

Doriola's diners wild about soup, especially the rice and mushroom

By Mike Peters
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Two weeks ago, I used this space to rhapsodize on the welcome warmth and goodness of a bowl of soup on a frosty Alaska day. After noting some personal favorites, I invited readers to share any soups that made them seek out particular restaurants.

"The posole at Taco King," said the first responder, Andrew deValpine, who wrote

Doriola's

Location: 510 Tudor Road
Hours: 5 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, closed Sunday
Phone: 375-0494
Web site: doriolas.com

Did we miss your favorite soup? Have a different type of dining delight that keeps you warm in winter? E-mail Daily News dining reviewer Mike Peters at mpeters@adn.com and tell him all about it.

back later to sing the praises of the pho at Pho Mailee.

"Any cream-based soup at Cafe Amsterdam is worth the wait," reported Rhonda Westover. "However, my favorite soup — for those cold, snowy days or when you're just feeling punk — is the lemon chicken soup at the Greek Corner. You can order it to go, and enjoy. YUM!"

Then came the first thump of an insistent drumbeat.

"The best soup I have ever tasted comes from Doriola's," Faye Williams wrote. "It is a wild rice and mushroom soup."

From that point on, half of the "best soup" e-mails that hit my inbox were about Doriola's, and half of those were about having a bowl of wild-rice-and-mushroom heaven.

It wasn't meant to be a poll or a scientific survey, and if you suspect that my previous column was posted prominently at Doriola's to stir customer reaction, you would be right. That happened at more than one restaurant, but the soup groups at Doriola's



ERIK HILL / Anchorage Daily News

Stan Steck, left, and brothers Richard and Jeff Walker are big fans of Janet Hickok's soups at Doriola's. When we asked what your favorite soup was for cold Alaska days, raves for Doriola's started filling our inbox. Though the mushroom and wild rice soup was popular, all Doriola's soups are good, many said.

may be the most loyal — and most vocal.

While mushroom and wild rice dominated the conversation, most Doriola's regulars I heard from were hard-pressed to choose one favorite soup. Creamy cauliflower and cheese. Mushroom bisque. Southwest chicken with hominy "that is toe-curling goodness." Rustic smoked ham-hock and split pea. Roast garlic and tomato with pesto cream. "Absolutely incomparable" asparagus soup.

"We love to make soup," says co-owner/chef Janet Hickok. When she encounters an interesting soup at another restaurant and asks if it's house-made, she says she usually gets an odd look. "Nobody in Anchorage does that," she says she's been told.

Not quite. "Every onion

in every soup we chop ourselves," Hickok said.

And then there are Hickok's twists on recipes that weren't soups in their first lives: Homemade chicken pot pie soup? Blue cheese hamburger soup? Oh, yeah.

If this suggests that Doriola's has a dozen soups to pick from, a note of caution. Each day only two soups are offered.

"Daily specials are posted online (www.doriolas.com) under the menus tab," e-mails reader Ruth Sams, who doesn't really need to check since she has at least half a dozen favorites. Upcoming specials are under the calendar tab.

"Some of the Thai soups are good — even plain old wonton," writes Jeff Walker. "It's really hard to beat Doriola's."

A few other favorites from around town, with comments:

- Tom kar at Siam Cuisine on Dimond Boulevard: Get it "and an order of sticky rice — not the regular rice that comes in a bowl with the entree but the REALLY sticky stuff that comes wrapped in plastic wrap and served in a little basket," writes Kylee H. "Ladle the soup over a hunk of the rice. Nirvana!"

- The seafood noodle soup at Asia Garden on Old Seward Highway. "A complete meal," promises reader Lon Lindo, "it is chock-full of seafood and

is thick and pretty spicy."

- Tomato Gorgonzola at Sacks Cafe.

- Potato leek at Clair d'Loon.

- "You must go to Palmer's Vagabond (Blues) cafe," writes Terri Anderson. "On Fridays they serve the best Hungarian mushroom soup! The homemade bread that comes with it is the perfect combo."

And, hey, today is Friday.

► Play dining reviewer Mike Peters can be reached at mpeters@adn.com.