



Daquise

1947-2017

Since 1947 Daquise has welcomed many esteemed guests such as Roman Polański and Edward Raczyński, President of Poland in Exile, who played a part in the history of both Polish London and Poland. A favourite haunt of Polish émigrées and their British friends since World War II.



TABLE TALK

AA GILL



Poland has a grim history, cursed by the neighbours from hell, Prussia and Russia, and, occasionally, Sweden. The relentless invasions and laying waste, the bullying and occupations, have meant that Poland has one of the largest diasporas: 20m Poles wander the world. That's a lot of toolboxes. And there's a calumny: that Poles are all plumbers and bodgers. There's Copernicus, Chopin and Conrad. You wouldn't have trusted any of them to change a ballcock. And our own Miliband brothers: maternal Poles. They couldn't screw in a light bulb, and Ed is begging to be our first Polack PM.

Before Poles became Europe's U-bend cleaners, three times they saved this continent from the cusp of catastrophe. Without the Poles, we would irrevocably have gone down the plughole. Jan Sobieski, with his heavy cavalry, at the cost of his own nation, vanquished the Ottomans at the gates of Vienna, thereby ensuring that Westminster Abbey was never a mosque. In the Battle of Britain, it was the Polish fighter pilots that made the nip-and-tuck difference. The Polish squadron was the most effective, with the most kills. And then there's the Miracle of the Vistula. In 1919, Lenin, having beaten the White Russians, thought it would be an appropriate moment to export the blessings of communism to the rest

of Europe at, as Trotsky put it, the point of a bayonet. The door to the West was Poland. There were to be co-ordinated uprisings in European cities that would begin as Poland capitulated. Its army was beaten back to the gates of Warsaw, then, against all the odds, it stood and held, defeated and then routed the Russians with brilliant élan and panache, and a great deal of shouting. The 203rd Uhlans captured a Russian radio post and continuously read Genesis in Polish and Latin to block the airways.

Polish food is, I'm told, chewed-over history. The leftovers of all the armies, traders and immigrants who've moved across its central European farmland. There are ingredients and methods from Germany, Russia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Bohemia and the Jews. Before the recent advent of Polish supermarkets and sausage takeaways, there was one famous Polish cafe in South Kensington: Daquise, started for homesick Poles during the war. They had a disproportionately romantic reputation in the polyglot, blacked-out city: they had the best uniforms, the best manners, the worst tempers and the best — or worst — sexual appetites.

I used to visit Daquise as a student in the 1970s. It was tired and run-down. The customers tended to be old men with cravats, tobacco-yellow moustaches and sad eyes who would drink lemon tea and shake their heads at each other. The menu was indecipherable: if you asked the tractor-mechanic waitress what any dish was, she would bark that it was "kibbigie mit sassage". Everything was kibbigie, mit or mit-out sassage. This was where Yevgeny Ivanov, the Russian spy and lothario, would meet Christine Keeler,

→ **DAQUISE** ★★★★★ FOOD ★★★★★ ATMOSPHERE

20 THURLOE STREET, SW7; 020 7589 6117. OPEN DAILY 11.30AM-11PM

★★★★ POLE POSITION ★★★★★ POLE STAR ★★★ POLE DANCE ★★ POLECAT ★ POLEAXE



Taking stock of soup

What better winter warmer than a bowl of soup? Sampling the Polish soup at Daquise....chef Zygmunt Bonitka and Mrs Jadwiga Morozewicz ("Ciocia") back in February 1988.

Some of London's best soup staging posts, however have never followed the lazy British habits of "dilute to taste". At Daquise, 20 Thurloe Street, SW7, there might be thick layers of Warsaw snow outside judging by the thick and hearty fare on the Polish menu. This welcoming restaurant offers a war, club like atmosphere enjoyed by numbers of Polish emigres tucking into fir favourites such as the excellent dish of herring in sour cream, onions and potato.

Evening Standard, Friday 26th February 1988

Daquise

20 Thurloe Street, SW7
589 6117

This great Polish institution — more a family café than a grand restaurant — is a gem in an area not known for modest prices. The doors are open seven days a week, with the exception of Christmas Eve and Christmas. A typical meal is chłodnik soup (made from ham stock, beetroot, cream and pickled cucumber or sauerkraut), followed by stuffed cabbage. It is hard to spend more than \$11 a person here off the main menu, unless you indulge in one of the seven vodkas or a few Polish beers. Come here for morning tea or coffee, or try the pastries in the afternoon, when the place can be full of business people and preppy, chattering students from the nearby French lycée.

Open: Every day, 10 A.M. to 11:30 P.M.
Lunch, 12 to 3. Dinner, 6 to 11:15.

Prices: Two-course lunch, from \$5.40. A la carte about \$11.



There is something irresistibly romantic about Daquise, the Polish Restaurant in South Kensington....Toby Young, Restaurant Spy....

ANGELA LAMBERT

A corner of Bohemia faces the bulldozer

I AM FILLED with despair by the rumour that the parade of small shops in Thurloe Street, on the north side of South Kensington underground station, may be demolished for redevelopment. This incongruously scruffy little street leading into smart Thurloe Square has been an unchanging landmark in ever-changing London. It looks almost exactly as it did in 1961 when, newly fledged from Oxford, I came in search of work and my first flat.

But I also deplore the threatened bulldozing of Thurloe Street because it is the home of a wonderful Polish café/restaurant called the Daquise. The Daquise has been famous as a meeting place for the Polish count, took me there in the late Fifties, my first heady days of freedom from boarding school, when I thrilled to its Bohemian, intellectual atmosphere.

In the Sixties I gravitated back to my old haunts. I rented a basement flat off the Fulham Road, shared with two girlfriends. It had an outside lavatory and the bath was under a wooden slab that doubled as a kitchen worktop. You could sit immersed in warm soapy water and watch onions and garlic being chopped in front of your nose. The rent was six guineas (£6.30) a week between us, and we were happy there.

The sexes were more segregated in those days: women (girls) shared flats with myself temporarily halted by writer's block and had faith that just leaning back against those shabby red plastic banquettes, stirring a glass cup of (frankly) sour coffee redeemed by deliciously creamy and flaky pastries, would inspire me.

The Daquise never fails to offer a colourful parade of elderly Mittel-European characters, ironic and world-weary and shabby and exquisite. They converse in a babel of unknown languages, eyes blazing, expressions intense, while alongside them sit hopelessly desirable art and music students from the RSM and RSA in Kensington Gore. You are handed three short stories on a tray.

Daquise all these things are happening all the time.

Coffee houses were ubiquitous in London 200 years ago, and throughout Europe until the turn of the century. I suspect the First World War finished off many of them, when the partying Twenties turned to cocktail bars for more hectic amusements. The few authentic London cafés that remain are a vital link with the mood and atmosphere of a century ago.

Not the least of their virtues is that they do not rely on television, videos or music, piped or otherwise. The loudest sound

This great Polish institution - more a family café than a grand restaurant – is a gem in an area not known for modest prices. Daquise was where Christine Keeler regularly met with Yevgeny Ivanov, the Soviet Naval Attache.....

Foodies

Time to stare ...

THERE is a timeless air that could be pre-war, post-war, past-war—and it is a perfect place to meet and eat.

Exiled Poles sit reading the closely typed newspapers of their homeland, pausing to stare out.

Ladies in complicated, colourful hats (have they just come from church?), with jewels, painted nails and pencilled eyebrows, quietly and concentratedly chew in corners.

On Sundays at lunchtime, style seekers sit at Daquise Polish restaurant and wait for The Boilerhouse to open, and dinosaur seekers on their way to the Natural History Museum fill up on bigos (an authentic Polish dish of chop-

ped beef and cabbage).

This is South Kensington, just along from Exhibition Road—a museum lovers' El Dorado.

English conversations mix with Polish hubbub, a baby in a pushchair sleeps and nobody bothers anyone.

Each day the menu changes. Last weekend there was Chłodnik—a cold and purplish beetroot soup at £1.80 for starters. To follow try Beef à la Warsaw or Shashlyk—shish kebabs for around £5.

My Forest Mushrooms proved to be a glutinous, stewy concoction, but the omelettes and eggs florentine are reliable. Order little dishes of buckwheat and sauerkraut or cabbage as accompaniments.

To finish go to the cabinet and choose a cake—a plain



macaroon, a sticky custard slice or a strudel. There is no fuss and all is calm.

Maybe in the evenings, after the original vodkas at 75p a glass, chased with Zywiec Tatra lager, then the party begins.

● Daquise Restaurant, 20 Thurloe Street, London SW7. 589 6117. Open every day 10 am-11.30 pm.

Jane Ferguson

Smooth taste of Poland

DAQUISE

20 Thurloe Street, SW7.

Tel: 584 4944.

Polish cooking

Seats 90.

About £25 for two.

Open: Mon-Sun 10am-12 for snacks and coffee,

12-11.30pm for main meals.

Parking: Difficult before 6.30pm.

Credit cards not accepted.

AS the various regulars at Daquise will tell you, this charming restaurant, just around the corner from South Kensington tube, offers an ambience as finely blended and unique as its range of special vodkas.

The restaurant is high on atmosphere but low on prices, good news for people looking to avoid a second mortgage in an area not well known for economic gastronomy.

In the tradition of east European cuisine, the food is tasty but simple, with sauerkraut and boiled red cabbage featuring prominently.

As I speak Polish like a native of Clapham, I was wholly reliant on the charming waitresses to aid and abet my choices (translations on the menu wouldn't go amiss).

Starters include chef's specialities such as herring in sour cream with onions and potatoes, a great success with the piping hot potatoes providing an on-the-spot oven for the cool herrings, and Golobki, stuffed cabbage and mince.

Main course specialities include Zrazy, buckwheat with bacon and baby cucumbers in a sauce, slightly unusual for the regular English taste, but full of goodness and well cooked, and, from Hungary, pancakes to break the Polish monopoly, served with layers of beef on top, and at £4 a very reasonable main course.

You've got to try the vodkas, all worthwhile and ranging from a honey-based concoction as smooth as silk, through to a delicious cherry. But don't attempt to drive home afterwards.

Scott Wilson

Table Talk

Daquise, 20 Thurloe Street, SW7 (020 7589 6117)

Who goes there?

Andrew Lloyd Webber, Marianne Faithfull (left) and Frederick Forsyth.

When to go

By day, this homely tearoom is a sanctuary for young Poles, war veterans and writers. The evening crowd flocks for lemon vodka and potato pancakes

after concerts at the Albert Hall.

History Established by a Polish fighter pilot in 1947, it survived bulldozer threats in 2003 and a fire last September.

Healthy? No, but the stodgy fare and flavoured vodkas are warming on a winter's day.

Modern or fusty? The old-time atmosphere is not

for the faint-hearted nor the minimalist.

Best table Table 10 by the window seats two.

Cost Two courses without wine, £12.

Where are the loos?

Downstairs in the basement.

Who to know? Restaurant manager Jola Pinchard.



JUANITA

Joy Ganjou (Juanita), variety artist and dancer, died on July 27 aged 80. She was born in London on January 23, 1912.

JOY Ganjou was the real name of the diminutive and petite acrobatic dancer known as Juanita who appeared on the music and variety hall stages of the 1930s and 1940s, as a member of a remarkable adagio act billed as The Ganjou Brothers and Juanita. Although never top of the bill, the act commanded a huge fan following and Juanita and her three male partners were certainly among the highest paid performers of their time, playing such diverse dates as the London Palladium one week and the Granada Cinema, Kettering, the next, not to mention three Royal Variety shows and a personal invitation from President Truman to appear at the White House.

Billed as "Romance in Porcelain" Juanita would make her stage entrance to the strains of *Sheherazade* or *The Blue Danube*, usually dressed in a skimpy silk costume, and proceed to be lifted and twirled dramatically over the heads of the Ganjou brothers — or indeed between their legs. Managements of theatres described the act as "poetry in motion" and audiences would be suitably impressed.

Joy Ganjou always wanted to be a dancer, albeit a classical one, but her mother introduced her to variety and took her to Blackpool in 1934

Handley, Max Miller, Arthur Askey, Jimmy Wheeler, Rob Wilton and countless others over a period of 30 years.

The act went to Hollywood in the 1950s where they were regularly featured on television and Joy subsequently married Serg Ganjou in 1958 in a typical glittering show business wedding in Las Vegas. The British press took her to their hearts and it was not unusual to open a women's magazine to read the headlines "Lovely Juanita at home" or "Legendary dancer Juanita finds happiness in cooking for her husband".

She was a shy and retiring person off-stage and after she left the act through ill-health in the late 1950s she dedicated herself to the show business charity the Grand Order of Lady Railings and in 1961 was made Queen Railings.

She worked tirelessly until last year when illness prevented her from making further public engagements and was last seen as a guest at a British Music Hall Society show at the Barbican Theatre in January on her 80th birthday. When the audience were told by the compere that Juanita was sitting in the stalls the orchestra played *Sheherazade* and she was given a standing ovation.

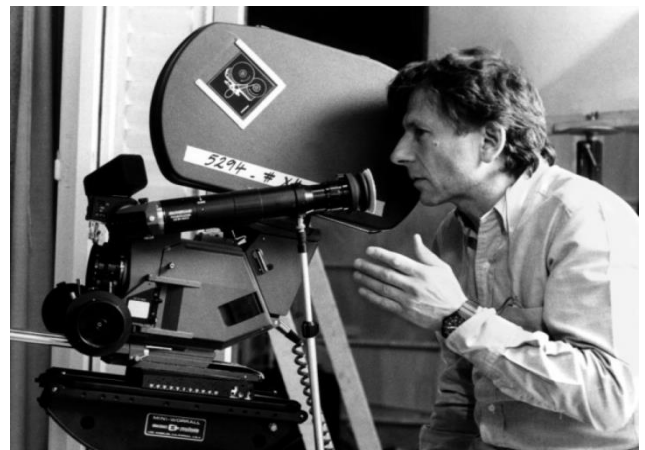
A picture of her stands in the London Palladium Hall of Fame and when asked recently by a fan how she would like to be remembered she replied, with typical modesty, "I would like to think that I was a small part of the great days of variety and that I did my bit."

to audition for a variety show at the Opera House. She shared theatrical digs with another dancer who was supposed to appear with the already famous Ganjou Brothers dancing act. Unfortunately the fellow dancer became pregnant and deserted the company and Joy took over her role and was later given the name Juanita.

The act was quickly snapped up by the powerful Moss Empires circuit and supported comedians such as Tommy

The allure of Mittel-European cafes was invoked at the recent launch of the Wolseley, but the real thing has been humming along in South Kensington since just after the Second World War. It is the sort of place cherished by impoverished writers and practised intriguers who can spin out a cup of coffee for the time it takes to compose a story. Owners have come and gone, none quite so picturesque as Serge Ganjou and his wife who, as 'Juanita' of 'The Ganjou Brothers and Juanita', would sit, literally, in the palm of her husband's hand.....

Evening Standard, Thursday 15 January 2004



Reflections on the last 70 years of Daquise. Above: General Władysław Anders with his wife in London 1956. Below: HE Edward Count Raczyński who performed both roles of the Ambassador of Poland and the President in Exile of the Polish post WWII Government. Below right, Roman Polański whilst on location some 45 years ago. Frequent visitors to the Daquise restaurant. All Copyright acknowledged. All Rights Reserved. Copyright MSS Consulting 2017. <http://www.polishheritage.co.uk> All Enquires: mssconsulting@hotmail.co.uk



Polish Heritage Society (UK)



**Guess
Who?**

