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the FRONT RANGE FOOD

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[From Nepal to Nederland](#)

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Photo by Kari Keller

BY KARI KELLER

The door swings open at the pastel-colored building located at 110 N Jefferson St. and the sweet smell of garlic, cumin and ginger waft through the air. Customers are greeted with a warm smile and then directed to take a seat at one of the red, cloth-lined tables, accented in Indian décor. Nepalese spices line the glass tabletops and serve as an introduction to the ethnic flavors being mixed, boiled and cooked in the kitchen.

One of the seven, Gurung-Malla or Ghale family members approaches the table, pours a glass of water and offers the option to order off the menu or to eat from the buffet. Since not every family member speaks English, words are often communicated through friendly gestures and warm, welcoming eyes.

The restaurant, known as Kathmandu, is perched at the base of the Rocky Mountains in the small town of Nederland. At first glance, it appears to be a typical Nepalese restaurant. Yet in truth, it symbolizes a life of struggle, isolation, fear and long-awaited achievement. It symbolizes the hardship and success of Resham Gurung.

Gurung was born in a small village called Dhading located in the heart of the Kathmandu Valley. She lived there with her family and relatives as part of the Gurung caste. In Nepal, your family is your most important asset and children often give back to their parents offering them a portion of their earnings.

To leave your family as a young adult is almost unheard of. Yet in 1989, Nepal was in turmoil, facing the growing threat of the communist party, known as Maoist. Additionally, women had limited rights and often faced discrimination and gender-based violence.

“In Nepal, men are a higher level. They think, I can’t do that work. That is a woman’s job. They think women have a lower role than men,” Gurung said.

So, Gurung took a leap of faith and decided to come to the U.S. in search of a better life; a life painted with visions of achieving the American dream.

Margaret Wyss – A mentor and best friend

Margaret Wyss, a U.S. woman 50 years Gurung’s senior, loved to visit Nepal and formed a close bond with Gurung’s brother-in-law. She traveled to Nepal every winter and taught him English and immersed herself in the Nepalese culture.

One year Gurung went to her cousin’s house for a visit and she met Wyss. “I was a little girl. I didn’t have anything and she liked me. She liked my attitude and how hard working I was,” Gurung said. Wyss continued to visit Nepal for the next three years and began to form a relationship with Gurung.

The first year, she taught me to speak English and gave me money to pursue classes in Kathmandu. The second year, she paid for me to obtain a passport. The third year, she asked me if I wanted to come with her to the U.S., Gurung said.

In 1989, at the age of 21, Gurung traveled with Wyss to Pinecliffe, a small town about eight miles outside Nederland. Wyss supported Gurung and encouraged her to look for work.

The years following Gurung’s arrival in the U.S. were marked by intense loneliness and isolation. “That time was hard for me. I didn’t have any Nepali friend or family. When I remember that time, I want to cry,” Gurung said. Yet, she remained strong and was determined to make a life for herself in the U.S.

With rudimentary English skills, an eight-grade education and little energy left over from a lengthy legal battle for her green card, Gurung went out to look for work.

After an exhausting search, Gurung found work cleaning four to five houses a week, working 40 hours as

a janitor at the Gilpin School and then working as a host at a local Mexican restaurant Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. “I was asleep maybe 4 or 5 hours a night. I saved all my money to help with my paper work and to pay the lawyers,” Gurung said.

Gurung kept up this schedule for the next five years, adamant that she would one day achieve the American dream that made her leave her beloved family and country behind. In 1995, Gurung received a small break when her Nepalese neighbor, Lok Malla moved to Pinecliffe. They soon married and supported one another in their struggle to succeed.

Reflecting on her first years in the U.S. Gurung feels she owes her life to her good friend, Margaret Wyss who died three years ago at the age of 90.

“She is my life mother and I have a birth mother too. Most of the time, I’m dreaming with her. I go play with her and go along with her,” Gurung said. “I love her.”

At long last – The achievement of the American Dream

The door to the restaurant opened wide and Mark Stringfellow, city contractor and longtime restaurant patron, came bouncing in. His eyes darted around the room in search of Gurung and Malla. He found them seated at a booth near the window and hurried over to chat, his grin widening with each step.

“Did you tell them you’re very prominent? Your family is very prominent in Nepal. You’re part of the Gurung clan,” Stringfellow said.

Stringfellow is one of the several locals that drop by Kathmandu every day for a cup of chai and a chat with his close friends, Gurung and Malla. He is very fond of his hard working Nepalese friends. “They came here, worked extremely hard and are a great asset to the community. They have helped weave the fabric of Nederland,” Stringfellow said.

Kathmandu opened in 1999 as a symbol of hard work and dedication. Gurung and Malla served over 100 customers on opening day. The restaurant was the result of Gurung’s love for authentic Nepalese food and years of dedication and heartache.

“We did not have a day off. We did not go out for dinner. We did not buy new clothes. That’s the way we saved money, Malla said. He remembers Gurung’s hard work for the first few months and said, “It was tough. You cry so many times.”

Today, the fresh smell of garlic naan, vegetable saag, chicken korma and several other homemade recipes fill the air. Gurung goes from table to table to welcome her guests and to make sure they are comfortable and feel at home.

Gurung arrives at the restaurant every day at 9:30 a.m. “I love to be here. I do what needs to be done. If we’re busy, I just help,” Gurung said. She keeps the restaurant going and rarely takes a break.

When she does take a break, even if only for a moment, she thinks about her sponsor and best friend. “I know she is happy with me,” Gurung said. “I’m sure she is looking from somewhere else.”

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- [Grilled Beef Tenderloin with Ancho-Jalapeño Butter](#) April 17, 2008
There are bigger cuts of beef, but none feeds so many people so quickly. Nick Fauchald serves sliced tenderloin alongside grilled bread smeared with chile butter. Set up a grill for indirect grilling, with the coals on one side, and heat to 450°. In a bowl, mix the butter, shallots, jalapeños and chile powder; season with salt. Transfer to a sheet of plastic [...]
- [Cold Peanut Noodles with Tofu and Red Peppers](#) June 7, 2007
A vast improvement on the usual sesame noodles made famous by a million Chinese take-out menus, this silky version includes chunks of tofu and sweet, crunchy slices of red bell pepper. In a large bowl, toss the tofu with 2 tablespoons of the soy sauce and let stand for 10 minutes.... [...]
- [Swordfish Steaks with Smoky Tomato Ketchup](#) May 1, 2007
"I spend part of the year in Martha's Vineyard, where we get incredibly fresh swordfish. It's a great sponge for that wood-grilled flavor," Raichlen says. He serves the fish with ketchup made from tomatoes charred over the same fire. PREPARE THE SWORDFISH: Arrange the swordfish in a shallow dish and season with salt and pepper. Rub the garlic onto b [...]
- [Tandoori Leg of Lamb](#) May 1, 2007
The tandoor oven is India's version of a grill. Here, Raichlen follows the traditional method of tandoori marinating—a wash of lemon juice followed by a long bath in a yogurt-based marinade—using a tender, succulent leg of lamb. After grilling the lamb, Raichlen says, make sure it rests for at least 15 minutes before carving. In a large roasting pan, mix 1/2 [...]
- [Brazilian Beer-Marinated Chicken](#) May 1, 2007
Steven Raichlen flavors this speedy chicken dish with Xingu (a Brazilian black lager that has a distinctive colalike flavor), plus mustard and onion—evoking the classic combination of beer and bratwursts. "The marinade brings a lot of flavor to a meat that really needs it," he says. In a shallow dish, mix the garlic, ginger, onion, paprika, salt, bl [...]
- [Spring Pea Falafel with Marinated Radishes and Minted Yogurt](#) March 7, 2006
The Good News Instead of deep-frying the falafel patties, Nicki Reiss sautés them in a lightly oiled pan. And she serves them with a low-fat yogurt sauce instead of the usual rich sesame-based tahini. MARINATE THE RADISHES: In a small saucepan, heat the vegetable oil. Add the shallot and thyme and cook over moderately low heat until the shallot is softened, a [...]
- [Shaking Beef with Pea Shoot Salad](#) February 1, 2002
In a bowl, toss the beef with 1/2 tablespoon of vegetable oil, 1 tablespoon of garlic, 2 teaspoons of sugar and the fish sauce; season with pepper. Let stand. 2. In a bowl, toss the onion and vinegar. In another bowl, mix the soy sauce with the olive oil and remaining 1/2 teaspoon of sugar. Season with salt and pepper. ... [...]

[Food news from Epicurious](#)

- [The Arkansas World Cheese Dip Championship](#) July 19, 2010

Defining the culinary culture of a state can be difficult. Louisiana has a cuisine, one that's far more varied and complex than most outsiders realize. Ditto California. And Texas. But what about North Dakota? What about Kansas? More to the point of this dispatch, what about Arkansas? If one is to understand the totemic dishes of Arkansas, one must und [...]

[Good Wine under \\$20](#)

- [Daring Pairings for Your Grape Adventures](#) July 19, 2010

I know that there is no such thing as a "correct" wine pairing, and that the only thing that really matters is what works for your tastebuds. Nevertheless, I do enjoy the alchemy of good wine and food pairings--that semi-mystical thing that happens when the two hit it off perfectly. Many of us have figured out over time what favorite foods work with [...]

[Restaurants from the Boulder Daily Camera](#)

- [Gourmet grub going mobile in Boulder with new food trucks](#) June 6, 2010

Officials from several Boulder city departments -- including planning, land use, sales tax, and licensing -- are scheduled to discuss food trucks and the regulations under which they operate on Tuesday. [...]

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