

"Madame Bozarjants" is a mansion in Tbilisi shrouded in mystery.

As part of the project "Walks around Tiflis," Sputnik tells about a house with an amazing fate and the people who became its history.



What could Madame Bozardzhants and Madame Bovary have in common, except for the associative analogy of the first two letters in both surnames? One is a respectable mother of three children, the wife of one of the richest citizens of Tiflis - tobacco industrialist Nikolai Bozardzhants! The other is the wife of a provincial doctor, passionately seeking love and ending her life by suicide. And besides, not a real heroine, but only a literary character. It would seem that there are no connections. But Tiflis citizens stubbornly called the Bozardzhants family nest on Gudovich Street, now Daniel Chonkadze, the house of "Madame Bozardzhants", as if putting some ironic subtext into it. Meanwhile, everything was much simpler - a prudent businessman, wanting to insure himself against encroachment on private property, registered the mansion in the name of his wife, Ekaterina Grigoryevna Bozardzhants.



- House on Chonkadze Street "City Pearl"

Nikolai Bozardzhants' attempts to protect his "property" were in vain. After the Sovietization of Georgia, the enterprise "Bozardzhants and Sons" was nationalized, and instead of cigarettes called "Sympathy", they began to produce tobacco products "Prima". And the party elite was moved into the house where the large and friendly family of a tobacco industrialist once lived, allocating two rooms to representatives of the hated class. It is not proper for enemies of the proletariat to

splurge on square meters. Many years have passed since then, but the mansion, considered the pearl of city architecture, still pleases the eye with its magnificence.



- House of Madame Bozardzhyants

The house seems to have some kind of magic. You are walking along the old Chonkadze Street, and suddenly - bam(!), and you stop dead in your tracks. In fairness, it should be noted that in the oldest city district of Sololaki there are many houses that can leave you stupefied, but the house of Madame Bozardzhyants has some kind of mysterious attraction.



- In the front door of the Bozardzhyantsev house

Without exaggeration, anyone passing by will definitely slow down to take a look at it. And it is not about the stories that surround this famous mansion, and not even about its architectural value. In 1915, the three-story mansion received a special architectural prize in a competition organized by the Tiflis mayor's office - for the best facade. But in something else, inexplicable, and perhaps not amenable to verbal description. The creation of the famous Tiflis architect Mikhail Ogandzhanov, which received a silver medal for the best facade, impresses, first of all, with its impressive size and shape. And, of course, with its exquisite decoration, devoid of pretentiousness and excesses.



- Interior of the house "Madame Bozardzhyants" on Chonkadze Street in Tbilisi

Right in front of the house there is a cozy garden, which is enclosed by a fancy lace cast-iron fence. To the left of the entrance to the mansion is a large arch leading to the courtyard. The house is built in a T-shape. And the perpendicular to the facade was conceived as an outbuilding for servants. Apparently, the car that the Bozardzhyants are said to have owned was also parked here. According to rumors, the first passenger car in Tiflis belonged to this family. I wonder what brand it was...



- In the front door of the Bozardzhyantsev house

Well, we've examined everything from the outside, it's time to ring the intercom and ask to come inside. We choose a tenant's last name at random, press the bell and prepare to explain the reason for our visit. But the lock on the door suddenly clicks, and we step inside. The front door to the house is half glass, and from the street you can clearly see the walls of the front door, lined with old wall tiles. But the coolness and impressiveness of the marble can only be felt by slowly walking up the stairs and leaning on the thick marble railings.



- Stained glass windows in the entrance hall of the Bozardzhyantsev house

What impresses most is the Venetian glass. It is everywhere. In the doors that lead to the long common corridors with the apartments, in the entrance doors of the apartments themselves. The owners of the house ordered the glass in Italy. What is surprising is not so much how such a quantity of glass was delivered from Italy to Georgia, but the fact that all of it has survived and survived to this day. The parquet in the common corridors, polished to a mirror shine, and the stained glass ceiling from those years have been preserved in the house.



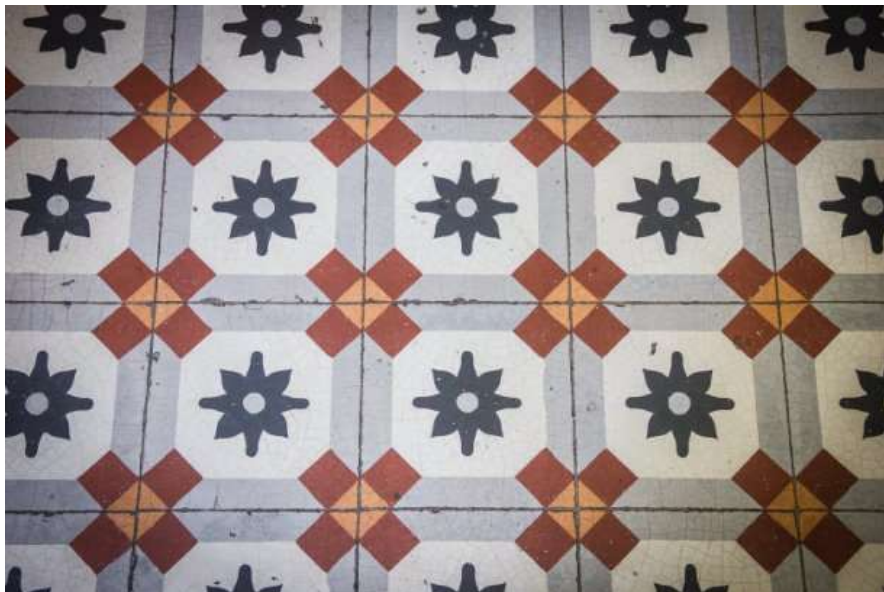
- Venetian glass in the design of the entrance to the Bozardzhyants house

"Love, Jazz and Diamonds" The house of tobacco magnate Nikolai Bozardzhyants was built in two years, from 1912 to 1914. The Bozardzhyants had three sons - Ivan, Mikhail and Arshak. The three-story house was conceived as a place to live for three brothers, where each brother had one floor. How Ivan and Arshak divided the floors among themselves is unknown, but the third floor went to Mikhail Nikolaevich Bozardzhyants. One of the residents of the house told us about this. Mikhail Bozardzhyants' son Nikolai, named after his grandfather, was her uncle. But first things first. Mother Varvara Agasyevna and her son Nikolai Bozardzhyants occupied a room on the third floor at the very end of the corridor. The trace of the other members of the once large family was lost after the Bolsheviks came to power. Some say that Ivan and Arshak emigrated to Europe, others say that their descendants lived in this house until the 90s of the twentieth century.



- Ceiling in the Bozardzhyantsev house on Chonkadze Street

Most of the luxurious apartments on the third floor went to the prominent revolutionary figure Alexei Gegechkori. His name is engraved on the wooden door to this day. He also got expensive household items and furniture: a grand piano, a screen inlaid with mother-of-pearl, tables, chairs and much more. Every Thursday, people gathered at Gegechkori's to play lotto. Varvara Agasyevna never missed a game. It was an excuse to sit on the furniture that once belonged to the family. Thus, nostalgic for the past, the lady from bourgeois society went to parties of party figures. The 100-square-meter reception hall also ended up at Gegechkori's disposal. However, he still had to share it with his fellow party member Dolidze. In this very room, which was given to the revolutionary Dolidze, his granddaughter Dodo Dolidze was born, grew up, and lives to this day. She is considered the keeper of local secrets. Despite her advanced years, Dodo has an excellent, trained memory, as befits a specialist in history.



- Tiled floor preserved in one of the apartments

It so happened that my mother's sister, Aunt Nadya, came to visit them from Abkhazia, says Dodo. Nadya was so dazzlingly beautiful that men were timid in her presence. During her stay, Nadya met their neighbors, the Bozardzhyants family. She liked the gallant and educated Nikolai so much that a romance broke out between them, which soon ended in marriage. "Nikolay Bozardzhyants spoke English and French, was fond of jazz and was such an attractive man that it was difficult to

resist his charm,” says Dodo. “You know, no matter how incredible it may seem today, I never heard any reproaches or complaints from them about the authorities, because of whom they lost their fortune. Representatives of this family were distinguished by an excellent education and high culture.”



- Venetian glass in the design of the front door Dodo says that the couple did not have children of their own, and they gave all their unspent love to her, a little girl. She recalls how Varvara Agasyevna would take out a large, uncut diamond and put it in the sun, and it would start to play with all the colors of the rainbow. The children would laugh and catch the multi-colored glare. Dodo also learned to read foreign languages and embroider from her. “Varvara Agasyevna was a devout woman. She went to church weekly, prayed for her loved ones. She passed away in the 50s. Nikolai, with all his remarkable education, worked as a taxi driver. It was not possible for Nikolai Bozardzhyants’ grandson to find a job. He often took us children for rides in this car. They still had a lot of jewelry. And when things were tough, my aunt would sell them, and that was how they lived. Besides, Uncle Kolya made good money in those days. And this allowed them, if not to live in luxury, then at least to dine in a restaurant once a week. It was such a good tradition in their family.”



- Stained glass windows in the entrance hall of the Bozardzhyantsev house

The couple lived a long life. Nadya was friends with Nikolay's sisters Evelina and Manya. She often invited Evelina, who lived in Moscow, to visit them at their dacha in Gagra. First Nikolay passed away, then Nadezhda. Due to the lack of their own children, the couple bequeathed the room in which they lived to Dodo. She also inherited some furniture from them. An

antique table, at which we have a very pleasant conversation, a sideboard made of beautiful wood, and portraits of the couple - the tobacconist's son Mikhail Nikolaevich Bozardzhyants and his wife - Varvara Agasyevna. Dodo carefully preserves these antique portraits of the Bozardzhyantsevs, as Aunt Nadya bequeathed...



- In the front door of the Bozardzhyantsev house

“Did the commissar live in the Bozardzhan chambers?” One famous person appears in the history of the residents of this house – Lavrenty Beria. There is no reliable information about the period of his life when the state security commissar lived here. And the scant information that can be scraped together on the vast expanses of the World Wide Web says that this happened at the beginning of his political career. Later, he allegedly moved to live on Machabeli Street. In general, the story is dubious, but, nevertheless, has a right to exist. However, the residents themselves have no doubts about this information. However, it is difficult to determine which of the rooms he lived in, based on the stories heard from neighbors. By the way, Zina, who lives opposite Dodo, claims that the red commissar lived in her room.



- Bozardzhyants House on Chonkadze Street

“I have lived in this house since 1978. Ever since I married my husband. He was born here and lived in this house his whole life. Yes, there is much to be said about this house... My husband Sergo’s parents lived here since 1938. His father was not a party member, although he was a man of Soviet training and a convinced communist. And when he was offered this small room in this house, those around him began to dissuade my father-in-law from moving into the apartment. They said that there was a bad aura here and the shadows of lives ruined by this man.” “Oh, no!” Dodo exclaims. “Beria lived in this very room, and he got here thanks to a relative of his wife, Gegechkori,” the woman says and points to her room. “And then Lavrenty Beria moved out of here, and my grandfather moved in here. This is not a tale, but a real fact.” In general, the more time passes, the harder it is to separate legends from real stories. And then, we often contribute to the development of an aura of mystery around historical buildings, personalities or events, simply because it is more interesting to live this way...

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