



Media Contact: Liz Barrett
(312) 446-6945
lizbchicago@gmail.com

Les Dames d'Escoffier International Announces Winners of 2021 M.F.K. Fisher Prize for Excellence in Culinary Content

Louisville, KY -- Oct. 8, 2021 -- Les Dames d'Escoffier International (LDEI) has selected the winners of the 2021 LDEI M.F.K. Fisher Prize recognizing excellence in print, broadcast and digital content that broadens peoples' understanding of the intersection of food and culture.

The M.F.K. Fisher Prize supports women creators and is named in honor of renowned culinary writer M.F.K. Fisher whose trailblazing work encouraged deeper thought about the cultural significance of foodways.

The winners are:

First Prize (\$3,000) – Catherine Neville for the [“Ramona Farms” episode](#) of the “tasteMAKERS” documentary series airing on PBS. From the Jury: “Catherine Neville’s moving celebration of Ramona Farms just outside of Phoenix shows how Ramona Button and her family cultivate crops that connect the Gila River Indian Community members with their history and heritage.”

Second Prize (\$2,000) – Lisa Donovan for [“Our Lady of Perpetual Hunger: A Memoir,”](#) (Penguin). From the Jury: “Lisa Donovan’s luminous writing deserves the widest possible audience. She writes movingly of loss in the culinary community and left the jury wanting to read more.”

Third Prize (\$1,000) – Pati Jinich for [“Finding the Soul of Sonora in Carne Asada,”](#) published in The New York Times. From the Jury: “In a mouth-watering piece of culinary anthropology, Pati Jinich explores the Sonoran carne asada as a very special social and culinary event.”

“The quality of this year’s submissions was sky-high,” said M.F.K. Fisher Prize Committee Chair Mindy Merrell. “These women set a high bar for creating insightful, captivating content that shines a light on the intersection of food and culture. We’re proud to recognize these winners.”

Works of Distinction

The jury also recognized seven additional works for overall excellence including:

Yana Gilbuena for "Filipino Feast," published in Allrecipes.com

Mary-Frances Heck for "Clay: Bringing the Ancient Cooking Medium Home to the Modern Kitchen," published in Food and Wine magazine

Hannah Howard for "Learning to Eat While Pregnant and Recovering from an Eating Disorder," published in Catapult

Besha Rodell for "World's Best Restaurants," published in Travel and Leisure magazine

Kathleen Squires for "Turkey Truly Worth Celebrating," published in The Wall Street Journal

CiCi Williamson for "Global Warming and the Last Crab Cake" published in Chow Line, the newsletter of the Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C.

Eagranie Yuh for "Where the Cookie Jar is Always Full" published in Edible Vancouver & Wine Country magazine

Winners were selected by an independent panel of judges including:

- Dr. Megan Elias, Director of the Gastronomy Program at Boston University, author of five books about food history and editor of the Food, Culture & Society journal published on behalf of the Association for the Study of Food and Society.
- Jean Haskell, Ph.D, retired professor of Appalachian Studies at Virginia Tech, University and East Tennessee State University, and visiting professor at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.
- Yvonne Maffei, a food researcher and writer, cookbook author, e-commerce entrepreneur, public speaker, food industry consultant and marketer. Yvonne is the founder of the first website on Halal food and cooking, MyHalalKitchen.com.
- Mary Jane Petrowski, associate director for the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) in Chicago, Ill, and a 13-year academic librarian.

Les Dames d'Escoffier International (LDEI) is an international organization of women leaders who create a supportive culture in their communities to achieve excellence in the fields of food, beverage and hospitality. The organization's 2,400 members in 43 chapters in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom and France provide leadership, educational opportunities and philanthropy. For more information, visit www.ldei.org and follow on Instagram @lesdamesintl and Facebook Les Dames d'Escoffier Int'l.

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