



Les Dames d'Escoffier

INTERNATIONAL

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\*photos of winners available upon request

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Les Dames d'Escoffier International Names 2017 Legacy Award Winners  
Supported by The Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts**

**LOUISVILLE, KY (June 1, 2017)** – Six professional women, chosen from a competitive field, are this year's honored **LDEI Legacy Award** recipients. They have each earned a generous mentorship opportunity with key distinguished members of Les Dames d'Escoffier International (LDEI), an organization of women leaders in food, fine beverage and hospitality whose mission is education and philanthropy for the good of the global community. **Click to tweet:** <https://ctt.ec/g6bP>

LDEI's Legacy Awards competition is open to women who live in the United States, Canada, Mexico and the United Kingdom who have a minimum of four years of industry experience. The Awards hone the women's crafts, stimulate their creativity and encourage these future leaders. Established in 2009, the Awards are generously supported by The Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts.

Each winner will participate in a high-energy, labor-intensive, career-expanding week customized by the hosting Dames. This year, the passionate winners will traverse North America to pursue new ideas and mentorship: Seattle to Manhattan, New York to the Bay Area, Canadians to the U.S. and Americans to Mexico! By the time the Awards have been completed and the winners have told their stories at LDEI's Annual Conference in Newport Beach in October, over 50,000 miles will have been traveled and countless networking connections made.

**The 2017 LDEI Legacy Awards programs and winners are:**

**Dame Araceli Ramos**, Director of Public Relations, **Mundo Cuervo/Jose Cuervo** in Guadalajara, Mexico welcomes **Kellie Thorn**, Atlanta GA, winner of the Fine Beverage and Hospitality Category to the centuries old world of Tequila crafting and hospitality in Mexico. Thorn, a celebrated beverage director for Hugh Acheson in Atlanta, will learn about all the facets of agave farming, distillation and aging of tequila including the myriad hospitality industries of this iconic global brand.

**Dame Susan Ungaro**, President of The James Beard Foundation, welcomes Culinary Category winner **Paige Bloskey**, Seattle WA, to spend a week at James Beard's historic NYC townhouse working alongside multiple guest chefs during their showcase dinners. Chef Bloskey is the first female head chef of Farestart, the game-changing nonprofit culinary training and catering program in the Pacific Northwest.

**Dames Carolyn Wente and Amy Hoopes** of Wente Family Estates will immerse Wine Category winner **Jenny Dorsey** of New York City in the exploration of winemaking at its best at America's oldest continuously operated family-owned winery, where she will discover the secrets of their award-winning hospitality. Chef Dorsey, an award winning, innovative chef consultant, will expand her wine appreciation and knowledge in the field with this opportunity.

**Dame Kari Leitch**, Vice President of Communications and Corporate Affairs at **Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery** in Woodinville, WA, welcomes Wine Category winner **Ann Brydle** of Victoria, BC to the oldest winery in Washington State. A wine scholar and educator, Brydle successfully manages Cascadia, a specialty wine and liquor store that focuses on products of the Pacific Northwest. She will learn about all facets of the winery's two locations and their popular wine tourism industry from vineyard to bottle to vineyard concerts.

**Dame Barbara Hanley** along with the team at **Shy Brothers Farm**, a New England artisanal farmstead cheese company, will host Farm to Table Category winner **Shelley Robinson** of Edmonton, AB. Chef Robinson, an executive chef and a Chopped Canada winner, will learn what it takes to produce an award-winning cheese by working side by side with cheese makers on the farm. She will gain new experiences that will enhance her passion for mentoring young chefs and satisfy her passion to understand cheese making up close.

**Dame Christine Burns Rudalevige** and esteemed members of the New England chapter of Les Dames d'Escoffier will welcome **Vanessa Driscoll Bialobreski**, founder of Farm to Table Events in Columbia, SC. The winner of the Farm to Sea to Table to Journalism Category, Ms. Bialobreski will experience a whirlwind tour through the **New England Food System** while overnighing on a fishing vessel and exploring food hubs, farms and more.

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*LDEI is an international organization of women leaders who create a supportive culture in their communities to achieve excellence in the food, beverage, and hospitality professions. Over 2,200 members in 38 chapters worldwide provide leadership, educational opportunities and host philanthropic events within their communities. For more information, visit [LDEI.org](http://LDEI.org) or on Facebook @LDEIdamesdescoffier.*

**The Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts** was created by Julia in 1995 and became operational in 2004. Headquartered in Santa Barbara, California, the non-profit Foundation has made more than \$1.25 million in grants to other non-profits in support of research in culinary history, scholarships for professional culinary training, internships in food writing as well as professional development and food literacy programs. [juliachildfoundation.org](http://juliachildfoundation.org)