



HALL'S WELL

Having provided a lifeline to normality during Warsaw's various lockdowns, **Hala Gwardii** has once again proved to be a city-wide legend...

Completed in 1902 as the twin sister of Hala Mirowska next door, the existence of Hala Gwardii has long been written into the city's DNA. Withstanding the vicissitudes of time to become an ingrained part of local folklore, Gwardii combined with its sibling to become the largest and best-known food market in pre-war Warsaw.

Having survived WWII with all but token scarring, Hala Gwardii briefly functioned as a bus depot before being handed

over to a sports club named Gwardia Warszawa. Under the inspirational guidance of trainer Feliks 'Papa' Stamm, the boxing team based here scored success after success on the domestic and international stage. But whilst Stamm masterminded Olympic gold triumphs, his finest hour came inside Gwardii when his charges racked up nine medals at the 1953 European Boxing Championships – among these, victories over fighters representing bitter enemies such as Germany and the Soviet Union.

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Despite this glorious history, later years saw Gwardii lay dormant, until that is it was recharged in 2017 by CBR Events as the food and drink hub we see today. Combining its historic function as a farmers' market with that of a hall filled with independent street food vendors and drinking points, it quickly assumed a catch-all role as a lively center of social life – something that even covid was unable to curtail.

Mixed with the raw authenticity of the architecture, the depth of its backstory and the sheer diversity of its offer, today's Gwardii is an irresistible concept that engages all the senses to stand out as something unique amid a sea of more contrived copycats – when people talk of Warsaw's buzz, it is Gwardii that encapsulates it. **IN**

