pierogies (dumplings) filled with sauerkraut and/or mushrooms, meat, potato and/or savoury cheese, with fried onions. Specials have included stuffed beef rolls with pickles, peppers and onions smothered in a zesty mustard sauce served with shredded carrot salad and two perfect scoops of mashed potatoes.

House-made cabbage rolls are slow-cooked and made of pork, rice and bacon. Sauce is often the main difference in regional variations. Czyz is known for a lighter sauce that is a perfect complement to her cabbage rolls. Signature Polish poutine features house-made Cheddar pierogies with goulash and additional Cheddar cheese. We love the crispy and perfectly balanced *mizeria* (cucumber and sour cream salad). There is sauerkraut salad and a shredded red cabbage salad that is otherworldly. There are apple pancakes with fresh fruit and whipped cream, French toast, crepes, omelets and deli sandwiches on the breakfast menu. There is sensuality to the food and presentation. One day our server recommended the lemon posset, on another day, the *szawlotka* (apple cake) and we have been devotees of the desserts ever since. Czyz has built a reputation for wedding and holiday cakes, including her handmade *kroketas* and *schlegie* that remind her European clientele of their homelands.

Her son Matt is often serving in the front of house, and daughter Patrycja when home is on hand in the restaurant. A staunch member of the Polish community, Czyz continues to support many community events.

Unique Food Attitudes

697 Dundas Street, London

519-649-2225

unique-food-attitudes.com

MONDAY-WEDNESDAY: 9AM-6 PM

THURSDAY-SATURDAY: 9 AM-8 PM

SUNDAY: CLOSED



3 Bigos (sauerkraut-mushroom-meat stew) and fresh bread

4 Soup of the Day and Deli Sandwich

5 Goulash with Placki (potato pancakes) and surówka z czerwonej kapusty (red cabbage salad)

6 Raspberry and Chocolate Cake