

Les Dames d'Escoffier International

# Quarterly

SUMMER



2023



Celebrating  
Asian American,  
Pacific Islander,  
and Native American  
Heritage





Dame Jin-Ya Huang (middle) visits a Dallas restaurant that serves mooncakes for the Chinese, Mid-Autumn, Harvest Moon Festival. Photo: Amanda Albee.

Dames Susanna Foo and Darina Allen at Ballymaloe House in Shanagarry, County Cork, Ireland. Photo: Susan Slack. The amazing Asian Aunties: Dame Marcie Taylor, Oakley Boren, and Dame Anita Lau. Photo: Anita Lau.

**On the Cover:** Poached Seafood in Coconut Lemongrass Sauce. Photo courtesy of Susanna Foo.



# Les Dames d'Escoffier International Quarterly SUMMER 2023

## IN THIS ISSUE

### FEATURES

- 4 Celebrating Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Native American Heritage
- 25 LDEI and The Wine Group Award Scholarships
- 26 Board of Directors Meeting
- 27 LDEI Conference: Experience The Bountiful Bluegrass
- 28 Edible Cork
- 30 Edible London
- 34 Fundraising
- 36 Flavors of Mexico

### DEPARTMENTS

- 38 Chapter Programs
- 44 Member Milestones
- 48 Global Culinary Postcard

© Les Dames d' Escoffier, 2023.



## FROM THE EDITOR

**Be Bold, Be Brave:  
Don't Settle for Less  
Than you Deserve!**

2023 is the Year of the Rabbit in the Chinese zodiac—a period of intellect and self-reflection and a time when hard work and sacrifices of the past are generously rewarded. This perfectly reflects the professional and personal accomplishments of the 19 remarkable women of Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Native American heritage who are profiled in this issue. Prepare to become inspired! These Dame entrepreneurs are making a significant mark as they build their brands through hard work and a strong drive. Yet each has an outward mindset that allows them to be of valuable service to LDEI and their communities.



Read the details about three magnificent travel adventures to Mexico, Ireland, and London, which were sponsored by the Mexico and London Chapters. In addition to learning more about the culture and cuisines of the host chapters' countries, the traveling Dames gained new perspectives and connected with their international sister Dames making new friendships that will be last for years to come.

Other highlights in this issue include an article from our valued Partner YETI and a report from Dame **Ellen Kanner** (Washington, D.C.) on "LDEI and The Wine Group Award Scholarships for Impactful Change."

Don't overlook the exciting report, "LDEI Conference: Experience the Bountiful Bluegrass." Thank you to all the talented writers who contributed to this issue and to the photographer-Dames who shared photos from their travel adventures: **Chrissy Walker**, **Angela Dansby**, **Patty Erd**, and **Marsha Palanci**. Special thanks to Second Vice President **Anita Lau** and designer Joni Keith.

—Susan Slack, Editor, Summer *Quarterly*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### *LDEI: What Makes Us Different?*

For the past few months, the LDEI Board of Directors has been working on strategic planning, both in response to an evolving post-pandemic way of doing business and in anticipation of a change in management in a few short years.

One of the most important issues we're addressing right now is the LDEI Annual Conference. As LDEI's Annual Business Meeting and our largest member event of the year, the Conference needs to be retooled to make more financial sense and attract more Dames to attend. Recently I communicated that a task force had been assembled to begin that process. And a big thank you to the many Dames who participated in the Conference survey—we had a tremendous response, which tells us that Conference is important to you! Armed with the great feedback we received, talks are now ongoing on the potential ways we can make attending more attractive and more realistic. The task force is a great mix of Dames—those who have chaired an LDEI Conference and some who have never attended. It is a blend of members with experience in hospitality management, multi-concept development, sales and event production. Nothing is off the table. We're throwing it all against the wall to see what sticks, from changing the time of year to replacing the Conference breakfast program with a continental breakfast bar and starting the programming a little later to allow for more time to visit the host city. Updates will be shared as the plans come together, all in an effort to make this annual gathering more accessible to more of our members. Thank you to Dames **Nancy Fitch** (San Antonio), **Tania Ruiz** (Mexico), **Cynthia Nims** (Seattle), **Deborah Mintcheff** (New York), **Cathy Siegel** (San Antonio), and **Katie Patton** (Des Moines) for your time and expertise.

Another aspect of the strategic planning process has been examining who we are as an organization and how LDEI compares to other associations in the hospitality industry. Networking groups of women supporting other women are becoming more and more common—which is a *great* thing! As you know, what sets LDEI apart is not only our global representation, which enriches our brand with cultural diversity, but



we also have longevity. Nearly 40 years of organizational history has afforded us an impressive membership of women, some of whom have been with us from the very beginning and others who are just getting started. The benefit to us is the range of accomplished women with career experience as well as newer Dames who come to the table with fresh ideas. Our dedicated Partners are *committed and involved* with collaborations including YETI's Woman of Purpose Award and The Wine Group's Scholarships for Impactful Change, both of which we'll be celebrating at our Annual Conference October 5–8 in Louisville. Our Dames are passionate about LDEI because it's personal and therefore meaningful.

Most of all, it is our mission of philanthropy and mentorship that sets us apart from other organizations. It's not only about what's in it for us but how we can give back. We're raising money for scholarships, volunteering in our communities, and being of service in ways that truly make a difference. And we're doing it together. *That's* what makes us unique.

Jennifer Goldman  
President, LDEI Board of Directors



## 2023 LDEI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The mission of the LDEI Board is to support the development of new chapters and the success of the existing chapters through guidance, education, connectivity, and effective communication. The Board also fosters and encourages the career development and growth of its members through diverse programs and philanthropic initiatives.

**President**  
**JENNIFER GOLDMAN**  
(Cleveland/Northeast Ohio)  
HelmsBriscoe  
jennifer.LDEIBoard@gmail.com  
(843) 224-0198

**First Vice President**  
**KATHY GOLD**  
(Philadelphia)  
In The Kitchen Cooking School  
chefkage@gmail.com  
(609) 206-4511

**Second Vice President**  
**ANITA LAU**  
(LA/OC)  
MHW Strategies  
madhungrywoman@gmail.com  
(650)-996-7300

**Third Vice President**  
**KERSTEN RETTIG**  
(Dallas)  
Pret Marketing  
kersten@pretmarketing.com  
(214) 912-3154

**Secretary**  
**BARB PIREZ**  
(Atlanta)  
Henri's Bakery & Deli  
piresb@bellsouth.net  
(404) 432-5541

**Treasurer**  
**STEPHANIE JAEGER**  
(British Columbia)  
PearTree Provisions  
ssjaeger@shaw.ca  
(604) 299-2772

**Chapter Board Liaisons**  
**ERIN BYERS MURRAY**  
(Nashville)  
The Local Palate  
murray.erin@gmail.com  
(617) 571-8173

**MARILYN FREUNDLICH**  
(St. Louis)  
Owner, Inclusively Yours Ceremonies  
marilynfreundlich@gmail.com  
(314) 374-5881

**IRENE MOORE**  
(South Florida)  
Freelance Wine & Food Writer  
irenemoore305@gmail.com  
(786) 942-6448

**Immediate Past President**  
**DEBORAH MINTCHEFF**  
(New York)  
TheArtfulPen  
dsmintcheff@gmail.com  
(917) 923-6348

**Executive Director**  
**GREG JEWELL**  
President, AEC Management Resources  
Louisville, KY 40204  
info@ldei.org  
(502) 456-1851 x1



# Celebrating Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Native American Heritage

It's important to reflect on the historical and cultural contributions of individuals and groups of Asian and Pacific Islander descent to the United States. The effort to officially recognize their contributions began with Congress in the late 1970s. In 1992, under the Bush Administration, Congress passed a public law, which annually designated the month of May as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month.

Last year, the Biden-Harris Administration designated May as Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month to bring broader visibility to Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities. Pacific Islander refers to those whose origins are the original peoples of Polynesia (Hawaii/Native Hawaiian), Micronesia, and Melanesia (Fiji). The acronym AANHPI is an umbrella term used often throughout this story.

During November 1-30, National Native American Heritage Month (NNAHM) honors American Indians and Alaska Natives for their rich, varied cultures, history, traditions, and societal contributions. They are recognized as America's original inhabitants who made vital contributions to the United States and the world, notably their prehistoric harvesting of potatoes and corn.

Equally important are several Canadian national heritage celebrations in June. National Indigenous History Month recognizes the history of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. June 21 is National Indigenous Peoples Day. In this story, read about 19 Dames—cultural icons—of Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American descent who are rocking the world with their contributions to hospitality, food, and wine. In alignment with their own values, they offer us the most authentic version of themselves.—**Susan Slack** (Charleston)



## Natalie Keng

(Atlanta) | Global Hearth

### *From Mudpies to Egg Rolls*

Making mudpie cupcakes topped with dandelions from her yard was foretelling Atlanta Dame **Natalie Keng's** future in culinary entrepreneurship.

Natalie is a trail blazer whose quest for knowledge is rooted in her Asian American heritage and being a native Georgian. Her constant search for increased learning has led her to new discoveries starting with the importance of community as the basis for achieving diversity. They have provided a compass for exploring life outside of the South. Creating community through food and culture has and continues to be the compass that drives her decisions, from working for a Fortune 100 company to starting her own small business. As the daughter of Asian parents who emigrated to the U.S. from Taiwan on academic scholarships, Natalie was born and raised in Smyrna, Georgia, a suburb of Atlanta, where she still resides.

Having grown up in the 70s, a time when Asians were confronted with discrimination, Natalie realized she didn't look like the typical southerner. When it was time to look at colleges, Natalie was ready for a new lifestyle...that of living in the North. Natalie chose Vassar College, one of The Seven Sisters. With scholarships and a work-study program, Natalie graduated from Vassar and went on to obtain a Master of Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. After working in the business world as a marketing executive for a Fortune 100 company and heading up leadership development and diversity teams for national nonprofit organizations, Natalie was restless for a career that would satisfy her desire for bringing cultures and diversity together. So, she decided to pivot and return to Atlanta. In 2009, Natalie opened her first business, Chinese Southern Belle, LLC. Along with her mother, Margaret Keng, the duo began cooking classes, custom interactive events, and tours to shatter stereotypes and promote community, diversity and inclusion. As her events grew in popularity, Natalie discovered parallels between Chinese and Southern foods. She built her small business around a community of sharing and creating new ways to combine Southern and Asian culture.

Just as she was enjoying business success, COVID-19 hit. Natalie's business came to a halt, but she didn't. She quotes a Chinese proverb: "Out of crisis comes opportunity," says Natalie. And that opportunity has been brought to life under the name "Global Hearth." With the tagline, "Cooking Up a Better World," Natalie is Founder and CEO (Chief Eating Officer). Global Hearth's platform centers around inspiring, interactive, and impactful presentations to businesses. Some of her clients include Chick fil A, Deloitte, Home Depot, and Invesco. Her topics include leadership development, employment engagement, and retention of talent, "all vital to the bottom line," says Natalie.

While Natalie was continuing to increase her presentations and work with community organizations, she decided to extend her growing enterprise by developing Asian-American sauces and marinades. With no experience in food science, she knew the flavors she was seeking so started to experiment. When asked about these ingredients, Natalie's response, "I just opened the refrigerator door and started mixing sauces, using a little bit of this and a little bit of that." The results are in the three bottled sauces, *Wild Wild West™*; *You Saucy Thing™* which was inspired by her grandmother; and *My Sweet Hottie™*. Natalie has now earned the title, "Sauce Maven™." Among other national awards, these sauces have won two Flavor of Georgia awards and have been featured at national restaurant shows.

Most recently, Natalie launched her new cookbook-memoir, *Egg Rolls & Sweet Tea*. Recipes include a fusion of Asian American dishes created by her parents and grandparents. New flavors from combining Southern and Asian favorites result in recipes such as *Preppy Pink & Green Handmade Dumpling Wrappers*. Colorful photos of recipes interspersed with her stories of growing up in an era of discrimination and rejection are historical accounts of Natalie's experiences that led to her on-going success today. —**Suzanne Brown** (Atlanta)





## Ruby Chan

(Boston) | FreshZen Food

### *A Family Tradition of Entrepreneurship*

What does it take to be driven, innovative, and passionate? Perhaps a dose of scrappiness, resourcefulness, and being proud of your cultural heritage. **Ruby Chan**, a Boston Dame since 2022 and the owner and prime mover of FreshZen Food, learned an invaluable lesson from her Chinese immigrant parents: entrepreneurship as a means of survival.

Ruby grew up on the Lower East Side of New York City working at her parents' restaurant. She was fortunate to be surrounded by fresh, authentic Chinese food with unique, flavorful sauces. Food was enjoyed as a way to celebrate life and heal the body. She noticed that her parents' customers always raved about their sauces and suggested that perhaps it would be a good idea to close the restaurant and concentrate on producing and selling their sauces. As luck would have it, years later, married with four children and caught up in the corporate grind of working in marketing for HP, Gillette, Staples, and Citizen Bank, she struggled to find time to prepare fresh, authentic, and healthy meals.

Ruby found a way to distill the traditions of her parents' popular sauces for quick and healthy meals. Her daughter turned to her one night at the dinner table and said, "Mom, I think you need to quit your job and sell sauce." Voilà, there was Ruby's entrée into entrepreneurship and a way to embrace her passions. Here was her daughter advising her precisely as Ruby had tried to persuade her parents many years earlier. As has been well documented, COVID-19 proved to be a challenging time. However, Ruby used it as an opportunity to develop new products such as the FreshZen Thai Chili Garlic Hot Sauce and ramped it up on an online e-commerce platform. As an entrepreneur, Ruby notes that one is "bootstrapping it every single day. Money is always a challenge."

As founder and CEO of FreshZen Foods, her company produces premium Asian sauces. FreshZen is the only plant-based and gluten-free Asian pesto on the market, made with clean ingredients, 75 percent less sodium and rich flavors passed down through generations making cooking healthy and delicious meals fast and easy. In today's market, Ruby sells three different sauces in over seventy stores across New England, including Whole Foods Markets in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Maine. Her company has been featured on TV shows such as WCVB *Chronicle* and in *Boston Business Journal* and *The Boston Globe*. Ruby adds, "In celebrating Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month (AANHPI), it is beautiful how we highlight and commemorate this occasion. It is about my tribe and network. It is the shared sense of humanity. No one succeeds alone, but we can all do great things with a supportive network of like-minded people. My dream of running and building a business has become much more about uplifting people and communities around us." Her advice to Dames aspiring to a similar career is "work hard, find your passion and your tribe."

—**Lucille Giovino** (Boston)



Jenice Yu's FISHcuterie box. Photo: Fresh Ideas Start Here.

## Jenice Yu

(British Columbia) | Fresh Ideas Start Here

### *Heritage at Heart*

**Jenice Yu** is the owner of Fresh Ideas Start Here (F.I.S.H) and joined the British Columbia Chapter in 2017. She is a purveyor of local, sustainable seafood, an expertise she grew up in.

Born in Vancouver BC, Jenice's family had a seafood processing company that originated in Hong Kong in the 1980s. They relocated the entire company to Vancouver and expanded into exporting BC seafood. They made a name for themselves in harvesting and processing sea urchin, herring roe, wild salmon, and specifically *ikura* (wild salmon roe). She grew up in the fish plant and witnessed the business flourishing during her youth.

In 2008, Jenice and her uncle opened a storefront in an up-and-coming neighbourhood in Vancouver. Though excited, Jenice needed to work hard. She quickly realized she needed to expand her business and decided to build a wholesale division. Before 2008, Jenice had spent years in the restaurant industry including seven years, on and off, for La Belle Auberge, which had introduced her to the people who would help kickstart this new division. Today Jenice provides some of the top restaurants in Vancouver with her fresh seafood. But she recognized that she could offer more; with staff and space shortages, restaurants were looking for more seafood options. She began to provide smoked octopus, fish stock, and candied salmon, items that removed time-consuming aspects for her restaurant/wholesale clients.

Now with a federally licensed warehouse facility in full production, Jenice continues to develop ideas for her growing empire. She offers poke bowls at her FISHbar, fish stocks, marinades, spreads, frozen chowders, bisques, curry, and congee. Yes, congee—unused rice from the poke bowls, fish stock from the halibut heads, no waste, more options, more classic dishes. She is continuously building her inventory for retail and wholesale clients. Currently, Jenice is working on promoting her *onigiri*, Japanese-style rice triangles filled with local tuna or salmon and wrapped with nori, the perfect grab-and-go lunch item. This item is currently available at one of the local ski hills and the University of British Columbia, but soon maybe even vending machine accessible?

In January, Jenice purchased full ownership of her retail stores. With the help of her COO partner/husband she looks forward to the independence that lies ahead and, now a mother herself, continues to develop new ideas. Her advice for anyone, especially getting into business on their own "Don't give up, there is always a way." I asked Jenice if she had special plans for Asian Heritage month and with a smile she replied, "I am Asian, I remember and celebrate it every day," which is obvious in everything she does. We celebrate Jenice and we wish her continued success. —**Stephanie Jaeger** (British Columbia)

Watch Jenice in action: [Halibut Cutting](#)





Tofu Tower from Susanna Foo Fresh Inspiration

## Suzanna Foo

(Philadelphia) | Chef/Restaurateur

### Tradition Meets Innovation

**Susanna Foo**, chef and restaurateur, was one of the founding members of the Philadelphia Chapter when it was established in 1984. Her hallmark five-star, award-winning restaurant, Susanna Foo Chinese Cuisine, which served a fusion of Chinese and French cuisines, is still revered and missed by Greater Philadelphia and South Jersey residents.

Susanna redefined Chinese cuisine since 1979 by marrying her keen knowledge of many regional Chinese cooking traditions with techniques and cultural norms of other international cuisines. These experiences allowed her to shy away from regional and national boundaries and allowed her to create a cuisine that embraces both authenticity and improvisation.

Although born in Inner Mongolia, China, her family moved to Shanxi province due to her father's position as a Lieutenant General in The Republic of China Marine Corps. By the age of five, the family moved to Taiwan where she eventually received a degree in European History at National Taiwan University. It was there that she learned both Shanxi and Hunan cooking and enrolled in several cooking classes with Fu Pei May in Taiwan. These early cooking and culinary experiences were a keystone for Susanna's future culinary endeavors and acclaims.

Susanna and her husband moved to America and settled in Pittsburgh in the mid 1960s where E-Hsin Foo received a Ph.D. and Susanna obtained a master's degree in library science. They moved to Philadelphia in 1979 to help E-Hsin's parents run the center city branch of their restaurant, HuNan. While working there she met the most influential person in her life, Jacob Rosenthal, who was president of the Culinary Institute of America and a regular diner at HuNan. Rosenthal encouraged her to dine at the best restaurants in New York City and Paris, and recommended that she study at the CIA.

In 1987, Susanna and her husband opened the Susanna Foo Chinese Cuisine, which was named the best new restaurant of the year by *Esquire Magazine*. She was named the best new chef in 1989 by *Food & Wine Magazine*. Throughout the 1990s and the following two decades Chef Susanna's restaurant thrived. In 1996 her cookbook, *Susanna Foo Chinese Cuisine: The Fabulous Flavors and Innovative Recipes of North America's Finest Chinese Cook* won the James Beard Award for best international cookbook. In 2003, Susanna and her husband opened Suilan, a high-roller restaurant in The Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa in Atlantic City. A few years later she released another award-winning book entitled, *Susanna Foo: Fresh Inspiration*, which in 2005 was announced the Best Asian Cuisine Book by *Gourmand International*.

Family comes first in Asian communities, so in 2009 Susanna closed both of her restaurants to care for her husband who had fallen ill and died the next year. After several years, she opened a restaurant closer to her suburban home and later decided to open in center city Philadelphia because she was not finished with her work to demonstrate modern Chinese cuisine.

After the time of her son's death from ALS in 2019, Susanna retired and now donates her time consulting, teaching cooking, creating pod cases, and fundraising for the fight against ALS.—**Dottie Koteski** (Philadelphia)



## Jin-Ya Huang

(Dallas) | Break Bread, Break Borders

### A Legacy of Love

I celebrate Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage (AANHPI) every day by being my authentic self." **Jin-Ya Huang's** simple words have such a profound meaning. Most of us struggle to be successful in our careers while staying true to ourselves. Jin-Ya, a Dallas Chapter member, has not only been discovering how to do this herself, but she has also helped hundreds of refugee women find a way to not only survive but thrive in their new country. "Through education, we empower refugee women with culinary and business skills to become competitive entrepreneurs," she says.

Jin-Ya's family escaped Communist China to live in Taiwan, then Texas. "My mother was a chef who became an entrepreneur—hiring immigrants and refugees to work in her restaurant, training them, then sending them on to bigger, better opportunities," she shares. "After losing her to cancer, I started Break Bread, Break Borders to honor her legacy. BBBB is building a culinary workforce development program to empower refugee women from war-torn countries to find job opportunities by sharing their food, culture, and storytelling."

Her mother, Margaret Mei-Ying Huang, was a chef who used the kitchen in her popular Dallas restaurant to help others believe in themselves and become successful businesspeople. Growing up in the family's Chinese restaurant gave Jin-Ya hands-on experience in running a restaurant and also helped her understand that food is love. "Honoring my mother's legacy, service to our community, making art to heal—all inspired me to fulfill my why and my purpose."

The three core values that she has built Break Bread, Break Borders around are:

1. Do the right thing.
2. Be a good neighbor.
3. Practice kindness and compassion every day.

Actively working towards making a difference every day is a goal we can all strive towards. Fighting for equity is an everyday struggle, but it is worth it. Helping women go from being unable to support and care for their families in a new country to owning their businesses is always worth the struggle. When the Break Bread, Break Borders women cater an event, it is about more than cooking and sharing food from their countries. They create an immersive experience where all can learn about what makes us different, but still the same. The BBBB Cookies for a Cause that these refugee cooks create have been so popular that they are now available as consumer packaged goods.

The Break Bread, Break Borders market is people who want to buy from purpose-driven companies. The changes this company has achieved have been recognized by *Time Magazine*, *Dallas Innovates*, Texas Women's Foundation, and the 2023 *Entrepreneur* 100 Best Community Business. Jen-Ya also appeared on the *Today Show* with Laura Bush and Jenna Bush Hager to talk about the rights of Afghan girls and women.

The company utilizes its role as a trusted neighbor who makes "food for good" catering and CPG (Consumer Packaged Goods) to sell the food that tells the stories, helps educate the public, and positively shapes the narrative on refugees and parolees.

One of Jin-Ya's favorite activists, Grace Lee Boggs, said, "We are the leaders we've been looking for." It is exciting to look toward the future and to see what these new leaders will accomplish.—**Suzanne Felber** (Dallas)



Photo credits from top: Kathy Tran; George W. Bush Presidential Center Staff; Jin-Ya Huang; Ruaa Gardener.





## Nikky Phinyawanta

(Dallas) | The Asian Mint Restaurant Group

### *Cultivating Culture and Identity Through Food*

Never bet against the house or your mother. Chef **Nikky Phinyawanta** learned this lesson early on when her Texas-born mother bet her that if she could speak English at home, she could continue to live in Thailand and attend the International School there. Nikky lost that bet and continued her studies at a boarding school in Dallas. After attending Babson College near Boston, she returned to Dallas and did what she loves the most—feeding souls.

Nikky is the owner of the Asian Mint Restaurant Group and ChefNikky.com. She became a member of the Dallas Chapter in 2013. As the incoming chapter president, she looks forward to mentoring women on how to be successful entrepreneurs and manage their businesses as she has done.

When 9/11 happened, Nikky was working in the corporate world. She made the life-changing decision that she wanted to do something different with her life. As a "Thai Texan," she had a vision of making Thai food and Thai culture more approachable to everyone and did this with her signature style. She has embraced her favorite memories of her life in Thailand with fresh market ingredients, bright, colorful decorations that she also includes in her daily wardrobe, and celebrating family time around the dining table. Asian Mint: Fresh Asian Fusion Twist is the brand she developed and continues to expand.

In 2004, at 27, Nikky and her soon-to-be husband opened their first Asian Mint Restaurant. She wanted to create an experience where customers could enjoy discovering fresh new tastes in her bright, modern-designed restaurants. She has taken her concept to the next level offering online and in-person cooking classes and a retail line of sauces. In addition, she is now offering culinary tours traveling through the streets of Thailand. Her first cookbook will be coming out at the end of 2023.

Giving back is a way of showing gratitude for all the beautiful things that come your way. Realizing that she needed to understand how to take her love of cooking and incorporate it into a restaurant setting, Nikky decided to take courses at the Dallas College El Centro Campus, a local community college with a renowned culinary program. This helped her understand the mechanics of running a restaurant, and she has never forgotten how important education has been to her success. This program is the recipient of many scholarships from Les Dames D' Escoffier, and Asian Mint is always a participant at the various Dallas College fundraising events.

Surrounding yourself with good people is how this busy Mom of two can balance work and home. Her kids are learning the business early and can often be seen with their parents serving food at the many fundraisers that Asian Mint is a part of or greeting restaurant customers. Nikky takes great pride in visiting her kids' schools, sharing her inspiring story, and being active in the Texas Restaurant Association and Greater Dallas Restaurant Association.

Central Market has been an important partner of LDEI Dallas. Nikky celebrated AANHPI in May by sharing her love for Thailand and Thai cooking in a class at a Central Market cooking school. You can bet that this talented chef and entrepreneur will continue to be a leader in the years to come and a role model for us all.— **Suzanne Felber** (Dallas)



Photos: Lisa Stewart



## Robynne Maii

(Hawaii) | Fête

### *Let Your Heart Be Your Guide*

New Dame **Robynne Maii**, chef/owner of Fête, an acclaimed restaurant in Honolulu's historic Chinatown, was the first woman of Hawaiian ancestry to be honored with a James Beard Foundation Award, which she won in 2022 for Best Chef, Northwest and Pacific.

Success is something you attract by the person you become. Robynne says her life goal was to "forge a career that incorporated my love for cooking and passion for building communities around food, and a persistent need to stay moving and physical." To accomplish this, she traveled a winding path that began with traditional education, which was strongly encouraged by her parents. Robynne earned a BA in English and Modern Dance at Middlebury College in Vermont and an MA in Food Studies from New York University.

While living in New York City, Robynne worked under Chef Rocco DiSpirito at Union Pacific and at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel's pastry banquet kitchen. She also wrote for *Gourmet* magazine and played an integral role in developing and teaching the culinary program at The Art Institute of New York City.

Moving back to her hometown Honolulu, Robynne enrolled in Kapiolani Community College, where she earned Associate in Science degrees in both Culinary Arts and in Pastry Arts.

Robynne says food always played a central role in her family on both sides. Her mother is Korean, her father is Hawaiian, Spanish, Korean, and English; all of her grandparents were born in Hawaii. My mother cooked dinner every night—even the humblest meals were delicious. I thought everyone grew up eating delicious home-cooked food. It wasn't until I went to college that I realized how special it was—the good eats we had growing up in Hawaii."

In 2016, Robynne and her husband, Chuck Bussler, opened Fête, an American neighborhood restaurant where people are the focus and the dishes served are their own favorites. Robynne wants your restaurant experience at Fête to be as relatable as if you were coming to her home for dinner.

A great respecter of fresh, local ingredients, Robynne works with island farmers. She shares, "We are lucky to be able to cook whatever we want to eat. We love celebrating local produce, poultry, meat, and seafood through our interpretation of classic cuisines from many cultures." Asked which foods she relies on, she replied, "There are so many! I must say, I do rely on rice, shoyu, good extra-virgin olive oil, papaya (it's the only thing I wanted to eat when I had COVID-19), eggs, kim (Korean seasoned nori), oatmeal, maple syrup, Dijon mustard, and bread for toast.

Robynne says the restaurant family celebrates Asian cultures in some way every day. "We cook rice daily, and this simple task has proven to be the most difficult task for our cooks. We do it old school, in a pot on the stove. The point we try and make is cooking takes total attention. That's why we love it so much...because it is different every single day! Robynne's parents taught her the value of not wasting and to respect the foods they are lucky to have. She adds, "These values are very much a part of the AANHPI cultures."

The chef has a few apprehensions for America. She confides, "The political polarization in this country really concerns me. And, this may sound simple, but I do believe breaking bread sets a tone of common ground. We all have to eat and drink clean water to survive. When it gets as basic as this, it allows us to see the humanity in others.

To move forward on a career path, Robynne says adaptability is an essential trait. "There really isn't one single attribute that leads to success, but if you have all the goods, you still need to be adaptable." Along with adaptability, a lot of hard work, with a little luck, has helped Robynne navigate the path to success.

—**Susan Slack** (Charleston)



Photos: Sean Marrs





## Samantha Fore

(Kentucky) | Tuk Tuk Snack Shop

### *Food is the Gateway to Culture*

Kentucky native Dame **Samantha Fore** was born to Sri Lankan immigrants. Raised in North Carolina, she spent the majority of her formative years with family and friends in kitchens cultivating and preserving community from Sri Lanka.

The island country (once Ceylon) lies in the Indian Ocean separated from peninsular India by the Palk Strait. The food has parallels with South Indian cuisine and cultural influences from other Asian cultures. Still, Sri Lankan food remains distinct.

Enamored with both the foods of Sri Lanka and those in her native South, Samantha has parlayed her passion into a successful career. Her career trajectory, like an asteroid shooting through space, has propelled her from obscurity into the stratosphere of fame.

This year, Samantha was a James Beard Finalist for Best Chef Southeast. In 2020, she was one of *Southern Living's* Cooks of the Year and appeared in *Taste of the South Taste 50*. In 2019, her Roasted Curry Tomato Pie was the cover of *Food & Wine*; and in 2018, she was named one of *Plate Magazine's* Chefs to Watch.

Samantha confides that her nonlinear career path came “completely out of left field—I started sharing flavors I grew up with.” In Lexington, she prepared meals at home for friends and quickly outgrew the space. In 2016, she started pop-up meals in a tent.

A talented and passionate cook, Samantha says she is self-taught. “I began cutting vegetables for a weekly meal service to hone my kitchen skills.” Chefs started inviting her to host pop-up restaurants in their cities showcasing menus that entwined the flavors and culinary traditions of Sri Lanka with the dishes and seasonal ingredients of the American South.

She says, “Life in the South and Sri Lanka are really not different; everyone is surrounded with food...we share a drink, a meal, and it bring us all closer together.” Samantha’s vibrant dishes include curry tomato pie with turmeric crust, curried deviled eggs, and spiced fried chicken. Tuk Tuk Snack Shop in Lexington, Kentucky, has garnered a loyal following.

Rice and spice are a common denominator in Samantha’s dishes. She explains, “Rice plays an invaluable role in keeping Sri Lankan traditions alive. (It’s also fundamental to the South) Rice and spice are my preferred base-starts for a number of dishes—it sets the stage perfectly.”

Whole spices are best toasted before grinding to bring out their intense flavors. “In Sri Lanka,” Samantha says, “Every auntie has their own three to five—the number of spices in a personalized blend.” She finds this work to be meditative and believes that “working with your hands helps preserve traditions and culture.”

Samantha says it’s not easy maneuvering as a woman in the industry, and less so as a woman of color. “I celebrate cultures that bring interesting, diverse dishes to the forefront ... Celebrating a culture or group should never be limited; our diverse food communities are what make us so compelling as food destinations.”

She wants “to see more folks embrace one another despite different cuisines and attitudes, so we can move forward on issues and concerns we can agree on. We all have a lot to offer if we can just get out of our own way.” She counsels, “... give yourself some grace with time and mistakes while trying to stay present for the good things. Self-care changes the game and is absolutely critical to healthy survival in the industry and at home. Tenacity in problem solving is an absolute necessity for survival in this industry. Networking skills are critical to long term survival.”

“I’m excited to be involved with this league of extraordinary women and trailblazers to see what we can bring to the Bluegrass,” concludes Samantha. October [Conference] is going to be wonderful; I cannot wait to help show the traveling Dames how rich and wonderful our commonwealth can be.—**Susan Slack** (Charleston)



## Grace Young

(New York) | Wok Therapist Turned Cultural Protector

### *Protecting Cultural Heritage*

New York Dame **Grace Young's** Wok Wednesdays Facebook group highlights healthy and versatile wok cookery while showcasing her respected books and building a committed fanbase. When she functions as a “wok therapist” for owners of 14-inch carbon-steel, flat-bottomed woks with handles, she can be her funny, intelligent, detailed self. But when coronavirus came, Dame Grace made a difference using another remedy; she evolved from stir-fry guru to Chinatown activist.

Between her youth that bridged two cultures (in San Francisco among a family with Cantonese traditions) and a notable career in recipe development, food photography, teaching, writing, and cookbook publication, Grace was primed for an unpredictable leadership role that has brought fame outside of the culinary field. Even before the pandemic was declared, she saw how xenophobia and misinformation decimated Chinatown businesses and proactively used her voice and communication skills to co-produce a video series designed to promote and save precious mom and pop restaurants, shops, and other legacy businesses.

Later in her uncharted advocacy role, Grace starred in high profile social media (sm) campaigns over three years, raised money and awareness for the suffering Chinatown businesses across our country, and fulfilled other unexpected duties.

“Through this remarkable journey to preserve and protect America’s Chinatowns, I received the Julia Child, James Beard Humanitarian, and Forbes 50 Over 50 awards; was recognized as a *USA Today* Woman of the Year; had profiles in the *WSJ*, *Washington Post* and on CNN; was featured on the *PBS Newshour*, *CBS Mornings*, *All Things Considered*, the *Today Show*, and *BBC Radio*; spoke at the U.S. Capitol to Democratic Senators; met VP Kamala Harris, and more.” It has been a privilege that immeasurably enriched my life and allowed me to discover this side of my personality that I didn’t realize was in me.”

Grace knows we all have it in us to support and uplift AANHPI culture and those businesses that embody tradition and community. They represent an essential chapter in the story of our American life, one that she knows we can’t take for granted, saying “Patronize local Chinatowns, and tag sm videos and photo posts with **#SupportChinatowns**. Arrange visits or meetings in Japantowns, Little Saigon, Koreatowns, and AANHPI family restaurants, markets, shops, and bakeries (and tag them with **#LoveAAPI**).”

She prizes these places as repositories of our culinary legacies, much like her book *Wisdom of the Chinese Kitchen*, which she wrote to safeguard her own family knowledge. Grace says cooking these recipes and sharing the dishes “restores the spirit, connects us to the past, and rejuvenates the soul.”

Grace also modestly reports that her work to save Chinatowns has taught her that “ordinary people like me have the power to make a difference.” We all can make a difference, and observers know that Dame Grace Young has made extraordinary ones. See more of them on her site: [www.graceyoung.com](http://www.graceyoung.com).

—**Elizabeth M. Young** (New York) “No relation to Grace.”





The Asian Auntie's Oakley Boren, Dame Anita Lau, Dame Marcie Taylor

## Anita Lau | Marcie Taylor

(LA/OC) | MHW Strategies | (LA/OC) | Marcie Taylor Media

### *Food is our Love Language*

Certain people step into our lives in meaningful ways, bringing joy, support, unconditional love...and food! In Asia, it's often the Aunties who fulfill this role. They might live off the grid, cutting a wide swath across cultures. They can be tough as nails or as soft and yielding as pillowy blocks of bean curd.

The kinship term of Auntie is an expression of endearment and extends to friendship networks. Dame **Anita Lau** (LA/OC), LDEI's Second Vice President, is the member of a small volunteer group of women called the Asian Aunties. Another Auntie, Dame **Marcie Taylor**, joined the LA/OC Chapter less than a year ago.

Anita, Marcie, and Oakley Boren are the co-founders. Anita says the Aunties are "friends who share Asian roots and enjoy bonding over eating and preparing food for charity. We currently volunteer to provide healthy meals for women experiencing homelessness and who are rebuilding their lives at WISEPlace, which is a community of hope and housing."

Born in Hong Kong, Anita predominantly grew up in Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Australia, which is where she learned about Middle Eastern, Vietnamese, and Indian cuisines. "My ethnicity is Chinese. I came to the U.S. as a high school exchange student in Omaha, Nebraska, and again for college in Oregon. The only Western food I was exposed to growing up was steak and lobster. We ate mostly Chinese or Japanese food."

Marcie shares, "I was born and raised in the Philippines and moved to the U.S. as an adult. So it's been interesting having the whole American immigrant experience and being a parent to mixed kids. Food is a big part of my life—and it has been really essential in sharing my culture with my children and my community."

Anita has a degree in journalism minoring in English, and also a Humanities degree. "I've always been interested in food and started my own catering business while at University in Australia. I returned to Hong Kong to start my career in journalism and a couple of years later ended up writing about food, along with entertainment and the arts." Anita does everything from writing and social connecting to marketing, consulting, and producing.

Marcie has a degree in communications and says, "How I ended up in marketing and in food was really just a result of following my passions." She owns Marcie Taylor Media—a creative marketing agency. She is a writer, photographer, host/emcee, podcaster, vlogger, director, and editor.

Anita's passion for cooking and eating mostly drove her career path and being exposed to a multitude of cuisines at a young age helped tremendously.

In Orange County, she won Best Food Blog in 2014 for the now defunct *OC Weekly* magazine. She has been nominated three times in the best food writer category—Golden Foodie Awards.

The rewards of her job include, "learning from the myriad of international chefs who came through Hong Kong in my early years." Challenges? "Being self-employed adds a level of stress and having to deal with some personalities." Marcie agrees with Anita saying, "Being self-employed is always challenging, but the rewards are fulfilling. I get to work with wonderful nonprofits and businesses including restaurants and beverage companies that I believe in."

Marcie adds, "As a board member of a Filipino American nonprofit (FilAm Arts), I'm involved in many projects during AANHPI Month and year-round with theatrical productions and festivals promoting Filipino arts and culture. For non-AANHPI, the key is to be open to new experiences and other cultures. We should celebrate our differences instead of being afraid or critical of them."

When asked which foods keep her traditions alive, Marcie says, "RICE! I always have rice in the rice cooker. (So Asian!) To keep Filipino traditions alive in my household, we prepare occasion-specific foods like *lechon* for milestone birthdays and celebrations and the *Noche Buena* feast for Christmas." Anita admits, "I'm a rice fiend as well, especially jasmine. My son likes Japanese rice, so it's always a toss-up as to which we will make."

Marcie advises Dames to network! "Be open to meeting people in and out of your chosen industry. You'll never know how one connection can help you out on a project or how you can help someone out too. I hope we can spread the idea of our Asian Aunties, women helping women, through and with food. I always say, 'Food is our love language,' and really, it is my hope to spread LOVE and yes, good food too." —**Susan Slack** (Charleston)



Photo: ChingHeHuang.com

## Ching-He Huang

(London) | Award-winning TV Chef/Author

### *Persistence and Patience Equal Success*

Hard work and grit underpin the well-earned celebrity and culinary achievements of London Dame **Ching-He Huang** MBE. Her dynamic approach to traditional Taiwanese food uses fresh ingredients and clever techniques to create modern dishes that taste true to their heritage. Her immensely popular cooking shows and appearances on British and American media span more than a decade. In the US, Ching is a regular guest on the NBC's *The Today Show* and appeared on *The Rachael Ray Show* on CBS. She has been a judge on *Iron Chef America* on the Food Network primetime.

She has published eight very successful, award-winning cookbooks—with another one in the works. Her celebrity is put to use in support of numerous charities.

Ching (as she is best known) was born in Taiwan. Her then, well-off family moved to South Africa and when she was 11 years old, she resettled in London. She attended private schools and was enrolled in the University of London when, at age 15, the family "lost everything" she explained. She finished her degree at the University, earning a first-class degree in economics by working in a shoe store.

Ching says when she was 21-years-old and her family needed money, she decided to set up a business producing Taiwanese-style noodles in a package that could be sold to sandwich shops. Despite having no food or other business experience, she forged ahead. She found a kitchen with three months free rent and visited sandwich shops to sell her product.

During the first month of long hours and grueling work, the business appeared to be successful as orders poured in. But then she learned that the buyers were returning the product because it wasn't selling. The packaging was confusing to customers. So, as Ching explains, "needs must"—she figured out a better package and persevered.

Ching credits her success to hard work and determination, and "unexpected angels" along the way. Foremost among them is her husband, a TV producer and writer, who she met when she was 24. Yes, she says, she had to deal with some bullying during her school days. But she says she made friends in the end.

—**Olga Boikess** (Washington, D.C.)





Olga Boikess and Gina McAdam in London. Photo: SS Crab dish: Romulo Café & Restaurant.

## Gina McAdam

(London) | Zest Quest Asia, Director

### *Embracing Filipino Culinary Spirit*

**Gina McAdam** is a London Dame whose marketing and hospitality expertise raises the profile of chefs and corporate entities. She is the author of several corporate histories, and most intriguing—the about to be published—*Houses that Sugar Built* about Filipino plantation mansions of a bygone era.

#### A COSMOPOLITAN START IN LIFE

She was born in Manila in the Philippines. When she was one-year-old, her father, who worked for the International Monetary fund, moved the family to Maryland. Four years later, the family moved back to the Philippines where she grew up and went to college. Her family includes bankers, judges, and doctors, and has interests in sugar. English she explains is the *langue franca* of the Philippines, and it is her first language.

As far back as she can remember, Gina wanted to do something different with her life. She credits the Belgian nuns, who taught her in grade school, for her drive. They were “fierce and insisted on excellence and performance,” she explains. Her mother also encouraged her independence. “Always have your own money,” she said.

After graduating from a private Catholic university in Manila, she went to England where she earned a Master’s degree and then worked in advertising. Then she spent several years in Madrid studying Spanish and teaching English while exploring “another country and its culture.” Her next stop was New York City where she worked for a marketing publication. She returned to England where her husband is based. Now she focuses her talents on writing and marketing assistance for hospitality industry clients.

#### SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON FILIPINO CUISINE

“Food,” she explains, “is ingrained in the Filipino psyche. As my English husband says, shake a Filipino’s hand and you’ll probably find a spoon and fork in it!” Indeed, she continues, “no gathering is complete without a feast of some kind—whether it’s a traditional Sunday [family] gathering or Christmas.”

As a partner in Romulo Café & Restaurant in High Street Kensington, London, her goal has been “to raise awareness and elevate the profile of Filipino food internationally.” This venture, she recounts, “was the first international outpost of a family-owned restaurant group based in Manila, Philippines. In the UK, it is owned and operated by Rowena Romulo, a university classmate, and is a tribute to her gourmand grandfather, Carlos P. Romulo, who was a Filipino statesman, a Pulitzer Prize winner and one of the original signatories of the United Nations” It serves Filipino cuisine in a smart setting, based on Romulo family recipes.

#### HELPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CHEFS IN ASIAN FOOD

Gina is a director of **Zest Quest Asia**, which she describes as “a student culinary competition, now on its 11th year, that aims to channel student chefs in Britain to a career in Asian cuisine.” Asked for advice for Dames aspiring for a food-focused career, she urges them to “be open to every opportunity, step out of your comfort zone, and don’t be afraid to explore the extraordinary. For me food is universal; it can be cooked, written about, or approached as part of the framework of one’s lifestyle. And it helps to compete against yourself, because that means you’ll always strive to do better the next time.”

#### PREVIEW OF “HOUSES THAT SUGAR BUILT”

Describing how her upcoming book related to her own family history, she tells us that: “The book looks at the domestic architecture of the three main sugar-producing regions of the Philippines when the country’s sugar industry was at its peak nearly a century ago. Sugar planters built beautiful homes inspired by their trips to Europe. One of the houses featured is our ancestral home in Iloilo, which is now owned by a major conglomerate...I wanted to preserve this important slice of Philippine history for future generations, and to honor our forebears. The houses are very well preserved and beautiful, but not many people know you can still find such houses in the Philippines.”—**Olga Boikess** (Washington, D.C.)



## Monica Lal

(Monterey) | Professional Chef

### *Blending Cultures with a Dash of Spice*

The Monterey Chapter is proud to introduce Dame **Monica Lal**, a professional chef with a 25-year career in hotels and restaurants working nationally and internationally including 10 years as an estate manager and chef for a hotelier family from Hong Kong. Currently, she is the president and CEO of the Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce where hospitality is the number one economic driver and industry. But first, a word about her background.

Monica is a Monterey Peninsula native with parents from the Fiji Islands and of South Asian and Mexican descent respectively, growing up amongst religious and cultural diversity.

Both parents were connected to their heritages as the first immigrants in their families and they, in turn sponsored their parents and siblings. Within the family there was always someone to cook, eat, and joke with. International products were not as available when Monica was growing up as they are today. Monterey County is an agricultural county with an active military base and international language school; the family was able to source Asian and Mexican herbs and spices not available elsewhere to re-create home food.

Always with an eye towards international studies, Monica graduated from Reed College with a degree in history only to find herself in a national recession. At the suggestion of her brother, she applied to the AT&T golf tournament in Pebble Beach for a job as a temporary helper. It was love at first sight and the beginning of her career in hospitality. Of course, there were challenges from uniforms that didn’t fit, to no designated restroom access, or finding the pass was too high. Monica sought competitive kitchens, knowing that she was being constantly assessed, but chose to feel that she was not being singled out. Nevertheless, she was often told she was “too young” as an excuse for not advancing her position. Her father was an executive chef, so she had an inside look at the hospitality industry, which helped.

When asked if she celebrates AANHPI, she said “yes, of course.” She plans to continue to share stories with her daughters, staying connected to their Naani and Abuela (grandmothers) who live their culture. While somewhat discreet, there is a view this group is “too foreign,” so she sees the increasingly visible roles that AANHPI play in national politics a good start to overcoming this prejudice. She is also a great role model in the community as a lifelong volunteer, serving as board president of the Bojuka Ryu Parent-Student Association (Judo Club) in Marina, working with Loaves & Fishes at San Carlos Cathedral in Monterey, acting as co-leader of Girl Scout Troop 30610, in addition to being actively involved in her children’s schools. And she admits food plays an invaluable role in keeping her cultural traditions alive. She says she relies on okra, potato curry, and black beans but won’t eat roti with Mexican food or tortillas with Indian food. “That’s a bridge too far for me to cross.”

Despite her new role as the chief executive of the Chamber of Commerce, she continues to cook with friends on large scale production events and donates her time to charitable events as a private chef for dinners at fundraising auctions. Her advice to other Dames, “Jump in whenever you can, understand what you like, and with food, let it speak for itself.”

— **Rachel Mueller** (Monterey)





## Sophina Uong

(New Orleans) | Mr. Mao

### *Spice it Up: A Gumbo of Cuisines*

Chef **Sophina Uong** wears many hats: Mister Mao owner, chef, new Dame, cat herder, ear hustler, and authentic self. Her heritage is Cambodian, but she didn't grow up with that cuisine. She was born in Cambodia and fled the war-torn country with her family when she was a tot. Arriving in Camp Pendleton in 1975, she grew up in Long Beach. Sophina says, "My father worked for an oil refinery for 32 years, while my mother had a total of nine donut shops. I grew up American as it was painful for my parents to speak of the past. My mother wanted to move forward, assimilate, reap the rewards of a bright American future." Sophina's early memories of her multi-cultural neighborhood include spending time watching mothers and grandmothers cook everything from traditional American fare to homemade tortillas. Her palate expanded in all directions.

She notes, "I wanted to be a holistic practitioner, but school in Ottawa, Canada, was too cold of an option after growing up in Southern California. When I was 20, I went to Manaus, Brazil, in search of becoming a Shaman—clearly, that did not work out! I was once a floral designer in San Francisco and made friends with hotel employees who would sneak me cioppino, sips of limoncello, and my first foie gras on toast with huckleberries at the Campton Place hotel (Now under the Taj brand.) I survived college life in the Bay Area by waitressing, then bartending, and then finally succumbing to cooking after realizing I could out-cook many of the male chefs I was flirting with at the time." Sophina is self-taught, working her way from the front of the house to the kitchen, where she clearly belongs.

She vividly remembers watching the Food Network in a NYC tenement in 1998, while visiting a friend. "I was watching Padma Lakshmi cooking food. I thought, huh, that could be me! Living in New York and the Bay Area allowed me to eat anything I wanted. I discovered new cuisines and cultures and started to understand that food made people happy and created community. It was fun to have dinner parties and entertain strangers that became fast friends."

Sophina won Grand Champion Grill Master on the Food Network show *Chopped*. In Minneapolis, she managed Chef Andrew Zimmern's Lucky Cricket restaurant during the COVID-19 pandemic. In New Orleans, Sophina and her husband, William Greenwell, opened Mister Mao, "a tropical roadhouse" named after her cat. The bold, vibrant cuisine features a range of cuisines: Mexican, Indian, and Southeast Asian. The restaurant was named one of Bon Appétit's "50 Best New Restaurants 2022."

There's nothing quite like it in New Orleans. One thing Sophina says she has learned is "Don't take advice from designers who don't like clutter. Mister Mao's polyglot flavors are second nature to this fearless chef. Proudly "inauthentic" the restaurant doesn't pretend—or even want to—appeal to the masses. "We welcome all, but we also know we aren't for everyone."

Sophina says she celebrates AANHPI by, "Eating my way through New Orleans, one dumpling and rice noodle roll at a time. I support my Asian friends, their restaurants and popups.—**Beth D'Addono** (New Orleans)



Top Photo: Stevie Chris  
Bottom Photo: James Beard Foundation

## Ellen Yin

(Philadelphia) | High Street Hospitality Group/Restaurateur & Co-Founder

### *From Connections to Contributions*

Dame **Ellen Yin** (Philadelphia) is at the top of her game. The four-time James Beard nominee was recently awarded a top honor in the food world when she was named *Outstanding Restaurateur* by the James Beard Foundation for her work in leading the High Street Hospitality Group. The prestigious award goes to "A restaurateur who uses their establishment(s) as a vehicle for building community, who demonstrates creativity in entrepreneurship and integrity in restaurant operations..." High Street Hospitality Group consists of Fork Restaurant, High Street Philly, a.kitchen + bar, High Street Hoagies, and the Wonton Project. *Eater* calls Ellen "a trailblazer of the farm-to-table movement."

Ellen's love of hospitality developed as she was growing up. She watched her Shanghai-born mother prepare elaborate Chinese dishes for entertaining. Ellen says, "Food is central to all get-togethers for family and friends. Asian food, like in many cultures, often has symbolic meaning and that's what ties in the culture and connection for me."

In high school, Ellen started working in a restaurant in her New Jersey hometown. "I fell in love with the hospitality industry and was determined, much to the chagrin of my immigrant parents who wanted me to be a doctor or engineer, that one day I would own my own restaurant," she confides. Her father, who was from Hunan, was an engineer with Bell Labs and harbored a dream that Ellen would also become an engineer. She says making a C in high school physics disappointed her father, who took it as a personal affront that she couldn't grasp the concept of gravity.

She realized that her dream couldn't be fulfilled just yet, so she earned undergraduate and graduate degrees from Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. Ellen adds, "I pursued other careers including getting an MBA in Health Care Management, working in consulting, and hospital administration. I never felt the same sense of satisfaction from any of my jobs that I felt from providing great hospitality, and the dream of opening a restaurant was still very strong." In October 1997, Ellen opened her groundbreaking restaurant Fork in Philadelphia's Old Town Historic District.

During the pandemic, people began cooking more. Using her mother's recipe, Ellen made wontons, a Chinese comfort food from childhood. Ellen started the Wonton Project, a small, pop-up restaurant specializing in the iconic Chinese dumpling. The project allowed her to find connections in isolation, and she began donating a portion of the proceeds to nonprofits like Asian Americans United to help fight anti-Asian hate.

Ellen says, "I think making connections is underrated...connection is what keeps me fueled—connecting with community and team members, and having a place people want to call home." She says the restaurant is her home—"When you walk in the door, you are in my house."

Ellen has a passion for carbs, especially the phenomenal breads and cookies baked in her restaurants. (Gold Belly) She admits to being a cookieholic! "Food plays an invaluable role in keeping traditions alive. I feel sad about that because in my journey to find my sense of belonging, perhaps those traditions didn't keep. But certainly memories of my mother's cooking and trying to keep those tastes and feelings alive has been important to me."

As a JBF winner, Ellen feels it's her role to continue representing the industry well. "I've been reading Angela Duckworth's book *Grit*; I suppose that many attributes (tenacity, flexibility) make a difference in developing grit. But I think that having a long-term vision of myself has definitely helped me get to where I wanted to be. Many people don't necessarily have that dream, and certainly my dream continues to evolve. That is what has kept me pushing forward."

She acknowledges, "I have found that when I am most challenged, that being outward facing has allowed me to garner support not only from my team (and that can just be your cheerleading team), but also from people who I didn't even know."

—**Susan Slack** (Charleston)





## Carrie Rau

(Ontario) | Lighthall Vineyards/Sommelier

### *A Sense of Place*

Ontario Dame Carrie Rau's three greatest passions are her heritage and her studies of wine and gastronomy. The classically trained French chef is a displaced First Nations child of the "60s Scoop," a practice that was prevalent in Canada along with the residential school system. First Nations children were taken forcefully from their families and placed into the foster/adoption federal system and given to other families. She is part of a Cree band from Western Canada (treaty Number 536) and has a lucky number, but wants to learn more. She was raised by a white adoptive family that she is close to, but says they are not equipped to help her culturally learn her indigenous roots. Craving someplace more diverse, she settled in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Carrie has every reason to be proud of her heritage and her successful career. She works for Lighthall Vineyards, in Prince Edward County, in the tasting room as a sommelier. She manages the wine club, organizes the food program, wine production, cellar duties, and makes sheep's milk cheese under the Lighthall Cheese label. "I'm pretty much cross-training across all parts of the business," she remarked.

Chef Carrie graduated from a culinary college in Stratford, Ontario, called the Stratford Chefs School. [www.stratfordchef.com](http://www.stratfordchef.com). She is a certified Red Seal chef, which helps with her work internationally. Carrie's extensive experience includes seven years working as a research and development chef for a large Canadian grocery store called Loblaws Inc.

Carrie is a certified CAPS Sommelier. She graduated with a WSET Diploma in 2020, completed courses with The International Sommelier Guild, and the Court of Master Sommeliers. She has taught WSET wine education through IWEG Drinks Academy in Toronto for the last six years.

Carrie believes wine education rounds out her cooking skillset. "I love learning and have been taking courses throughout my career—food writing, hospitality math, culinary tourism, etc. I have kind of moved away from cooking into a wine career and looking even now to continue learning more of the business side of wine as opposed to the creative "making" side of wine."

Currently enrolled in the Master of Wine program, Carrie hopes to be the first Indigenous Master of Wine. She received two major scholarships in 2022: The Taylor's Port Golden Vine Scholarship, which helps with tuition, and a scholarship from the Women of Vines and Spirits, which pays for professional development courses like the Wine-making certificate from UC Davis.

Carrie says, "I'm definitely honored to have been nominated for a space on the Board of Directors for the Stratford Chefs School. She co-founded a not-for-profit with six other dynamic BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) wine professionals called Vinequity. We raise scholarship money for wine education and for advocacy and support of our community.

When asked about challenges, Carrie confides, "I think I've worked a little bit harder as a woman of colour. Financially, I had to work multiple jobs to afford wine education. My scholarships currently are game changing for what I am doing. Other challenges are physical strength in wine production—some jobs are just out of reach for me due to that. I have difficulty lifting barrels onto our barrel washer at work as well as a few other things, but our team in the winery is great and we work around it.

AANHPI celebrates Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Carrie shares, "In Canada our days are a bit different; we have National Indigenous Peoples' Day, and Truth and Reconciliation Day, which memorializes (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation) children lost to the residential school system and honors survivors and their families. Carrie recommends embracing these special days as part of the community—try to learn about history from a different perspective. She believes that "Important attributes are resilience, strength, and community...No person is an island, and we all need support and mentoring." Carrie says her spouse has been her biggest cheerleader; "I'm not sure if I would have reached as far as I could have without the support."—**Susan Slack** (Charleston)



## Jean Hwang Carrant

(France) | Cookie Love

### *The Love Language of Cookies*

Dame **Jean Hwang Carrant**, a Taiwanese American living in Paris for 33 years, has been a member of the France Chapter since 2021. Jean is owner and creative force behind the esteemed Cookie Love boutique in Paris central's 2nd arrondissement, le Sentier. She says, "I own a cookie shop in the pastry capital of the world. This is a heavy challenge because we have so many delicious sweets to choose from!"

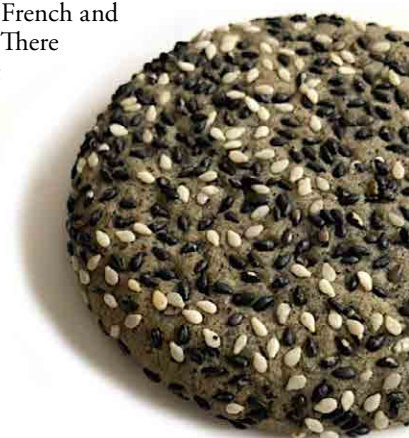
Cookie Love has appeared in *Fou de Pâtisserie's* magazine and *Best of Guide* since 2021, and since 2019 has appeared in the prestigious *Gault & Millau* guide. In 2022, Cookie Love was inducted as a member in the *Collège Culinaire de France*, which is recognized as an artisanal producer of quality in the culinary arts.

Jean began her journey without any formal pastry training and with only a simple love and fascination of cookies. She grew up, the child of Taiwanese immigrants, in the bucolic American college town of Manhattan, Kansas. After moving to Paris in 1990, marrying her French husband Philippe and having three children, Jean was making the food she missed the most, including the simple, classic cookies she remembered from her Kansas Midwest upbringing: chocolate chip, snickerdoodles, oatmeal, and decorated sugar cookies.

She started baking cookies professionally at home in 2006 when her youngest son went to preschool. The cookies were a big hit in the neighborhood restaurants and so she started creating cookies to reflect her unique American Taiwanese and French backgrounds. She follows three rules when making her cookies: use only organic or high-quality ingredients; the cookie has to have balance; and the cookie must be beautiful in a wabisabi way. (Wabisabi is a Japanese aesthetic that sees the beauty in imperfection and appreciates simplicity.)

Jean opened her cookie boutique in 2015 under her name Jean Hwang Carrant but changed the store's name to Cookie Love after her recipe book was published in 2018 in French and republished in 2019 in English. She explains, "There was a lot of confusion with my name and what I was selling because Jean is a man's name in France and cookies are not associated with someone of Asian descent! My best reward from opening the shop has been meeting my customers and letting them discover for themselves what a really good cookie should taste like."

Her most famous cookie, the Black Sesame Cookie, is her best-selling cookie despite having no chocolate in the recipe. A Black Sesame Mochi Cookie brought the treat to another level. "The secret of a good cookie," she says, "is that it must please both children and adults." The intoxicating smell of beautifully baked cookies and Jean's smiling presence assures her customers, regardless of their origins, of her simple love for a simple dessert at Cookie Love.—**Betteanne Daro** (Paris)







# Harley Tunac Chow

(Hawaii) | The Local General Store

## From Hawaii, With Love

Dame **Harley Tunac Chow** was born in Honolulu, Hawai'i. She is half of the married baker-and-butcher team who own The Local General Store in Kai-muki, a vibrant Honolulu neighborhood that is just a hop, skip, and a jump away from Waikiki.

In 2008, Harley moved to San Francisco to attend the University of San Francisco where she received a B.S. in Biology with a Neuroscience Minor. While in school, she took a part-time job in the baking industry, but soon it became fulltime work. Harley continued her pursuit of a medical career until she could no longer deny her dream to become a professional baker.

Working at Jane the Bakery, she learned the art of baking croissants. In a 2018 competition for the best croissants in San Francisco, Harley was part of the Jane the Bakery team who won the Best Croissant and the Best Pain au Chocolat prizes, which were awarded by a jury of professionals.

It was instant love for Harley! Croissants and laminated doughs (folded layers of butter and flour) had become her passion. In 2018 she was accepted into the James Beard Foundation Women in Culinary Leadership Program. In Chicago, she mentored for a year under Pastry Chef Meg Galu, a finalist for JBF's outstanding pastry award. Harley refined her pastry techniques and developed women-led leadership skills.

Jason, Harley's husband, graduated from the University of Hawaii at Manoa with a biology degree. He worked in marine conservation and had a passion for cooking. His background led him to a career distributing sustainable fish to Honolulu restaurants. At The Local Butcher Shop in Berkeley, California, he learned to process whole beef, pork, lamb, and chicken. Recognized as an up-and-coming butcher in the restaurant industry, he was among Eater's Young Guns class of 2019. His dream was to open a Honolulu butcher shop focused on local, ethically raised meats.

Harley and Jason met in San Francisco. He was dining solo in a restaurant where Harley was the pastry chef. She happened to serve his dessert, which he thought was the best he ever tasted. They fell in love, married, then worked in San Francisco three years before returning to Hawaii to fulfill their dream of starting a business that would be a whole animal butcher shop and a bakery.

The Local General Store bakery specializes in irresistible, artisanal pastries that always include at least one locally grown ingredient. Harley's pastry boxes offer a variety of items like strawberry guava almond cookies, brown butter mochi, and guava jam Danish with *kinako* streusel. Also noteworthy are treats like *longanisa* (Filipino chorizo) croissants and Banana Lumpia Morning Buns, which celebrate and honor Harley's Filipino heritage.

Together, the baker and the butcher have been accomplishing quite a lot. They help connect people to more responsible, local seafood. They work closely with produce farmers, and they source whole animals and butcher them to increase access to local meats. By showcasing the products of local farmers and ranchers, the couple hopes to bring awareness and increased accessibility to their community and the local food system of Hawai'i. —**Susan Slack** (Charleston)

Photos: The Local General Store.

## Congratulations 2023 JAMES BEARD AWARD WINNERS!

### Ellen Yin

(Philadelphia)

Philadelphia Dame **Ellen Yin** took home one of the biggest awards in food from the James Beard Foundation this year: Outstanding Restaurateur award (read more about her on page 19).



Photos: James Beard Foundation

### Marissa Gencarelli

(Kansas City)

Dame **Marissa Gencarelli** of the Kansas City Chapter, is the winner of the James Beard Award for Outstanding Bakery, a new category this year for the prestigious awards. Born and raised in Sonora, Mexico, Marissa's products reflect the rich diversity of Mexican cuisine, embodying traditional processes native to Mexico, but using local and seasonal ingredients found in the Midwest.



Yoli Tortilleria currently supplies to restaurants across her city, and her products are also available online.

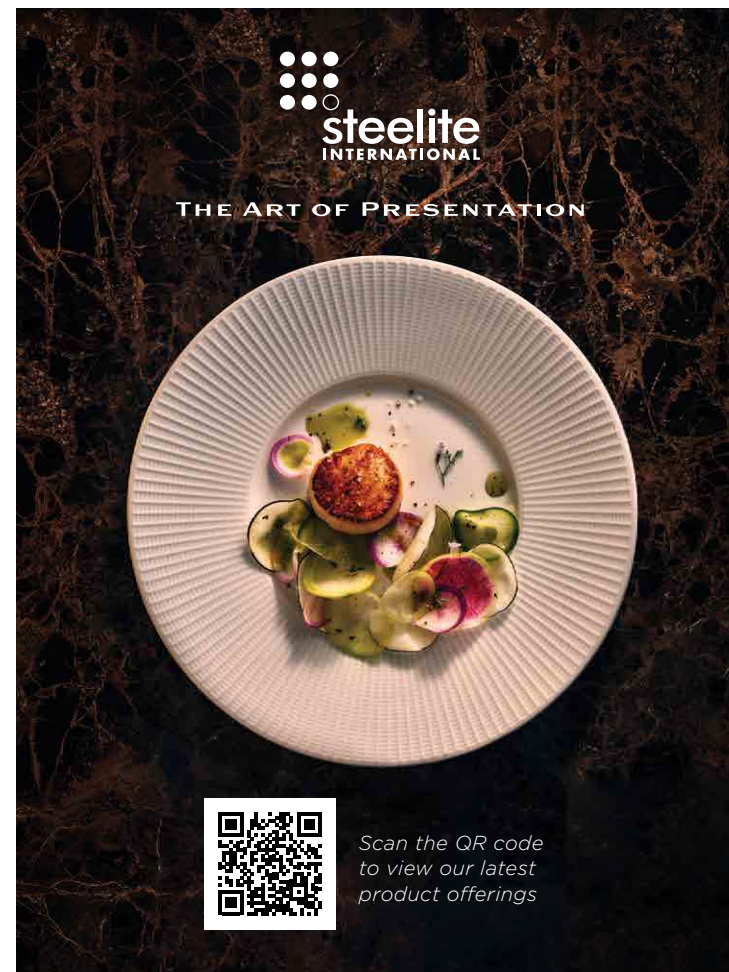


### Nina Mukerjee Furstenau

2023 WINNER  
WOMAN OF PURPOSE AWARD

*"The Woman of Purpose Award celebrates a visionary Dame who has made strides towards improving our food system."*

**Nina Mukerjee Furstenau**, a member of the St. Louis Chapter, is the winner of this year's Woman of Purpose Award. She is a journalist, author, editor, and humanitarian but most importantly, a story-teller. Read the fall issue of the LDEI Quarterly to learn more about Nina and all of the amazing nominees.



Scan the QR code to view our latest product offerings





## Break Out the Strong Stuff

Consumers have long appreciated YETI drinkware solutions that they can take with them as they enjoy their outdoor pursuits. From Rambler® Tumblers to Rambler Bottles, our drinkware is Built for the Wild, or wherever life takes you.

The new YETI Barware collection offers a variety of cups and tumblers—not to mention the best can insulators for your favorite beer or canned cocktail. The 24 oz Beer Mug is perfect for your go-to local brew, the YETI

insulated wine tumbler is built for your favorite pour of wine, anywhere from your back porch to backcountry base camp, and the 10 oz Lowball is ideal for four fingers of bourbon. And don't forget to upgrade your basecamp party and reduce single-use plastic with the 16 oz Stackable Pints.

This spring, YETI introduced the all-new Rambler Beverage Bucket to bring entertainment to the wild. Made with the same vacuum insulation technology as YETI's iconic Rambler Drinkware (18/8 kitchen-grade, double wall vacuum insulated stainless steel) and seamless bottom construction with DuraCoat™ color all the way through, will keep your beverages cold no matter how far

into the wilderness you go. Its heavy-duty clear lid will protect your ice from bugs and debris, and it's nearly 2-Gallon capacity can fit 6+ cans or 3+ 750ml bottles of wine.

The Rambler Beverage Bucket pairs perfectly with YETI's over-engineered Ice Scoop, which is built to easily wrangle, pick up and break apart unruly ice. Made of heavy-duty stainless steel, it won't break no matter how many times you give stubborn ice a good thwack. It even comes with drain holes so unwanted water doesn't end up in your drink and is dishwasher safe for easy cleaning.

YETI Barware will elevate your outdoor experience and ensure you can take the bar wherever you are.



Visit [yeti.com](https://yeti.com) to shop the YETI Barware collection.



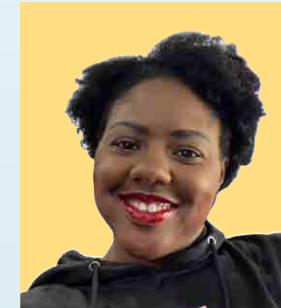
# LDEI and The Wine Group Award Scholarships for Impactful Change

By ELLEN KANNER  
(WASHINGTON, D.C.)

Meet the 2023 Scholarships for Impactful Change recipients:



Samantha "Sami" MALDONADO



Donna SMITH



Lani FURBANK



Cecilia PICOAGA

- Samantha "Sami" Maldonado, Operations Coordinator for the Minnesota Farmers Union, will be earning a Master of Science degree in Environment and Sustainability at the University of Michigan. The Minnesota Chapter's Scholar of Education for two years running, Samantha works to give local farmers a voice and a platform.

- Donna Smith, mother of three, will earn a doctorate degree in nutrition at Texas Tech University. Her programming weaves together culturally appropriate foods, nutrition, and mental health. Donna is a triple threat with degrees in culinary arts, computer science, and human nutrition. She combines all of her skills to create nutrition and wellness outreach for underserved urban communities.

- Washington, D.C. Dame **Lani Furbank** is currently a staff writer at the Center for International Environmental Law, and she will go on to study sustainable food systems at CIA Greystone. Lani conveys the complexities of sustainability challenges, and policy and solutions to the public.

- Cecilia Picoaga is Samsung's Latin America Corporate Citizenship Manager and Government Relations Liaison. She will pursue graduate work in sustainability at Columbia University. As a corporate executive, she uses her position to create social programming, which includes providing education and training for at-risk youth in Lima, Peru.

Les Dames d' Escoffier International (LDEI), in partnership with The Wine Group, is pleased to have awarded each of these four women leaders a \$5,000 scholarship through Scholarships for Impactful Change. The scholarship initiative is new this year, but the ethos behind it continues LDEI's original goal—to elevate women in the industry and foster sisterhood and support.

A panel of diverse Dames judged all 26 applicants based on merit, need, and community service as listed in the scholarship information. Among them, though,

Samantha Maldonado, Donna Smith, Lani Furbank and Cecilia Picoaga stood out. They not only proved to have a GPA of 3.0 or higher and established financial need, their level of community impact and commitment stood out as "an embarrassment of riches," as one judge put it.

LDEI and The Wine Group created Scholarships for Impactful Change to help these already accomplished women go even further, enabling them to pursue more education, increase expertise, and expand opportunities in their field. Reflecting LDEI's commitment to inclusiveness, the scholarship is open not just to Dames such as Lani, but to all women pursuing a degree in culinary or pastry arts education, food systems or agriculture/farming, hospitality management, dietetics and/or nutrition, or the beverage industries.

"We are honored to give back to the communities where we live and work, and create opportunities where individuals with diverse backgrounds and voices can learn and grow," said The Wine Group's Stacy Weisgerber, CSW Director of Marketing.

All Scholarship applicants are invited to take advantage of LDEI's Inspire and Thrive Mentorship network ([www.ldei.org/awards/woman-of-purpose](https://www.ldei.org/awards/woman-of-purpose)), so they can connect and work with a Dame whose skill set and interests are aligned with their own chosen career path.

The next Scholarships for Impactful Change will be awarded next year, so LDEI and The Wine Group can continue to pave the way for more dynamic women leaders. "We are pleased to partner with The Wine Group to nurture the next generation of women leading meaningful change in their communities," said LDEI President **Jennifer Goldman**.

The Awards Committee invites all LDEI members to be part of the process. Our goal is to increase public awareness of Scholarships for Impactful Change and encourage more women to apply. Help us grow our database of food and beverage institutions so we may share information about the Scholarships initiative and reach more diverse, dedicated women.

Please send your contacts to LDEI Awards Committee Chair **Ellen Kanner** [ellen@soulfulvegan.com](mailto:ellen@soulfulvegan.com).





## International Board Meets in June via Zoom

BY ANITA LAU, LDEI SECOND VICE PRESIDENT (LA/OC)

It has been customary for everyone on the International Board to meet in person three times a year. However, during the first in-person meeting in Mexico City earlier this year, the Board reviewed the financials, cash flow challenges, and losses incurred over the past two years due to the pandemic, and voted to opt for Zoom, instead of a second in-person meeting, to offset some of those costs.

So we gathered in front of our computers via Zoom for our June Board meeting, which every Board member participated in: **Jennifer Goldman** (Cleveland/Northeast Ohio), **Kathy Gold** (Philadelphia), **Anita Lau** (LA/OC), **Kersten Rettig** (Dallas), **Barb Pires** (Atlanta), **Stephanie Jaeger** (British Columbia), **Erin Byers Murray** (Nashville), **Marilyn Freundlich** (St. Louis), **Irene Moore** (South Florida), **Deborah Mintcheff** (New York), and Executive Director Greg Jewell. The Board also invited incoming new Board members **Belinda Smith-Sullivan** (Charleston), **Anastasia Nickerson** (Boston), and **Robin Plotkin** (Dallas) to join the session.

The Board unanimously voted on several items including the Phoenix Conference logo, and eliminating the printed Conference brochure, which further helps with budget costs. A physical copy of the programming will still be provided for Conference attendees.

We delved right into strategy planning for the next three to five years, discussing and examining various topics including ways in which to best serve our membership, and how culture impacts everything we do, to learning how to better leverage assets, and how one shows up for one's chapter is determinant upon how successful your chapter will be.

We further discussed the SWOT analysis, which the Board had participated in during the May Board meeting, and they focused on strategic planning for the future of LDEI. Policies, procedures, and standing rules were considered and examined.

From monthly CBL calls, it was determined that many chapters struggle with member onboarding, engagement, and board successions. Providing resources and directing chapters to this agenda year after year would hopefully create and maintain consistency. The Board discussed how it can put into place



organizational and structural best practices guidelines for what works for larger chapters and what works for smaller chapters.

Immediate Past President Deborah Mintcheff says, "We are putting forward suggestions of what chapters COULD do, things they COULD change, but the Board is not suggesting policies or requirements of what chapters need to do. It would simply be an additional resource for chapters."

Of course, the number one priority of the strategic plan is to be financially stable. After which, membership engagement, communication/marketing, longevity, organizational bylaws, standing rules, standardization, and more direction from LDEI were key elements to which the Board can provide long term planning to keep LDEI successful in the long run. Moving forward, the Board plans on revisiting and retooling various aspects of the organization as part of the long term goals. Modernization is a part of it, but we must always be mindful of LDEI's mission, and what our organization stands for.

### 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Kersten Rettig (Dallas); Marilyn Freundlich (St. Louis); Irene Moore (South Florida); Barb Pires (Atlanta); Stephanie Jaeger (British Columbia); Anita Lau (LA/OC); Erin Byers Murray (Nashville); President Jennifer Goldman (Cleveland); Kathy Gold (Philadelphia); Deborah Mintcheff (New York)



## LDEI CONFERENCE: EXPERIENCE THE BOUNTIFUL BLUEGRASS:

BY NICOLE STIPP (KENTUCKY)  
CO-CHAIR, KENTUCKY CONFERENCE

As I'm writing this, the Kentucky Dames are pulling their Derby hats out of boxes, plucking fresh mint from their gardens, and preparing for 155,000 of their closest friends to spend a weekend in Louisville for the Kentucky Derby. While the only thing you might associate with our Commonwealth is the state's iconic two-minute race, this year's Conference is sure to surprise and delight your senses.

Fast forward: This year's Conference theme, **The Bountiful Bluegrass**, is particularly special as Kentucky continues to rebuild from natural disasters that affected all corners of our state. There is no bounty, if there is no caring. To tend a bountiful field you must care about every seed and stroke of a till. To tend a bountiful life, you must extend compassion to others and build an authentic social fabric to rely upon. And our two keynote speakers are incredible examples of how to tend to, and care for, our world—from livestock farming to the food and recipes we use to nourish ourselves and our families. These two speakers are showing us how to find bounty through compassion, understanding, and caring—sounds like the perfect conversations for Dames to participate in right now.

We will open the Conference with Temple Grandin, PhD. Dr. Grandin has spent most of her life advocating for the humane treatment of livestock, and we are grateful to our partners at The Kentucky Beef Council who have helped us make this keynote speech possible. Dr. Grandin has worked for decades on tools, training, and processes that make livestock slaughter more humane on the animals. Here in Kentucky,

the farmers who produce our world-famous country ham have a saying that their livestock have "just one bad day." While Dr. Grandin's message is certainly centered on livestock, perhaps we could all spend time with her understanding how we can weave compassion and empathy through more aspects of our lives, and how we do business or consume.

We could not be more excited about **Toni Tipton Martin** joining us to open our Saturday program. Attendees of the Conference are in for a treat as Toni will only be a few weeks away from the launch of her newest book *Juke Joints, Jazz Clubs & Juice*. Join us for a special conversation with

the woman who unveiled the true role of black women in the creation of American, and especially Southern cuisine in her book *The Jemima Code*. She showed the world the dynamism and culturally essential aspects of Southern food when she co-founded the Southern Foodways Alliance. Get excited for a sneak peek and the opportunity to purchase her book before it is widely available!

Along with hearing from these powerful, inspiring women, we are planning a stunning Derby-themed night at our fantastic, local art museum, The Speed. You'll enjoy an evening of farm-fresh, locally sourced Kentucky classics, delicious cocktails by one of our hometown liquor companies, and plenty of true Southern hospitality to go around.

While we are putting the final touches on pre-conference tours, there are going to be plenty of opportunities to dive deeply into our thoroughbred industry, experience our agricultural might, visit distilleries, and experience our bountiful hospitality. We can't wait to see you and hope you have your calendars marked for your trip to Louisville, October 5-8. Cheers y'all!



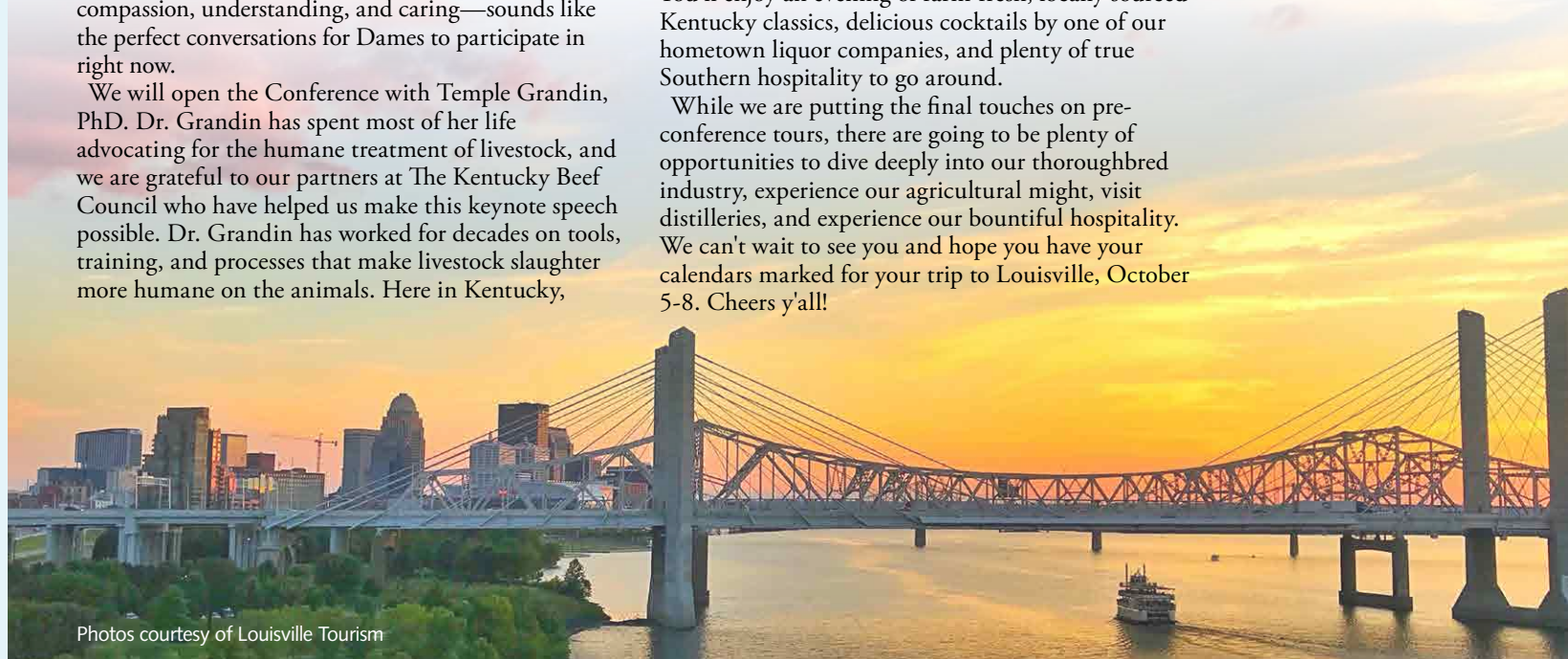
### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Temple Grandin, PhD



Toni Tipton-Martin



Photos courtesy of Louisville Tourism



BY SUSAN F. SLACK (CHARLESTON)

*Céad Mile Fáilte.* Dames and guests who attended LDE London's Edible Cork received a very warm welcome. We experienced all of the hospitality and friendliness that this Gaelic greeting embodies—in a hundred thousand ways.

Checking into the Imperial Hotel in Cork City, we discovered tempting arrays of handmade chocolates and decadent, miniature pastries in our rooms. The landmark hotel, built in 1813, has played host to notable figures such as Charles Dickens, Frederick Douglass, Sir Walter Scott, and Grace Kelly of Monaco. The adventurous spirit of Her Serene Highness is reflected in the hotel's botanical restaurant, Sketch. Channeling our inner Grace Kelly, we enjoyed bountiful breakfasts in the garden room with its playful neon wall sign, “Don't be like the rest of them, darling—Grace Kelly.”

WEDNESDAY  
MAY 10

We met with our London hosts, President **Jacqui Pickles** and **Catherine Sloman**, before strolling to Ireland's oldest food market for a welcome reception and dinner. Built in 1788, it's the epicenter of Cork's bustling gourmet scene where generations of family traders sell artisan ingredients and prepared foods.

We climbed the sturdy “stairway to food heaven” to reach Farmgate Café overlooking the trader's stalls. The restaurant showcases the market's cornucopia of vibrant ingredients. Our hosts were restaurant founder Kay Harte, and Manager Rebecca Harte, her daughter. Guests included market traders whose products were featured at the dinner.

THURSDAY  
MAY 11

Frances Bonner led us on a city culinary tour. We walked past 18th century buildings; one served as a corn depot for U.S. shipments during the Great Famine, which started with the potato blight of 1845. Our destination was the imposing Old Town Whiskey Bar, which has arched colonnades, chandeliers, and a magnificent bar. We sipped Irish Coffees—hot coffee with whiskey, sugar, and lightly whipped cream—while Frances' associate, Amanda, serenaded us with beautiful Irish songs. This historic building was built in 1843 as the “Irish Market” and specialized in meat. Outside in the street, working-class women, wearing black fringed shawls, started trading their wares. Known as “shawlies,” the resourceful women eked out a living, but when street trading was banned, they disappeared.

Following another visit to the English Market then lunch, there was time to explore the Butter Museum. (Read *The Global Culinary Postcard*, page 48.) That evening, we experienced Chef Denis Cotter's elegant, satisfying dinner at Café Paradiso, Ireland's celebrated vegetarian restaurant where “just-picked local vegetables and cheeses play the starring role.” We were served six imaginative courses that included Gortnanain Farm asparagus with lemon thyme, hazelnuts, and capers. In a collaboration, Chef Cotter and farmer Ultan Walsh of Gortnanain Farm were Big Plate winners at the inaugural World Restaurant Awards in Paris.

FRIDAY  
MAY 12

We were off to the Clonakilty Food Company to learn about black pudding, one of the oldest known sausages. We explored the exhibits then met owner Colette Twomey for a fascinating chat and tasting. She and her husband, Edward, turned the business into a success using a 140-year old recipe. After Edward passed away, Colette carried on, overcoming many obstacles. She alone mixes the secret spice recipe. Today, the company wins international awards.

We traveled to Sally Barnes' Woodcock Smokery, near the picturesque seaside village of Castletownshend, for a masterclass in the artisan craft of traditional fish smoking. Using sustainable fish, Sally requires only “salt, smoke, skill, care, and lots of time.” A great advocate of Slow Food, she said, “Fish don't get any slower than that.” Her talented chef assistant transformed seasonal ingredients into an al fresco lunch in The Keep—the rustic, outdoor room where we assembled. Starters included smoked/cured seafood appetizers embellished with herbs and flowers. Then buttery potatoes, vibrant salads, rustic bread with butter, Irish cheeses, luscious strawberries, shortbread, and lime-lemonade cordial. A pair of binoculars hanging in the charming outhouse provided a delightful overview of the stunning countryside.

Our visit to the Macroom Buffalo Farm was enjoyable and enlightening. Who doesn't love inquisitive water buffalo babies, not

to mention five, award-winning cheeses from Italian water buffalos' milk: mozzarella, bocconcini, feta, ricotta, and “buffaloumi,” (like Greek halloumi). Farm guide Dorothy O'Tuama introduced us to the herd, who were curious and friendly. At milking time, the “queens” of the corral led the herd in an orderly fashion, from the lush green fields to the milking parlor. After meeting several newborns, we tasted an array of outstanding buffalo cheese appetizers and cheesecake.

We ate dinner at Goldie Fish & Ale, an exceptional Cork seafood bistro run by talented Head Chef Aishling Moore, who believes in a “gill to fin” approach to sustainability. Daily menus depend on what's coming off the day boats. Sea vegetables and seaweed are foraged on the local coast. The restaurant produces ales in a tiny, nearby brewery; they are formulated to suit the foods.

SATURDAY  
MAY 13

We arrived early at County Cork's Midleton Farmers Market. London Dame **Darina Allen** was the inspiration for starting the market, one of the first in Ireland. Ballymaloe Cookery School maintains a market stall selling artisan breads, herbs, and fresh garden vegetables.

After lunch—a behind-the-scenes tour of Old Midleton Jameson Distillery museum. We saw the maturation room with a pair of “angel wings” crafted from the ribs of a whiskey barrel. It represents the “angels share”—the 2 to 3 percent that evaporates as a spirit matures in the barrel...available only to the angels. We admired the world's largest pot still with its capacity of over 31,000 gallons and a giant iron waterwheel used to drive malt-grinding stones. At the Irish Whiskey Academy, we tasted a range of premium whiskeys.

Next stop—the Kinsale Mead Company to learn about honey wine, a favorite beverage of the Vikings and Shakespeare. Owner Kate Dempsey presented an overview of how their award-winning meads are produced. We sampled four types, each with a different flavor profile. Subtle, with seductive honey undertones, the off-dry meads weren't too sweet and could be sipped like wine.

Kinsale is one of Ireland's oldest towns with a richly distilled, maritime history. William Penn's father was a Vice Admiral of Ireland; both briefly lived here. Lying in a sheltered harbor, the postcard-pretty town is famous for its stellar restaurants. We drove to Bulman Bar in Summercove Bay on the outskirts of town. In terms of cuisine, character, and history—this establishment has it all. Within a few feet from the water, we dined on locally caught fresh seafood including oysters, mussels, lobsters, and shrimp.

SUNDAY  
MAY 14

It was chilly and damp as we headed to Rossmore Oyster Farm on the sheltered North Channel of Cork Harbor where owner Rupert Hugh Jones met us. Pulling jackets tighter, we visited 22 new ponds under construction to expand native oyster breeding. Rossmore sells the finest native and rock (Pacific) oysters from around Ireland and Great Britain. Their sweet, briny flavors were enhanced with lemon, mignonette sauce, and hot sauce with brown soda bread and butter on the side.

For our final adventure, we traveled to Darina Allen's award-winning Ballymaloe Cookery School near Shanagarry in East Cork. She was recently a nominee for LDEI's Grande Dame award. This is the only cookery school in the world located in the middle of its own 100-acre organic farm and garden. After refreshments, Darina and her husband Tim gave us an extensive tour through the school and gardens. The Topiary Walk led to an enchanting, small Shell House with gothic windows. Every square inch inside—walls, floor, window sills—is covered with shells. Each shell in the roof once encased a mussel or scallop that was consumed at the cooking school or at Ballymaloe House. It's truly magical.

After attending the Ballymaloe May Fair, we settled into our rooms at Ballymaloe House. The Georgian home is built onto a Norman castle and is the first country-house hotel in Ireland. We were thoughtfully provisioned with shortbread hearts, strawberries, and handmade sweets. Darina and her late mother-in-law, Myrtle Allen, are the pioneers of Ireland's slow food movement. We enjoyed a superb five-course dinner in the main dining room, including the famous dessert trolley, a tradition since the 1960s. Carrageen Moss Pudding, a delicious, soft-set seaweed dessert, is a favorite and always included. In 2021, Ballymaloe won the Trolley of the Year award at the prestigious World Restaurant Awards in Paris.

Photos: Susan Slack

WEDNESDAY MAY 10



THURSDAY MAY 11



FRIDAY MAY 12



SATURDAY MAY 13



SUNDAY MAY 14





BY PATTY ERD (CHICAGO)

Twenty-three guests of Edible London assembled Wednesday, May 17, for five glorious days of whirlwind adventures that included iconic destinations, carefully orchestrated food and wine tours, and world-class meals. May was the loveliest month of spring. Flowers were bursting with color and the weather was mostly sunny, which was icing on the cake! The long-anticipated event was chaired by Dames **Jacqui Pickles** and **Sue Carter**.

The London Dames warmly welcomed us during an evening wine and canapé reception in the lush courtyard garden of Number Sixteen hotel in South Kensington. Each guest received the ultimate swag bag with gifts, goodies, and must-read books including an autographed copy of *I'll Try Anything Once* written by TV cook, broadcaster, and cookery writer Dame **Prue Leith**, DBE., DL.

The following day we split into two groups. Half of us enjoyed a behind-the-scenes tour at Piccadilly's Fortnum & Mason, founded in 1707 by Queen Anne's footman, William Fortnum, and his landlord Hugh Mason. Accompanied by London Dame **Fiona Richmond**, the tour began in the Boardroom, which is filled with valuable artwork and boasts an outstanding litany of past guests including Winston Churchill. Lionel Richie and Katy Perry were honored with an afternoon tea during the King's recent Coronation.

We finished in the intimate Wine Crypt, secretly hidden away in the oldest part of the building and used for private wine tastings and intimate dinners. Refreshments included Scotch eggs, created at Fortnum & Mason in 1738. We learned that Charles Dickens rewarded himself with a special hamper whenever he finished a book. After a lively lunch at the Brasserie Zédel, many of us rewarded ourselves, for no such lofty reason as Mr. Dickens, with an afternoon at Fortnum's, where we purchased all sorts of delicious treats to ship home.

**Liz Barrett** reports, "The other group headed to Berry Brothers & Rudd, England's oldest wine merchant. Dames took a behind-the-scenes tour of the cellars—including one where Napoleon held secret strategy meetings—but only after knocking on each barrel to be sure they didn't contain any spies! After the tour, we had time to peruse the wine shop and taste wines through a clever dispensing system. Lunch followed at 67 Pall Mall, a private club for the wine trade, and was hosted by Dame **Hermione Ireland**, co-founder of the Academie du Vin Library imprint."

We spiced up the evening with an amazing Royal Thali Indian feast at Asma Khan's renowned restaurant Darjeeling Express, the first restaurant in the UK to be featured on the hit Netflix show *Chef's Table*. The cuisine, prepared by an all-women team of chefs, pays homage to Asma's royal Mughlai ancestry. The 13-dish feast included fried, puffed puri; Tamarind Dal; Pulao (rice); Beetroot Raita; a choice of chicken, beef, or prawns, and three desserts plus spicy masala chai.



Friday was our Grand Day Out; we chose between visiting The School of Artisan Food on the Welbeck Estate in Nottinghamshire or The Sussex Wine and Culture tour. My group, led by Jacqui Pickles and **Catherine Sloman**, journeyed by train to the cooking school, which is located in the Dukeries, an area made up of four, historic ducal estates. Welbeck Estate is the site of Welbeck Abby, the ancestral home of the Dukes of Portland.

Dame **Alison Swan Parente**, MBE, founder of the school, gave us a personal tour and emphasized that while many schools teach cooking, her school exists for the purpose of encouraging and teaching artisan food making. We attended a cooking demonstration for making English pork pies and enjoyed them during our marvelous luncheon prepared from foodstuffs grown, raised, or created at the school estate.

After lunch, we viewed the Portland Collection of historic art treasures, accumulated over 400 years by the Dukes of Portland. Our guide was Alison's husband, William Parente, a descendant of William Cavendish-Bentinck, the 7th Duke of Portland. We were invited to afternoon tea at their estate home, Welbeck Woodhouse. The Parentes guided us through the historic home and gardens that were blooming with an abundance of spring color. We also saw majestic swans nesting on the lake banks.

**Liz Barrett** adds, "Dame **Valentina Harris** escorted the Sussex wine group to Ridgeview Estate Winery, one of England's oldest sparkling wine houses, where a vineyard walk was followed by a seated tasting of three Ridgeview sparkling wines. Our conclusion: English sparkling wine is a real thing!" After lunch at Rathfinny Wine Estate and a visit to Firlie Place and Charleston Farmhouse, there was a tasting of Sussex wines, cheese, and charcuterie curated by winemaker **Emma Rice** and Valentina.

Another highlight was Saturday at Borough Market with Dame **Kate Howell**, Director of Communications and Engagement. The market dates back 1000 years and is always evolving. We learned that it is so much more than a place to shop. Run by a charitable trust, the market endeavors to deliver value, knowledge and education, access and opportunities. It seeks to provide unique foodstuffs of exceptional quality, with provenance, transparency, and sustainability. Catherine Sloman and Jacqui Pickles organized food from the market for a marvelous picnic luncheon. We listened to market experts Angela Clutton, culinary historian and author of *Borough Market: The Knowledge*, and Mark Riddaway, award-winning food writer/author of *Borough Market: Edible Histories*, as they discussed many aspects of the market and its history.

Saturday evening we dined in intimate groups at five exceptional London restaurants hosted by local Dames: Jacqui Pickles at Chez Bruce; Valentina Harris at Theo Randall at the Intercontinental; Sue Carter at Myrtle; Fiona Richmond at Portland; and **Elisabeth Luard** at Moro.

On Sunday, we enjoyed an English brunch at The Coachmaker's Arms—a Victorian pub in the heart of Marylebone—while listening to an enlightening conversation between **Sheila Dillon**, the M.F.K. Fisher award-winner/founder of the BBC Food and Farming Awards, and Carolyn Steel, author of *Sitopia* and *Hungry City*. They touched on so many relevant food topics, we could have listened all day.

Our grand finale evening was in Chelsea at Michelin-starred Elystan Street. During dinner, artist Elisabeth Luard drew charming watercolor sketches of the event as she had done at other events. Phil Howard, one of London's top chefs, prepared an unforgettable meal with seasonal offerings such as spring vegetables with light truffle cream; cured trout with elderflower pickled cucumber and Amalfi lemon; and Cornish Red chicken breast with fresh morels. We savored every bite, as well as the companionship of special friends. With gratitude, we bid a fond farewell...until our next Edible adventure!

Photos: Susan Slack, Chrissie Walker, Angela Dansby, Patty Erd.



London Dame Anna Haugh (wearing apron), is a celebrated, Dublin-born chef who opened Myrtle in Chelsea to showcase modern Irish cuisine. Her restaurant's name, Myrtle, honors Myrtle Allen of Ballymaloe, who defined the modern era of Irish cooking.





BY MARSHA PALANCI  
(NEW YORK)

One of Edible London's highlights, especially for wine and spirits professionals, was our tour of Berry Brothers & Rudd (BBR) at No. 3, St James's Street. Revered as Britain's oldest wine and spirits merchants, BBR was founded in 1698. The shop and family dwellings are a stone's throw away from Saint James's Palace, once the love nest of King Henry VIII and now a working palace used by the royal family for ceremonial occasions and entertaining. BBR was built around the smallest square in London, Pickering Place, one of Mayfair's hidden gems. On the narrow passageway leading to the square, our group was shown a plaque honoring a delegation of Texans (before Texas was a state) who came to London to present their credentials to the court of Saint James. In fact, between 1842 and 1845, the delegation maintained its London embassy in rooms above BBR's shop. According to our guide, Sebastian, there were no ill feelings when the gentlemen failed to pay their rent when they departed. Ironically, BBR celebrates this historic link with America by today selling a bourbon whiskey called Texas Legation, which is distilled outside Dallas!

Oddly enough, London's most prestigious wine merchant began as an Italian grocery shop, owned by a woman known as Widow Bourne. A very astute businesswoman, she sold her clientele the most exotic goods available at the time. This included tea, spices, snuff, and most importantly, coffee, which she supplied to trendy coffee houses. The business' original sign depicting a coffee grinder still hangs over its door, a tribute to its humble beginnings. The original shop has two acres of underground cellars, which held fine wines for customers and also family bottles—kept under key, of course. Just around the corner from the Widow Bourne's original shop sits BBR's London Shop on Pall Mall. Here customers can peruse a selection of fine wines and spirits from around the world as well as taste a range of outstanding wines from their Enomatic machines, as we did.

BBR was the first wine and spirits retail store in the UK to launch a website (bbr.com) and today has a thriving on-line business. BBR is still family-owned and operated by two powerful women at the helm—CEO Emma Fox and Chair Lizzy Rudd. Their mission, as they mark their firm's 325th anniversary, is to preserve the legacy started by Widow Bourne. The company continues to supply the British royal family, as they have done since the reign of King George III.

Veronica Hastings adds, "A visit to Berry Brothers & Rudd wine and spirit merchants is a delightful trip through the centuries that will transport you from Widow Bourne's all-purpose goods store, where one could get themselves weighed (a fashionable pastime), to the fine wine merchants they are today. Layers of black paint, which must be maintained due to historic standing, glosses the storefront. A tour through the cellars and entertainment rooms beneath the store make this institution unique and fun. A must see if you are in London."



**WE Belong**

Meaningful Blogs from Dames

## The Pitfalls and Potentials of Self-Publishing

BY MARSHA PALANCI (NEW YORK)

Do you know the expression of being over your head? Well, that is how I felt through most of my first foray into self-publishing. And whose fault was that? Admittedly, mine.

When I first contemplated the idea of writing a book, I thought it would be easy. However, now that the book *Tarte Tatin Tales* has been published and I can reflect on the almost three-year process, I am horrified with my somewhat cavalier approach.

I knew from the get-go that publishing through traditional methods would be out of the question. No literary agent was going to pick up the memoir/cookbook of an unknown author. The only other option was self-publishing. However, navigating this world turned out to be much harder than expected. What follows are a few "lessons learned." After all, we all have a book in us, as the expression goes. Maybe your turn is next?

### THE GENESIS OF THE BOOK

Several Christmases ago, my nephew Tony Boss and his family visited me in Manhattan. Tony loves to cook as much as I do, a shared family trait. He asked me to send him ten of my favorite recipes to reproduce back home in his Florida kitchen. It occurred to me that these recipes already existed on my blog. Then, a light bulb went off in my head. Why not pull together the preexisting material and produce a book?

### ASKING RECOMMENDATIONS OF SELF-PUBLISHING FIRMS

Several friends, who self-published their own books, gave me commendations. After some cursory research, I landed on BookBaby to help with my first book. They offered a full range of services and publishing experts who promised to take me from writer to author. It never occurred to me how difficult the learning curve would be—especially for someone not particularly tech savvy—nor what the final financial commitment might look like.

### STEP ONE: PREPARING THE MANUSCRIPT

While I knew my book would never be a bestseller, it still needed to be intelligently conceived, well written, and beautifully designed. Call it self-pride. However, even before I could start a dialog with BookBaby, a manuscript needed to be produced. That turned out to be the easiest part of the long process.

### SENDING THE RECIPES OUT FOR A TEST DRIVE

Essays and recipes were chosen and loosely put into a book format. I asked Dame Jan Hazard—who had been the food editor of *Ladies Home Journal* for years—to review the recipes. Jan took her job seriously and meticulously corrected my mistakes as an amateur recipe developer.

### STARTING THE SELF-PUBLISHING PROCESS

With the contents of the book assembled, I made the first call to BookBaby. Despite my initial brio about becoming an author, I was intimidated. Why? Because like many women my age, I suffer from the "imposter syndrome." You know the one where you question whether you possess enough intelligence, creativity, and talent to do anything substantial, such as writing a book.

Nevertheless, I forged ahead and ended up having a productive conversation with a chatty sales representative who enthusiastically walked me through the steps of publishing. He later assigned me to George (not his real name!) as my project manager. I immediately took a dislike to George and he to me.

### RED FLAG ALERT!

While the process initially appeared straight forward, everything had to be submitted electronically. I found BookBaby's site frustratingly challenging to maneuver and resented having to call George each time for instructions.

George's condescending attitude and poor people skills created such anxiety that I put off the book venture for six months. Eventually, I gave myself a pep talk and relaunched the project. Before I knew it, I had signed a contract and paid \$2,290 for BookBaby's Deluxe publishing package. This was the soup to nuts version which included editing, design, production, some online marketing, as well as the all-important book distribution.

### PROJECT ON HOLD: POOR PHOTO RESOLUTION

With a downpayment made, I was ready to start. George walked me through how to send the book's text and photos via Dropbox. Done. Easy enough. But a week later, I received a very upsetting phone call. As George explained it in his surly, monotone voice, "Sorry, Marsha, but the resolution of your photographs is inadequate. You need a higher DPI (dots per inch). I suggest retaking everything using a better camera or iPhone." Everything?

Out of desperation, I walked to the Apple store for advice. I was almost to the point of purchasing a new iPhone when the Apple Genius casually suggested that perhaps the photos could be enhanced electronically. Immediately, I thought of CiCi Williamson who put my mind at ease. "No sweat, Marsha, just send me the photos. I'll change their DPI using Photoshop."

### THE DANGERS OF BAD EDITING

Once the new, enhanced photos were inserted into my manuscript and resent to BookBaby, I

stepped myself for a conversation with George. "Now we start the first stage of editing," he explained. This task was done quickly and sent back to me for review. When I questioned some of the edits and asked to speak to the person making the corrections, George responded matter-of-factly that would be impossible. Everything had to go through him.

If that were not bad enough, Jan's carefully reviewed recipes had been mangled by BookBaby's editor. As you know, recipes are written following very precise guidelines of formatting and style. My editor didn't even know the basics. Revision #1 which followed was unacceptable as was Revision #2! Furthermore, my working relationship with George was rapidly deteriorating. My friends convinced me that it was time for a change.

### SWITCHING GEARS: HIRING MY OWN BOOK EDITOR

George was taken off the project. Angie (another invented name) became my go-to. As accommodating as she was, I had completely lost confidence in BookBaby's editing capabilities. To protect the integrity of the book, my best path was to find an outside editor. This way, a dialogue would be possible, something which I felt was essential to the creative process of producing a book.

In no time, I found the perfect person for the project: Deri Reed, a whip-smart, dry-witted, no-nonsense professional with an obsession with grammar.

### REFOCUSING THE BOOK

Deri made intelligent recommendations on how to restructure the book so that the essays made thematic sense. Next, we worked closely together to make sure her edits were what I wanted as the author. This gratifying, collaborative experience allowed me to be proud of what I (we?) would soon publish.

### DEALING WITH THE TECHNICAL ISSUES OF BOOK FORMATTING

Putting a book together is not for the faint at heart. In the midst of all this, I had also undertaken the task of co-chairing the 2023 LDEI Conference. No longer did I have the luxury of extra free time to learn the intricacies of publishing. Out of desperation, I asked Deri to take the lead, yet another unanticipated expense. However, without her intervention my book would still be up in the ether!

### COOKBOOK DESIGN: MY FORTÉ

Many aspects of producing the book remain a mystery to me. However, being a visually oriented person, the book's design was one area at which I could easily and quickly excel. My vision for the book's "look" was that it be clean, modern, and playful. Deri communicated this to BookBaby's designer who, surprisingly, hit the nail on the head on the first try. Except for the book's cover, which was problematic, the interior design was stunning.

### ONE SHOT AT A FIRST IMPRESSION

Given that many people buy a book by its cover, it was critical that *Tarte Tatin Tales*

be visually attractive. After several attempts incorporating different photos, we settled on the one originally used for my blog: a scrumptious closeup of a slice of tarte tatin taken with my old iPhone several years ago while dining at Buvette, Jody Williams' Paris outpost.

However, our designer struggled with the background colors for the book's title cover. The green he/she chose looked like overcooked asparagus and the brown like the inside of a baby's diaper. Back it went until the brown resembled deep, rich caramel and the green, a more appetizing shade of spring fava beans. Now, we were off to the races.

### THE MODERN WAY OF BOOK DISTRIBUTION

Luckily, BookBaby handled the book's physical printing and online distribution which electronically went out to the world's largest bookstores. To do this they used a system called "Print on Demand." This is a relatively new printing technology which allows for books to be printed once orders are received. This is a cost-efficient way to get your book directly into the hands of readers without worrying about unnecessary print runs, inventory storage, or shipping.

### COMMITMENT OF ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

Experts recommend that you determine early on whether or not writing a book will be a serious business venture. If so, this will guide your approach to the process. Specifically, this means a serious commitment of time and money to promote your book. As making a profit was never my intention, I soft-pedaled this part of the process.

So, there will be no media tour, personal website, or serious advertising support to promote my book. Whatever happens will be organic. There may be a few press releases sent out, perhaps a book signing or two plus a feeble attempt at a social media presence! But that is about the extent of my planned book promotion.

### SELF-PUBLISHING: NO LONGER JUST A VANITY PROJECT

Whether or not there will ever be a second book in me, is up for grabs. However, in hindsight, I must admit that diving into self-publishing taught me a great deal. For one thing, I never realized how many people use this method to get their book out to the public. In fact, if handled properly, it can be a profitable business. For example, sales of self-published books rose 264% in the past five years and now represent a revenue of \$1.25 billion.

While the release of my book will probably not move the needle that much in total book sales, that does not diminish how proud I am having completed the project and survived its many pitfalls. And, if you are seriously tempted to publish your own book someday, then you, too, can experience the electrifying thrill of seeing your book's title up on Amazon and Barnes & Noble's websites.



# Hand-in-Hand: Fundraising Inspires Deeper Connections



*Fundraising and scholarships go hand-in-hand. For LDEI, fundraising is a key element of success. In this report, the spotlight is on the Atlanta, Boston, Charleston, and Cleveland Chapters who are doing the serious work of raising funds to help educate women in the fields of food, wine, and hospitality, and to provide grassroots community service. Dames are always willing to come together and donate their time, and even money, for a good cause especially if they can have a little fun doing it. In Chapter Programs, read about the fundraising efforts of other chapters including Birmingham, Cleveland, Dallas, Hawaii, Kansas City, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C.—Susan Slack*



LDEI Atlanta's scholarship winners. Sips of the Summer—a recent wine tasting fundraiser.



## ATLANTA — Toby Bloomberg

Most scholarship programs make an impact; however, LDEI Atlanta's Culinary Futures fundraiser literally changes lives. The program allows for generous awards that may be the difference between young women receiving a higher education or not. As much as the program provides opportunities for recipients to obtain the education to pursue careers in the culinary arts and hospitality, it also gives back to those in the industry. The recipients are an inspiration to those currently working in the profession. Each year, Culinary Futures benefits one female high school senior pursuing a degree in culinary arts, hospitality, or related fields. The event, sponsored by IMC & GC Buying Group, is the primary fundraiser for this scholarship. The more money we raise, the more we can provide. The program is part of the LDEI Atlanta Philanthropy Committee under **Simone Byron**. It is overseen by **Mary Moore** whose vision for Culinary Futures has allowed the chapter to leave an important legacy.

## BOSTON — Lucille Giovino

The fundraising goddesses were certainly hovering over Boston as we surpassed all expectations with our first major fundraiser since Covid-19. Over 300 guests nibbled gourmet samples from our best women-owned restaurants and food crafters while enjoying wine tastings. Dame **Christine Tuttle** from *This Old House* TV series and Chef **Elle Simono Scott** from *America's Test Kitchen* taught mini classes on home entertaining. Four Dame-owned restaurants participated: The Inn at Hastings (**Trisha Perez Kennelly**); Jen Verrill's Farms (**Jen Verrill**); The Daily Catch (**Maria Freddura**); and Chiara (**Michelle LaCount**). Dames **Susanne Greelish** of Ginger Gems and **Jen Sanford** of Twisted Sauces added that just right zing to our festivities. Our spectacular 16-foot Grand Grazing Board was a sight to behold, laden with tempting cheeses, fresh-cut fruit, and accompanying breads along with **Teresa Maynard's** Sweet Teez cookies and **Eileen Joy Spitalny's** Fairytale Brownies. The always rewarding silent auction and raffle included an apron signed by Paul and **Julia Child** and hotel accommodations at luxury hotels and spas. All this culminated with a grand total of a \$16,000 profit, which will benefit our Scholarship Fund for deserving and dedicated young women in the culinary profession. Kudos to **Robin Cohen** for masterminding this event and **Joan Sweeney** for coordinating all logistics, and to all on the committees.



Dames Emily Hill and Joan Sweeney (event co-chair). Dame Anne Hopkins, Dame Robin Cohen (event co-chair), and Domez Cardullo Tavilla. Dame Christine Tuttle from *This Old House* TV series. Photo: Joseph Keller. The Grand Grazing Board.



(Top Photo) Front Row, L-R: Marilyn Markel, Julie Shaffer, Jamie French, Robin Griffith. Back Row, L-R: Angie Dupree, Tanya Gurrieri, Gina Stouffer, Mary Kay Gill, Lisa Buzzelli, Amanee Nierouz, Jodie Holder. (Bottom Photo) Front Row, L-R: Sarah O'Kelley, Lisa Buzzelli, Johnny Caldwell, Robin Griffith, Tanya Gurrieri, Helen Mitternacht. Back Row, L-R: Marilyn Markel, Judy Hazel, Mary Kay Gill, Amanee Nierouz, Leonice Ludwig, Jenni Ridall Lata, Kelly Chu, Tracey Richardson, Julie Shaffer.

## CHARLESTON — Robin Griffith

In a remarkable display of support and generosity, the Charleston Chapter recently hosted a fundraiser that exceeded their expectations. The Culinary Bazaar turned out to be a resounding success! Inspired by the Culinary Bazaar held by the Chicago Chapter and fueled by a passion for making a difference, the dedicated team, led by Dames **Tanya Gurreiri** and **Angie Dupree**, created an event that made a lasting impact on the community. The fundraiser attracted a diverse crowd that included community leaders, businesses, citizens, and visitors from all over.

Attendees were greeted with a vibrant atmosphere and immediately began to peruse the gently used items of culinary and kitchen equipment. Bone china, rice steamers, beautifully curated baskets filled with local goods, and much more could be found. Dame **Julie Shaffer** secured and managed the amazing bake sale.

The over \$12,000 the chapter raised from sales and donations will support its educational scholarships for woman in the industry. However, the bazaar's success was not measured solely on financial terms but also in the impact it had on the community—it served yet another platform to raise awareness of LDEI's mission. Attendees left with treasured new kitchen items and a sense of fulfillment, knowing that their contributions would make a difference in the lives of local women in the industry.

## CLEVELAND—

### A Pictorial View: Cleveland's Culinary Treasures Fundraiser

L-R: Dames Destiny Burns, Britt-Marie Horrocks, Beth Davis-Noragon, and Pat Bennet. Photo: Pat Bennet.

L-R: Dames Shara Bohach, Grande Dame Bev Shaffer, and Carol Hacker Photo: Pat Bennet.

Books for sale—you would not believe the number of books that were donated and sold! Someone could have built a culinary library. Photo: Shara Bohach. Read more about the Cleveland Chapter's Culinary Treasures Sale Fundraiser in Chapter Programs.





By KENDRA THATCHER (PHILADELPHIA)

I touched down in Oaxaca—"The Land of Seven Moles"—a day early and was instantly greeted with warm, smoky air and a bright (albeit hazy) landscape. This world would be mine to explore for the next five days and, compared to the gray and slushy East Coast I left behind, I was beyond myself with excitement.

Settling into the historic Quinta Real Oaxaca and acclimating myself to the energy of the city grounded me. Our Mexican sisters offered two spectacular options for the early birds. The first was a hands-on culinary experience that included shopping at El Mercado and preparing a meal of mole from scratch. The second, a more spiritual experience: the *temazcal*. Beating deep within the indigenous roots of Zapotec culture, this religious sweat lodge ritual cleanses the body, mind, and spirit.

**DAY ONE** The festivities officially began in the evening, so there was plenty of time to weave through Oaxaca. Dressed to impress, at 5:30 p.m. we bustled down to the main courtyard for the opening ceremony. We were greeted and accompanied for the rest of our journey with tequila and mezcal from Partners *Jose Cuervo* and *400 Conejos Mezcal*. After a few bites and several sips, we found our seats for the fashion show. The designer, a young Oaxacan photographer turned fashionista, masterfully showcased a balance of tradition with complexity and simplicity in more than 20 original pieces. The perfect amuse-bouche for what was to come.

A most delicious welcome dinner at Zanduga, prepared by traditional Oaxacan cook Aurora Toledo, emphasized the sweet, spicy, rich flavors we'd be experiencing over the next few days. And then, with a lovely mezcal buzz blissfully escorting us home, bed beckoned.

**DAY TWO** The morning light glimmered on the crepe-like petals of the bougainvilleas; birds flitted about. The smell of *cafe olla* lured us to the hotel's main hall where Chef **Olga Cabrera** gave an in-depth lesson on maize—one of Mexico's staple ingredients. We learned of its many uses and tasted a trio of *atoles*—a traditional hot, masa-based beverage. Then we shifted our attention to a *quesillo* demonstration. A technique hailing from the Dominican friars, *queso Oaxaca* is a string cheese that resembles a ball of yarn and tastes like unaged Monterey Jack and is purely Mexican.

Our tour then whisked us outside the city's limits to the Teotitlán del Valle. We enjoyed a class on the intricate artistry and 3,000 year history of *velas*, ritual candles still used in various traditional ceremonies that represent forgiveness and love. The air was heavy with the familiar aroma of *copal*—a tree resin burned as incense—and around the property, several looms sat with textiles. Naturally dyed yarns in various shades of indigo, maroon, and amber hung in ombre from the rafters.

Lunch was just down the road with Oaxacan cook Abigail Mendoza Ruiz at Tlamanalli. This Zapotec-centric restaurant has been serving traditional cuisine since 1990. Abigail and her two sisters served Squash Blossom Soup and deftly seasoned Yellow Mole with Chicken. Abigail can be credited for the preservation of Zapotec cuisine and, on a larger scale, the preservation of many of Mexico's indigenous cuisines. It was from her vision, participation, and perseverance at a Paris conference that helped put Oaxaca on the map as a UNESCO City of Gastronomy.

There was time to relax or explore before the next delicious meal at Levadura de Olla. Chef Thalia Barrios Garcia's vegetarian restaurant is a celebration of health and flavor. One of Oaxaca's most popular restaurants, Levadura uses ingredients directly from the communities where the dishes originate.

**DAY THREE** We enjoyed a historic walking tour through the Santo Domingo Cultural Center—an immense preservation of the cultural wealth of Oaxaca—before being shuttled off to Matatlan for a lesson in mezcal. What was more impressive than the making of my favorite smoky spirit,

was the cultural importance of the agave plant itself. The nutrient-rich, unfermented agave milk is given to infants, and then the slightly fermented milk is ingested as a digestive the next day; the woody leaves are used for tools and utensils. At Mezcal Mal de Amores, our tour guide identified a wide variety of wild and cultivated agave plants that are used to make their mezcal. My favorite? The wild varietal *cuishe*.

Lunch was at the highly anticipated Criollo. On the edge of Oaxaca's historical city center sits this do-not-dare-miss collaboration between world-renowned architect Javier Sanchez and Pujol chef, Enrique Olvera. Manning the menu and asado was Chef Luis Arellano and his team. Like a maestro conducting his orchestra, Chef Arellano served one stellar dish after another including a salad with Black Zapote Vinaigrette pooling around pineapple, mango, roasted jicama, and translucent *chilacayota* noodles; a Short-Rib Barbacoa; and dessert's corn pancake with pineapple *nicuatole* and *chamoy*.

Filled to the gills and happy as clams, some of us strolled back to the hotel and took in the sweeping cityscapes, vibrant street art, and a sea of Oaxacan women marching in solidarity for International Women's Day.

Friday's dinner at La Teca was like going home to my long lost *abuela* and the perfect ending to a beautiful day. Cook-owner Deyanira Aquino—who has cooked for popes and presidents—specializes in dishes from her native Juchitán de Zaragoza on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. An array of savory and sweet dishes included Estofado de Boda, a traditional wedding dish of shredded beef and fruits, and a refreshing Mamey and Coconut Sorbet. A table gift prepared us for Saturday's adventure: a set of two specially made *mezcaleros* (mezcal tasting glasses) made of *barro negro* (black clay) by Candelaria Sosa.

**DAY FOUR** Breakfast was a short stroll to the iconic La Catedral where gracious owner Martina Escobar served quintessential chilaquiles! We boarded buses for a short drive to San Bartolo Coyotepec to learn about the barro negro pottery process with a demonstration at Casa de Leon from Candelaria Sosa herself. From black clay to vibrantly colored mythical creatures, we ventured to the home and workshop of Jacobo and Maria Angeles in San Martin Tilcajete to witness the wonder of *alebrijes*—dreamlike, winged guardians elaborately carved from copal and intricately painted with natural dyes.

Our final luncheon took place on an off-the-grid road where a small sign reading Alfonsina marked the unassuming location. Traditional Oaxacan cook Doña Elvia Leon cooked what she felt—an insanely delicious array of dishes presented with grace, pride, and a dash of bashfulness. I'm still dreaming about the Bean Soup with Corn, the Cauliflower Tostada, and the Guanabana Sorbet with Mulberries. But, the moles—oh those moles! Go there for the moles.

After a quick rest before our final evening together, many Dames partook in the complimentary makeup and hair; others took a final stroll about town. We met in front of the hotel for our *calenda*—or parade—that danced us all the way to our final destination, Tierra del Sol restaurant. On the rooftop, we enjoyed 360° views that stretched as far as our final setting sun could touch. The tables perfectly set; each dish made with love.

As fireworks burst above, I vividly recall smiles illuminating the faces of President **Araceli Ramos** and **Maria Gomez Laurens** as they hugged sister-Dames **Emily Williams Knight**, **Tania Ruiz**, **Veronica Madrigal**, **Marcela Briz**, and **Ruth Alegria** and shook the Partner's hands including Chef Luisteen Gonzalez and friends from El Faro who helped to make this incredible event a reality. Five magical days in Oaxaca, in which attention to detail was an understatement, hospitality was a crown jewel, and the array of hand-crafted daily gifts, along with our culinary experience, is now a lifetime memory. A most sincere thank you to *all* of the Mexico Dames for sharing your world with us. Bravo, sisters, bravo!

DAY ONE



DAY TWO



DAY THREE



DAY FOUR



Photos: Oscar Valasquez





# CHAPTER PROGRAMS *Nichole Bendele (San Antonio)*

ANN ARBOR | ATLANTA | AUSTIN | BIRMINGHAM | BOSTON | BRITISH COLUMBIA | CHARLESTON | CHICAGO | CLEVELAND | COLORADO | DALLAS | FRANCE | GREATER DES MOINES | GREATER MADISON | HAWAII | HOUSTON | KANSAS CITY | KENTUCKY | LONDON | LOS ANGELES/ORANGE COUNTY | MEXICO | MINNESOTA | MONTEREY BAY | NASHVILLE | NEW ENGLAND | NEW ORLEANS | NEW YORK | NORTH CAROLINA | ONTARIO | PALM SPRINGS | PHILADELPHIA | PHOENIX | PORTLAND | SACRAMENTO | SAN ANTONIO | SAN DIEGO | SAN FRANCISCO | SAVANNAH/COASTAL GEORGIA | SEATTLE | SONOMA | SOUTH FLORIDA | ST. LOUIS | TUSCANY | WASHINGTON, D.C.

## ANN ARBOR *Sandy Lach Arlinghaus*

Kudzu is often referred to as “the vine that ate the south.” Our recent LDEI Table Talk turned the tables on that as we explored ways to eat kudzu! Kudzu Kickoff featured kudzu as a garnish and a Krawfish and Kudzu Boil in Meridian, Mississippi. Try some kudzu...stay tuned for more about our Green North/South Kudzu Project and check our website linked to [www.ldei.org](http://www.ldei.org)

## AUSTIN *Lindsey LaRoy*

This spring, Austin Dames hosted Caftans & Fans, a fun event to help wind down from the South by Southwest Festival (SXSW) on March 28. Guests learned about the state of the Texas wine industry while sipping wines paired with bites from Las Brasas, Huckleberry Hospitality, 3 Small Plates Catering, and Suga's Cakery. Featured wines included Ab Astris Winery; C.L. Butaud; Duchman Family Winery; Folio Fine Wine Partners; Summer Revival Wine Co; Virtuoso Wine & Spirits; Wine For The People; Texas Keeper Cider; and William Chris Vineyards. Thanks to Austin Dame **Lindsey Peebles** for hosting at her beautiful location, Texas Keeper Cider!



Austin Dames host a fun Caftans & Fans event.

## BIRMINGHAM *Martha Johnston*

Birmingham Dames baked, packed, and sold boxes of sweet confections for our Valentine's Sweet Treats 2023 sale. Led by **Gia McCollister**, **Rebel Negley**, and **Sherron Goldstein**, we surpassed our proceeds from all our previous years put together. For a donation of \$50, supporters received beautiful treats prepared and donated by our Dames. The money raised allowed the creation of an additional entrepreneurial grant. In early March, The Community Food Bank of Central Alabama held its second annual Feast for Hope Gala in the Food Bank warehouse. Birmingham Dames helped again to make it a fun, beautiful celebration of community spirit and giving. Several members who own catering companies produced and served the food, and dozens of Dames were on hand to serve as hostesses, pour wine, and talk about LDEI and the Food Bank. The Food Bank also gives \$2,500 which we use for a scholarship focused on a young woman with interest in community outreach.

**Jasmine Smith** organized a Dames visit to the Auburn University Rane Culinary Science Center on March 24. It is Auburn's first program with a major academic component and revenue-generating elements. Tours included the culinary/food labs, The Laurel Hotel & Spa, 1856 Restaurant, and Hey Day Market.



A group of 21 Birmingham Dames packed boxes on Friday, February 10, ahead of Saturday's Sweet Treats pickup and fundraiser sale. Dozens of Birmingham Dames were on hand for the Feast for Hope Gala. Members poured wine, served as hostesses, and talked about the work of the Food Bank and our organization. The Feast for Hope Gala was held in the warehouse of the Food Bank of Central Alabama, which was transformed into a chandelier-lit event with sparkling china and crystal. Birmingham Dames visited the new Rane Culinary Science Center at Auburn University on March 24 to tour the facilities and meet the students. A student in the Rane Culinary Science Center kitchen.

## CHARLESTON *Susan Slack*

On Sunday, June 11, at the American Theatre on King Street, the Charleston Dames participated in FAB for the second year, under the direction of **Tanya Gurrieri**. The popular, three-day



Pork Belly Crisp, Pimento Cheese Mousse, and Fermented Cabbage. Charleston Dames at FAB: Front Row (L-R): Tanya Gurrieri, Amanee Neirouz, and Chapter Scholarship Recipient Isabella Gurrieri. Back Row (L-R): Robin Griffith, Lisa Buzelli, Mary Kay Gill, Kim Baretta, Johnnie Caldwell, Isabella Macbeth, and Angie Colyer. (Contributions were made by several Dames not present.) Shrimp and Snow Pea Skewers. Pecan Cheese Wafers.

business workshop is designed to inspire, support, educate, and empower women in the hospitality industry. Chapter members provided some of the wines and a variety of creative appetizers, which they helped pass to guests during the Opening Night Cocktail Reception. Renowned speakers for the event included our own Charleston Dames **Carrie Morey** and **Tracey Richardson**; plus **Christa Cotton**, **Lauren Darnell**, and **Emily Shaya** (New Orleans); **Sarah Worley** (Nashville); and **Sam Fore** (Kentucky).

## CHICAGO *Sharon Olson*

Derby, Drinks and Other Delights featuring Spiritless™ and spirited cocktails at the Columbia Yacht Club was a win-win for Chicago Dames and our partner. Dames were treated to an extraordinary tasting experience beginning with their choice of a Spiritless Bellini or the classic Bellini followed by a three-course tasting menu with beverage pairings and a dessert reception that included a choice of their favorite beverage of the evening. Special guest Grande Dame **Bev Shaffer** joined four past presidents of the Chicago Chapter and other Dames and guests for this festive event. The Columbia Yacht Club, one of Chicago's signature event venues, was so impressed that they decided to continue offering Spiritless Cocktails for their members throughout their Derby celebration month.



(L-R): Veronica Hastings, Grande Dame Bev Shaffer, Sharon Olson, and Lindsey Stocks from Spiritless, Toria Emas and Julie Chernoff. (L-R): Chicago Chapter Past Presidents (L) Veronica Hastings and Sharon Olson with Grande Dame Bev Shaffer. Spiritless™ and Spirited versions of Old Fashion, Mint Julep and Goblet of Fire cocktails. Photos: Sharon Olson

## CLEVELAND *Shara Bohach*

Cleveland Dames have been busy—monthly, alternating between business and social meetings at women-owned businesses, and quarterly, making donations to local organizations. We kicked off the year with a wonderful Sunday Brunch at Noble Beast Brewing Co. and delivered more than 50 pounds of nonperishable food and monetary contributions to The Hunger Network. In February, our taste buds tingled as Ramat Wiley of Adun Spice Company shared her story and prepared dishes from her Nigerian heritage using her spices. In March, we hosted a Culinary Treasures Sale Fundraiser at CLE Urban Winery, where members and local chefs donated gently used culinary equipment for sale to the public. The sale was so well attended and successful that the chapter plans to make it an annual



Dames Pat Bennett and Beth Davis-Noragon performing checkout at The Culinary Treasures Sale. Ricotta Cheese made by Cleveland Dames. Photos: Shara Bohach

event. In April, Kandice Marchant of Marchant Manor Cheese taught us to make ricotta, and Kari Moore spoke to us about her healthy and delicious cracker company, Le Cracker. We then delivered bundles of personal care items and monetary donations to The City Mission, an organization devoted to the homeless.

## DALLAS *Heather Kurima*

Spring was a time of reawakening and growth for the Dallas Chapter. Our Dames in the Kitchen cooking classes helped our members and community learn about making pasta with **Jennifer Bajsel** and crafting the perfect cocktails with **Bonnie Wilson**. We are on fire waiting for our upcoming class by **Melissa Tate**. **Cindy Kleckner** led our Table Talk session educating us on Be Heart Strong—a little DASH will do it to help everyone understand Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH). To celebrate International Women's Day, we partnered with Eataly on an event called *Festa della Donna*. Eataly was the perfect venue for a storewide showcase of female talent featured more than 30 female-led tasting stations with bites and drinks from their businesses, live music, a photo booth, and silent auction. We were overjoyed to celebrate with Grande Dame **Lidia Bastianich** and our own Grande Dame **Paula Lambert**. Over \$20,000 was raised for scholarships and philanthropic endeavors of the Dallas Chapter. As spring began to shift to summer, we welcomed 15 new Dames at our Induction Brunch and took applications for the inaugural Renie Steves LDEI Conference Scholarship.



Grand Dames at Festa della Donna. Photo: Tammany Stern

## GREATER MADISON *Linda Eatherton*

We are thrilled to announce that our first full slate of officers has been accepted and ratified to lead this small but mighty group of women in Wisconsin. Please welcome our leadership team: President **Linda Eatherton** (Eatherton Consulting); Vice President, President Elect **Elizabeth Griffith** (Door Creek Orchard); Secretary **Celine Coquard Lenerz** (Wollersheim Winery); Treasurer **Julie Coquard** (Wollersheim Winery); and Past President, Advisor **Nicole Bujewski** (Spensley Farm). We are planning events for the coming year and can't wait to meet everyone in our sister chapters.

## HAWAII *Hayley Matson-Mathes*

The Hawaii Chapter hosted a family-style dinner with San Francisco Dame **Tanya Holland** at Fête, the Honolulu restaurant of **Robynne Mai'i**, James Beard Award winner, 2022 Best Chef: Northwest & Pacific. Chef Holland shared her culinary story and showcased her latest cookbook, *Tanya Holland's California*



Hawaii Dames gather to honor Dame Tanya Holland at Chef Robynne Mai'i's Fête Restaurant. From left to right: Hayley Matson-Mathes, Tanya Holland, Dorothy Colby, Robynne Maii, Clare Bobo, Kai Cowell, Angel Foster, Erin Olivari. Photo: Mike Mathes.



*Soul*, with Hawaii Dames and guests. She was in Hawaii to present a Hawaii Culinary Education Foundation (a 501(c)(3) nonprofit) workshop at the University of Hawaii Maui Culinary program coordinated by HCEF Executive Director **Hayley Matson-Mathes**. The Maui culinary program was supported by the Hawaii LDEI Chapter to encourage, inspire, and expand the students' culinary horizons. Chef Holland demonstrated Brown Sugar Kitchen's famous fried chicken, buttermilk biscuits, grits, and Creole shrimp. The students enjoyed working with her to recreate her dishes and sample the flavors. Chef Holland offered motivational advice and inspiration reflected in the outstanding student evaluations.

## KANSAS CITY *Anne Brockhoff*

Kansas City Dames prioritized making connections in early 2023, with happy hours at **Jill Cockson's** Chartreuse Saloon and **Pam Liberda's** Buck Tui BBQ. The biannual member meeting was hosted by **Shanita McAfee-Bryant** at The Prospect KC, where she offers programs centered on food access, nutrition education, and culinary job training. Dames tested their mettle and raised funds with the Trivia Throw Down—Foodie Style, then co-hosted the fifth annual Grow, Cook, Give fundraiser with Slow Food Kansas City. That event—held at **Louise Meyers'** store, Pryde's Kitchen & Necessities, included shopping, wine, food, and demonstrations and benefitted Kansas City Community Gardens.



Kansas City Dames Benay Shannon, Kristie Roehr Sigler, Cheryl Hartell, and Jennifer Vergara raise a toast to their Greater Des Moines hosts in the two chapters' first exchange weekend. Photo: Chilton Dodson

Grande Dame **Lidia Bastianich** returned to her namesake Kansas City restaurant for an intimate evening of conversation over a menu featuring mlinzi, a toasted pasta from Istria (now part of Croatia) where she spent her childhood. In April, Kansas City Dames hit the road for our first Chapter to Chapter weekend in Iowa. Greater Des Moines Dames showcased their businesses including The Tangerine Food Company, the Dotdash Meredith test kitchen, Peach Tree Brewing Company, Kitchen Collage of Des Moines, and Bubba Restaurant. Many a cocktail was crafted with spirits from Kansas City Dame **Benay Shannon's** Restless Spirits Distilling; participants came away invigorated and inspired.

## LOS ANGELES/ORANGE COUNTY

*Tina Borgatta*

The LA/OC Chapter had a fun-filled and cause-minded spring, starting with a Raise the Bar happy hour organized by Dames **Alison Robbins** and **Peilin Breller**. Held in the atrium at the landmark Five Crowns restaurant in Newport Beach, the evening featured music by DJ Lellie, tasty bites by Five Crowns, and three specialty sips—The Double X with Lynxx Bourbon, The Mixtress with Copali Rum, and the B.F.F. with San Cosme Mezcal, created by uber-talented mixologists from the nonprofit Babes Behind the Bar (Instagram @babesbehindthebar). **Nancy Eisman** organized a tour of the Di-



Dames tasted fresh mozzarella during the DiStefano Cheese tour. Photo: Tina Borgatta.

Stefano Cheese factory, with the brand's namesake, Stefano Bruno, leading the way. (Patriarch and founder Mimo Bruno grew up in the Puglia region of Italy and is credited for bringing burrata cheese to the U.S.) A demo by Stefano ended with a sampling of fresh mozzarella plucked right from the production table. He sent each Dame home with a box of DiStefano's premium cheeses. In April, Chapter President **Tina Borgatta** attended the Careers through Culinary Arts Program (C-CAP) annual scholarship breakfast and presented student Liana Ybarra from Oxnard High School with the chapter's \$1,000 award. Liana will attend Oxnard Community College and study culinary arts. Fun and cause-minded, indeed.

## MINNESOTA *Paula Zuhlsdorf*

The setting: Bourget Wine Company wine tasting. Members were greeted by artisanal wine selections and a warm fire. We enjoyed handmade lasagnas and desserts from Dame **Jo Seddon** before settling into a thoughtful conversation with Annette Peters, owner/founder of Bourget Imports. Q&A was led by **Brenda Langton**. We learned every wine tells a story through its place of origin, time, and producer. Annette has traveled the world to discover some of wine's most unsung heroes, champions of organic viticulture, generational continuity, and those who care about preserving tradition. We heard about her journey from journalist to importer as we sipped through the wine selections. Her slogan "from families not factories" sums up her approach. Annette's goal has been promoting wines that represent beauty, hard work, integrity. She celebrates "brave souls" who dare to retrain their vineyards to cope without chemical inputs so they can learn to build resistance from pests and disease naturally. She recommends we all seek out local independent wine sellers and build a relationship with them. Though today's young generations have been slower to drink wine, Annette remains hopeful the industry will answer the call to stay relevant. She is a true inspiration to women.

## MONTEREY BAY *Rachel Mueller*

Carmel-by-the-Sea Culinary Week, themed The Art of the Plate, featured an evening with Ted Allen on Thursday, June 8, at Sunset Cultural Center, the area's premier performing arts facility. The event got off to a spectacular start with a VIP Reception, which was catered by the Monterey Bay Chapter. Ted is the Emmy® award-winning host of the long-running hit TV show *Chopped*, one of the most successful shows in Food Network history. Dames **Sarda Desmond**, **Wendy Brodie**, **Charlotte Muia**, and **Rachel Mueller** created a variety of bite-size hors d'oeuvres to showcase the best in local food. Dame **Jennifer Evans** of Scheid Vineyards in Carmel provided four of their special wines; **Eileen Topete** and **Cheryle Pisto** assisted with pouring them. Dames **Mary Chamberlin**, **Susan Walkup**, and **Carol Hilburn** passed hors d'oeuvres and talked with guests about the Monterey Chapter's Scholarship Program. The guests were also given a photo op with Ted.



Monterey Dames, Front Row (L-R): Sarda Desmond, Carol Hilburn, Ted Allen, Mary Chamberlin, Rachel Mueller. Back Row (L-R): Eileen Topete, Cheryle Pisto, Charlotte Muia, Wendy Brodie, and Susan Walkup.

## NASHVILLE *Mara Papatheodorou*

Les Dames d'Escoffier Nashville proudly presented its second Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Symposium Series this past February, March, and April, thanks to Dame **Nancy Vienneau's** stellar programming and successful sponsorship drive. Bluewater Music and VEVA Sound, Brown Foreman, Finn Partners, Germantown Pub and Lockeland Table Community Kitchen and Bar all generously sponsored three different cocktail and supper workshops at Yay Yay's, Dame **Charlotte Miller's** terrific restaurant and gathering venue. President **Claire Cowell** introduced each guest speaker. Brigitte Janea Jones, Director of Equitable Partnerships at Belle Meade Historic Site & Winery, examined the history of racism and discrimination in the hospitality industry while certified DEI Thought Leader and Executive Performance Coach Kellie Martin highlighted why inclusivity matters. Dynamic duo Nina Singto and Jeran Williams elaborated on how they blend cultural differences and service responsibilities to create a respectable and enjoyable restaurant environment in the front and back of the house. Many Dames attended the breakfast retirement tribute at Nashville State Community College for **Mary Lou Tate**, one of our original founding members, to celebrate her impressive 17-year career as Assistant Professor of Culinary Arts. Hearty congratulations and best wishes to Mary Lou on this milestone achievement.

## NEW YORK *Karen Tenenbaum*

On February 25, members of Les Dames d'Escoffier New York along with students from ICE attended a soulful discussion with Dames **Wanda Mann**, President of LDNY and Chef **Adrienne Cheatham**, who recounted stories from her new book, *Sunday Best*. We all feasted on several dishes from the book, which were prepared by the student chefs of ICE.

Chapter Dames attended the Food in New York exhibit at the Museum of the City of New York for an engaging exploration of New York City's food history and culture. The event provided an opportunity for passionate food industry professionals to network and discuss their shared love of food and its impact on the city.

On April 3, we attended an exclusive event at the offices of *Food & Wine* magazine. Organized by Dame **Antonia LoPresti Giglio**, several Dames were treated to a tasting of various wines and potato chips led by Ray Isle, Food & Wine's Executive Wine Editor. We enjoyed spirited conversation about the wine and spirits industry and learned that pairing wine is not always straightforward or conventional.



Dame Adrienne Cheatham is interviewed by President Wanda Mann about her book titled *Sunday Best*. Museum of the City of New York—Food of New York exhibit. Photo: Lawrence Tenenbaum. Wine and potato chips tasting. Photo: Francine Kowalsky.

## SAN ANTONIO *Karen Haram*

Dames Dr. **Lana Balvin Frantzen** and master gardener **Susan Johnson** created a garden at Time Dollar, a community-focused center serving residents in a lower-income area of the city. The women planted cucumbers, tomatoes, eggplant, okra, and a variety of peppers and herbs with the help of Green Space Alliance, which paid for the plants. **Chris Goloby** and two of her culinary students also presented a cooking demonstration to Time Dollar clients. Dames **Blanca Aldaco** and **Linda Beck Triesch** with Don Strange of Texas employees organized and erected shelving for additional dry storage at Time Dollar. LDEISA and Don Strange catering donated shelves and storage bins for the project.



Our chapter's annual book event, Word of Mouth, was a big success. A potluck dinner at the event focused on French cuisine as inspired by the book, *The Secret French Recipes of Sophie Valroux*. Highlights of the dinner were Shrimp Gratin, French Carrot Salad, petite salmon sandwiches, meat and cheese trays, crepes, and clafoutis. **Di-Anna Arias** planned the event, **Linda Triesch** hosted and **Kathy Gottsacker** led the book discussion.



Dr. Lana Balvin Frantzen (left) and Susan Johnson at the Time Dollar garden they created. Photo: Dr. Lana Balvin Frantzen. (L) Kathy Gottsacker and Linda Triesch at Word of Mouth. Photo: Karen Haram.

## SAN DIEGO *Carolyn Larsen*

We met in January for a Taffy Pull Class on one of the few dry days this winter. Dame **Carolyn Larsen** hosted Dames for the taffy pull and a potluck at her home. Most of the Dames were taffy virgins, so they listened very carefully. That didn't stop them from getting taffy in their hair, clothes, and everywhere else. It was a fun afternoon and everyone left with bags of taffy to share. Later in January we collected and purchased hundreds of pounds of food for our quarterly food drive, which was launched one year ago. March took Dames to Mujeres Brew House in downtown San Diego to share brews and tacos while hearing the amazing story of the owner who turned her love of beer into a brewery made by and for women. April brought the class All Health Benefits While Cooking with Exotic Fruits and Vegetables taught by Chef **Megan Leppert** and narrated by **Sabrina Falquier Montgrain, M.D.**, who shared the health benefits of the menu. The chapter wants to congratulate Dames **Janet Burgess**, **Pamela Gigante**, and **Mary Trimmins** on their recent retirements. Their collective years in business total 110 in culinary, beverage, and hospitality.

## SAN FRANCISCO *Jodi Chase*

The San Francisco Dames presented an enlightening Table Talk virtual program on New Frontiers in Meat & Dairy: Improving our Food System with Innovative Biotech. Speakers Nicki Briggs of Perfect Day (animal-free dairy), Joanna Bromley from The Better Meat Co. (mycoprotein meats), and Amy Chen of UPSIDE Foods (cultivated chicken) introduced their companies and explained the innovative technologies each employs to produce nutritious protein foods without using animals. Dame **Kara Nielsen**



set the stage by articulating how the companies are part of rapidly expanding trends around sustainability and how these startups are striving to improve what they perceive as a broken food system.

All three companies share an urgent mission to produce food sustainably in order to cut greenhouse gases, reduce pollution, and be kinder to animals. These products may seem far out, but some are already in supermarkets, making this a topic culinary professionals should know about. Any chef or cooking teacher inspired to do their own part to reduce negative impacts on the environment should explore this fast-paced arena and track its progress while also seeking ways to use these alternative proteins and teach consumers about them as well.



UPSIDE Foods was one of three innovative startups featured in the San Francisco Dames' New Frontiers in Meat & Dairy virtual program. Photo: UPSIDE Foods

## SOUTH FLORIDA *Barbara Seelig Beyer*

South Florida Dames have been busy with some wonderful events! **Carole Kotkin** hosted a Zoom meeting with Atlanta Dame **Virginia Willis** who talked her about her recent health journey and another with NY Dame **Grace Young** who shared intimate details



(L) President Ann Stratte and South Florida Dames. Cynthia LeGrand, our hostess at Titia's Tea Room. Marie Charlotte Piro. Tea Co-Chairs Denise Weisberg, Irene Moore, and Karen Escalera. Teaching granddaughters about good manners at a tea! Denise Weisberg with daughters and granddaughters. Lynn's Crema Di Limoncello Cake. Photos: Barbara Seelig Beyer.

of her career and recently becoming A Woman of the Year Honoree by *USA Today*. **Marie Charlotte Piro** hosted a Table Talk on Food Trends as Observed at the Fancy Food Show. **Barbara Seelig Beyer** hosted a Zoom meeting with the founder of Lina's Crema di Limoncello, Lynn Reisigl, who talked about creating Lina's and having a woman-owned business. Lynn and Barbara shared recipes for the Lina Spritz and Lina Colada cocktails, Barbara's Lemon Meatballs from Amalfi, and the Lina Colada Cake. We were also treated to a Master Class on Olive Oil with San Francisco Dame **Nancy Ash** who was visiting South Florida. Nancy discussed proper tasting and what to look for in a quality extra-virgin olive oil. Dames **Irene Moore**, **Denise Courshon**, and **Karen Escalera** hosted a very elegant English tea in Miami at Titia's Tea Room, owned by new Dame **Cynthia LeGrand**. Finally, we held a Silent Culinary Auction online for the first time and brought in our goal of \$5,000.

## WASHINGTON, D.C. *Ellen Kassoff*

More than 60 Dames and guests came out for Waste Not, Want Not, a Green Tables program about the importance of composting and zero-waste cooking. Dames **Ellen Kassoff** and **Lani Furbank** organized the educational afternoon at Ellen's Equinox Restaurant, featuring a cooking demo with Chef Todd Gray of Equinox (Ellen's husband) and a panel of experts from the community. Attendees enjoyed bites and drinks made from ingredients that are usually tossed, and they learned about the various ways to fight food waste by



Swiss Chard & Kale Stem Tempura with Saffron Aioli served at the Waste Not, Want Not event. (L) Ris Lacoste at the Dames Who Dine dinner at her restaurant.

rescuing scraps and composting organic matter. The program was a great success and raised more than \$1,300 for our chapter's grants and scholarships. Dames celebrated at member **Ris Lacoste's** RIS restaurant in honor of her nomination for a James Beard Foundation Award for Outstanding Restaurant. The dinner included Kale and Shaved Brussels Sprout Salad, Mustard and Leek Crusted Salmon, and Lime Bavarian Cheesecake. Dames at the Beach was our first weekend getaway to explore one of the new areas of our expanded D.C. Chapter region. The gathering in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, featured meals at women-owned restaurants as well as an oyster-shucking lesson.



# MEMBER MILESTONES *Dottie Koteski (Philadelphia)*

## ATLANTA

**Toby Bloomberg**, co-executive producer for the documentary about an 82-year-old pastry chef, Marda Stoliar, won several awards. In addition, Oregon Public Broadcasting devoted a full program spot on it. MARDAs GIFT won Best Inspirational Film and Best Female Director from the international Morgana Film Festival.

**Simone Byron**, in conjunction with the Georgia Restaurant Association, managed an innovative regional competition for high school culinary arts students—Georgia ProStart. ProStart is a two-year high school culinary and management education that teaches transferable, real-world skills. Joining Simone, from LDEI Atlanta as judges, were **Shirley Hughes, LeMonica Harkeem**, and **Toby Bloomberg**. [www.thenavigateprogram.org](http://www.thenavigateprogram.org)

**Holly Chute** was a guest on FOX 5 to talk about seasonal fruit and how home cooks can prepare them. Holly is the Executive Chef for Georgia Grown, a Georgia Department of Agriculture program and a champion of Georgia farmers, restaurateurs, and craft food makers. [www.georgiagrown.com](http://www.georgiagrown.com)

**Cynthia Graubart**, James Beard Award winning author, has published her 14th cookbook. *Zucchini Love* celebrates this prolific garden vegetable at every meal of the day. It's her third book in the series along with *Strawberry Love* and *Blueberry Love*. [www.CynthiaGraubart.com](http://www.CynthiaGraubart.com)

**Natalie Keng** was a guest on FOX 5's *Good Day Atlanta* where she celebrated National Meatball Day by demonstrating her recipe for Sweet & Sour Stir-Fry Meatballs. Natalie also



Toby Bloomberg



Simone Byron



Holly Chute



Cynthia Graubart



Natalie Keng

recently published her *Egg Rolls and Sweet Tea* cookbook that incorporates the cuisine from her Asian culture merged with the flavors from her Atlanta hometown. [www.globalhearth.com](http://www.globalhearth.com)

**Mary Moore** was honored with the Georgia Ovarian Cancer Association's Dame Barbara Petit Philanthropy Award for her continued support of the GOCA mission. The award is in memory of LDEI Atlanta founding member **Barbara Petit** whom we lost in 2015 to ovarian cancer. [www.cookswarehouse.com](http://www.cookswarehouse.com)

**Asata Reid** was honored by Lady Locavores with its Everything But The Kitchen Sink award. Asata was acknowledged for her contributions of over a decade of working in various aspects of the culinary arts, from educator to writer to recipe developer. Lady Locavores celebrates the work that women are doing in the local food movement.

**Virginia Willis** made an appearance as one of three James Beard Foundation award-winning chefs competing on the Food Network show, *Alex vs America*, hosted by Alex Guarnaschelli. Virginia's dish was a deconstructed Beef Wellington with Sauce Diable. [www.virginiawillis.com](http://www.virginiawillis.com)

## AUSTIN

**Kendall Antonelli** started the monthly radio show *Eat Good Radio* to highlight how people do good and build community through food. Recent guests included fellow Dames **Sheila Garcia** and **Sara Gibson**, who have each sought to diversify and make more equitable the beer and coffee industries, respectively. [www.mixcloud.com/eatgoodradio/](http://www.mixcloud.com/eatgoodradio/)

**Patricia Bedford** opened her first retail bakery storefront for Suga's Cakery in Pflugerville, Texas, on April 2. Inspired by her late grandmother, Suga, who baked all of the family cakes, Patricia offers scratch-



Mary Moore



Asata Reid



Virginia Willis



Kendall Antonelli

baked cupcakes, cakes, cookies, and other classic desserts made with premium ingredients. [www.sugascakery.com](http://www.sugascakery.com)

**Matti Bills** is expanding a new concept into the Food Hall at The Pearl in San Antonio where they will run a full barbecue program. She continues offering incredible house-cured meats, barbecue + scratch foods at her butcher shop and market, Three Six General in San Marcos, Texas.

**De J Lozada** landed a new partnership for Soul Popped at the Smithsonian's African American History Museum in Washington, D.C., where her popcorn will soon be a regular feature in the gift shop. [www.soulpopped.com](http://www.soulpopped.com)

**Sara Mardanbigi** was named a 2023 Austin Under 40 Awards Finalist in the Food, Events & Hospitality category. Sara is the managing member/co-owner for the lauded Nixta Taqueria in Austin. [www.austinunder40.org/2023-finalists/](http://www.austinunder40.org/2023-finalists/)

**Traci Velebil** passed her WSET Level 3 exam in April. Traci is a member of the team at C.L. Butaud Wines located in Texas.

**Rae Wilson**, founder of Wine for the People, was included in the 2023 VinePair Top 50 list. As member of the LGBTQIA+ community, Rae was recognized for her minimal intervention winemaking, uniquely Texas terroir, environmentally friendly practices, and "passion for her work, [which] is palpable." [www.vinepair.com/the-vinepair-50-2023](http://www.vinepair.com/the-vinepair-50-2023)



Patricia Bedford



Matti Bills



De J Lozada



Sara Mardanbigi



Traci Velebil



Rae Wilson

## BIRMINGHAM

**Stacey Craig** and the Bright Star staff in Bessemer are celebrating being named the Best Alabama Locally Owned Restaurant 2023 by *Southern Living* readers. The Bright Star opened in 1907 as a 25-seat establishment. Currently, it seats 330 and is only a few blocks from where it started. [www.thebrightstar.com](http://www.thebrightstar.com)

**Raquel Ervin** has opened Smoke Bistro at Birmingham's Pizitz Food Hall. Chef Ervin states that the new concept will be an upscale version of traditional soul food with a barbecue flair. [www.eatSmokebistro.com](http://www.eatSmokebistro.com)

**LaCrista Hutchinson** was recognized as US FOODS Gulf States Area Regional Sales Manager of the year for 2022. She began her career with the organization in 2007 as a territory manager, progressing to district sales manager, transitioning to her current role of regional sales manager for the Montgomery market in October 2020. [www.usfoods.com](http://www.usfoods.com)

**Ashley McMakin's** debut cookbook, *Ashley Mac's Kitchen*, is now available. The book contains over 100 recipes including her favorites, present and past. The publisher is 83 Press, which is Hoffman Media's book imprint. [www.ashleymacs.com](http://www.ashleymacs.com)

**Cheryl Slocum** has been named Senior Food Editor at *Food & Wine/Dotdash Meredith*. She was previously at *Allrecipes*, *Country Living*, and *Cooking Light*. She's a James Beard Award winner and former clients include *Martha Stewart Living*, Food Network, *Every Day with Rachel Ray*, *Skinnytaste*, and *Epicurious*. [www.foodandwine.com](http://www.foodandwine.com)

**Pardis Stitt** along with Chef Frank Stitt and the Bottega team celebrated the achievement of being named a finalist for the James Beard Foundation



Stacey Craig



Raquel Ervin



LaCrista Hutchinson



Ashley McMakin



Cheryl Slocum



Pardis Stitt

Award for Outstanding Hospitality. [www.bottegarestaurant.com](http://www.bottegarestaurant.com)

## BOSTON

**Christine Gilchrist Tuttle**, founder and lead designer of Christine Tuttle Design, was featured in the Boston *Globe Sunday Magazine* in March and in *Northshore Home Magazine* in April. The *Globe* article featured a cocktail lounge for a residential project, and the *Northshore Home* project included a kitchen and dining area.

## CHARLESTON

**Ashley Strickland Freeman** is a culinary producer for *Delicious Miss Brown* on the Food Network. The series has been nominated for a Daytime Emmy for outstanding host.

## CHICAGO

**Ina Pinkney** was feted by 60 of Chicago's best chefs for her 80th birthday and as a illustrious fundraiser for Pilot Light and the Green City Market.

**Sharon Olson** celebrated the 35th anniversary of Olson Communications®, the business she founded in 1988, which is the parent company to her research and trend forecasting practices Culinary Visions® and Y-Pulse® [www.olsoncom.com](http://www.olsoncom.com)

## COLORADO

**Holly Arnold Kinney** is owner and proprietress of The Fort, the nationally acclaimed, "truly Colorado" restaurant that celebrates its 60th anniversary this year. The Fort brings back popular recipes from the 19th century, with a twist. On the National Register of Historic Places, it's a full-scale replica of Bent's Fort. [www.thefort.com/celebrating-60-years-at-the-fort/](http://www.thefort.com/celebrating-60-years-at-the-fort/)

## DALLAS

**Liz Baron** and her husband, Jim, owners of Mesa SW Restaurants, Inc., celebrated the 35th anniversary of Blue Mesa Grill in three locations.



Christine Gilchrist Tuttle



Ashley Strickland Freeman



Ina Pinkney



Sharon Olson



Holly Arnold Kinney



Liz Baron

The owners were recognized as one of the 12 Most Popular Restaurants in the Dallas-Fort Worth area by Zagat.

**Jill Bates** is the executive pastry chef helping to open Sugar and Sage Bakery, which recently opened in the University Park area of Dallas in April.

**Amber Fletcher** and **Jin-Ya Huang** were featured speakers at the Mavs Women's Symposium hosted by The Women of Mavs Empowering Network (WOMEN) at the Dallas Arboretum. The event encouraged people to "Be That Diamond" while focusing on four C's: character, compassion, champion, and clarity.

**Jin-Ya Huang** of Break Bread, Break Borders was named as one of the Entrepreneur 100, which honors 100 exemplary female business owners across 11 categories and is sponsored by Chase Ink.

**Rebecca Murphy** joined Dallas College to share her knowledge of wine and the business of wine. She will be teaching Wine Studies and Service.

**Janice Provost** was featured in the March edition of *Edible Dallas & Fort Worth*. Additionally, her photography titled "Captured: Beautiful Strangers" was exhibited at Craighead Green Gallery. On display were photos from her adventures in Paris. They focused on examining common people who spark your desire to know more.

**Jennifer Uygur** and **Fana Yohannes** were included on the James Beard Foundation 2023 restaurant and chef finalists list. Lucia in the Bishop Arts District made the finals for Outstanding Restaurant.

## GREATER DES MOINES

**Lisa LaValle** is co-owner of the Trellis Cafe at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden and recently celebrated its 10th anniversary. Locals and visitors alike have been welcomed to enjoy seasonal lunches, brunches, snacks, and pop-up dinners. The 10th anniversary milestone was



Jill Bates



Jin-Ya Huang



Rebecca Murphy



Janice Provost



Lisa LaValle



celebrated with a party on May 21, 2023. [www.dmbotanicalgarden.com/visit/dine/](http://www.dmbotanicalgarden.com/visit/dine/)

## HAWAII

**Alison Tomisato Alves**, director of marketing for Marriott International, was honored as one of *Hawaii Business Magazine's* 20 for the Next 20. The award celebrates 20 people whose talents, potential, and accomplishments set them apart as emerging leaders of Hawaii into the next two decades.



Alison Tomisato Alves

[www.hawaiibusiness.com/alison-tomisato-alves-marriott-international-20-for-20-2023/](http://www.hawaiibusiness.com/alison-tomisato-alves-marriott-international-20-for-20-2023/)

## LOS ANGELES/ORANGE COUNTY

**Jamie Knee** recently accepted the position of Wine Educator for Jackson Family Wines in California. Additionally, in March she earned her Cava Educator & Ambassador Certification from the Cava D.O. while in Spain, to add to her recent Rioja Wine Educator and Spanish Wine Scholar Certifications.



Jamie Knee

[www.instagram.com/petitewinetraveler](http://www.instagram.com/petitewinetraveler)

## MINNESOTA

**Allison Sheardy** is at the forefront of Minnesota's wine scene and was featured in a metro newspaper by wine aficionado Bill Ward. She's a Level 4 graduate of the Wine & Spirit Education Trust, instructor at Vine Lab Wine & Spirits Academy of Minnesota, and oversees events at the wine club at Rustic Roots Winery.



Allison Sheardy

[www.dmbotanicalgarden.com/visit/dine/](http://www.dmbotanicalgarden.com/visit/dine/)

## NEW ENGLAND

**Tracey Medeiros** released her sixth book, *The Vermont Farm Table Cookbook*, 10th Anniversary Edition. She revised and updated this culinary tome to highlight the dedication of Vermont's farmers, with new recipes, photos, and local farm profiles. It's a love letter to those who work the land and prepare nourishing meals. [www.traceymedeiros.com](http://www.traceymedeiros.com)



Tracey Medeiros

## NEW ORLEANS

**Nina Compton**, James Beard Award winner, opened Nina's Creole Cottage inside Caesars New Orleans Casino in March. The quick-

service concept spotlights the flavors of her St. Lucian and Creole heritage including Fried Chicken and Plantain Waffles, and Shrimp and Grits. Nina's other acclaimed restaurants are Compère Lapin and Bywater American Bistro.

**Chaya Conrad's** Bywater Bakery is also a community hub. Her edible St. Joseph's altar paid homage to the saint and to Sicilian traditions. Chaya broke down the altar on St. Joseph's Day, March 19th, to feed her neighbors while they enjoyed live brass music and a performance by the Mardi Gras Indians. [www.bywaterbakery.com](http://www.bywaterbakery.com)



Nina Compton



## NEW YORK

**Pat Cobe**, a senior editor of *Restaurant Business*, is proud to announce that the magazine's edit team won four Jesse Neal Awards for 2022 coverage of the hospitality industry—the highest honor in B2B journalism. [www.restaurantbusinessonline.com](http://www.restaurantbusinessonline.com)



Pat Cobe

**Marsha Palanci's** first book is available on Amazon. *Tarte Tatin Tales*—part memoir, part cookbook—is a collection of recipes and valuable life lessons spun from memories of an American raised in Europe, educated in Ohio, and nurtured through four decades as a winemaker in the New York City wine industry. [www.tartetatintales.com](http://www.tartetatintales.com)



Marsha Palanci

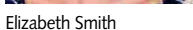
**Karen Tenenbaum** Esq., LL.M., CPA, tax attorney, was featured in the *New York Times Super Lawyer Supplement* as a Top 50 Women Lawyer in the state. Karen was interviewed by the New York Bartender's Guild regarding the IRS and New York State taxes and problems, which is the focus of her practice. [www.litaxattorney.com](http://www.litaxattorney.com)



Karen Tenenbaum

## SACRAMENTO

**Elizabeth Smith** was a judge at the annual Winelovers Wine Awards in Budapest, Hungary on July 7-9. Elizabeth was the only judge from the United States. The competition is one of the most influential



Elizabeth Smith

in Central and Eastern Europe and includes masterclasses, tastings, and winery visits. [www.wineloverswineawards.com](http://www.wineloverswineawards.com)

## SAN ANTONIO

**Denise Mazal** closed her Little Gretel restaurant in Boerne after 15 years. She opened the first business establishment on River Road, was featured in *Cook's Country*, duplicated the final dinner on the Titanic, and competed in Beat Bobby Flay. Denise is a member of Best Chefs America and named Best Businesswoman by the Greater Boerne Chamber of Commerce.



Denise Mazal

## SAN FRANCISCO

**Maryam Ahmed** founded and leads Maryam + Company, which is now a B Corporation Certified business. This achievement allows Maryam + Company to further its commitment to sustainability and social responsibility, while infusing these practices into its client and community work within the wine industry and crossed industries.



Maryam Ahmed

**Kimberly Noelle Charles's** firm Charles Communications Associates (CCA), a leading San Francisco wine marketing agency, marks its 20th anniversary. Clients span from Japan, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and South America to the U.S. In 2021, Meininger's International named CCA one of the top 10 wine and spirits PR companies in the U.S. [www.charlescomm.com](http://www.charlescomm.com)



Kimberly Noelle Charles

**Marcia Gagliardi**, table hopper/founder/publisher, who after 17 years of assiduously and enthusiastically covering the San Francisco Bay Area dining scene launched her groundbreaking, insider newsletter and column in February, which includes major upgrades and new content. [www.tablehopper.com](http://www.tablehopper.com)



Marcia Gagliardi

**Jennifer Newens**, a former cookbook editor and publisher, has signed on with Martin Literary Management as a senior literary manager to help cookbook authors shape pitches and find publishers for their work. [www.jennnewens.com](http://www.jennnewens.com)



Jennifer Newens

## SEATTLE

**Kathy Casey** was awarded the 2023 Innovator of The Year award at VIBE, the hospitality industries premier on-premises beverage conference.



Kathy Casey

## ST. LOUIS

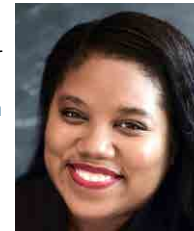
**Connie Diekman**, M.Ed., RD co-authored an article on "Misinformation and Disinformation in Food Science and Nutrition: Impact on Practice" that was published in the January issue of *The Journal of Nutrition*. [www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022316622131020](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022316622131020)



Connie Diekman

## WASHINGTON, D.C.

**Nancy Baggett**, author of *The Art of Cooking with Lavender*, received the prestigious LIFT award at the U.S Lavender Growers' National Conference in January. The award recognizes creativity, vision, and groundbreaking work that inspires others and contributes to advancing the American lavender industry. Nancy is only the sixth winner of the award. [www.nancyslavenderplace.com](http://www.nancyslavenderplace.com)



Nancy Baggett

**Mary Blackford** and **Erinn Tucker-Oluwole** were honored by the *Washington Business Journal* with a Diversity in Business Award. The awards celebrate diversity and inclusion in the workforce and honor inspiring leaders of color.



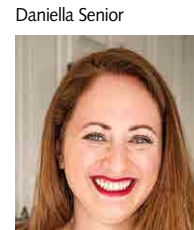
Mary Blackford

**Amy Brandwein** and **Daniella Senior** were named to the Department of State's American Culinary Corps, a network of more than 80 of the United States' most influential chefs and culinary professionals.



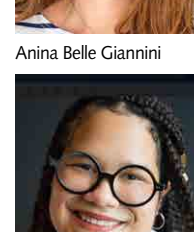
Amy Brandwein

**Beverly Bates Coakley** graduated summa cum laude in April with a BBA in Food Service Management from The Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. This achievement was accomplished along with over 30 years of work in the restaurant and hospitality industry.



Beverly Bates Coakley

**Anina Belle Giannini**, author of the popular blog, *Le Chef's Wife*, appeared on *The Today Show* with her husband Sebastien Giannini, making French onion soup and dark chocolate lava cakes.



Anina Belle Giannini

**Ris Lacoste** was named as the recipient of the 2023 Duke Zeibert Capital Achievement Award by the Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington. The award is named in honor of legendary Washington restaurateur Duke Zeibert.



Ris Lacoste

**Paola Velez** made the Food Network's Hot List of rising stars to watch in 2023. Paola, a pastry chef and social justice activist, was one of only nine culinary celebrants to make the cut.



Paola Velez

# Les Dames d'Escoffier International Quarterly

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

DEADLINES Fall Issue 2023 - AUGUST 15, 2023

### MEMBER MILESTONES

(Editor, Dottie Koteski)

To submit your milestone, go to this link:

<http://link.ldei.org/ldei-member-milestones> For any questions or issues, email the editor at [MemberMilestones@ldei.org](mailto:MemberMilestones@ldei.org).

Include:

- CHAPTER
- DAME'S NAME
- Maximum 50 words for each Dame about personal honors or accomplishments, but not about new product introductions or other promotions. Please include a website URL, if applicable. [Press releases](#) and [cookbook covers](#) are NOT accepted.

PHOTO: You may submit a high resolution quality headshot to accompany your news (see below), and agree to the photo permissions questions for the photo. *Note: Due to space constraints, only two Member Milestones will be published per Dame per year.*

### CHAPTER PROGRAMS

(Editor, Nichole Bendele)

To submit your chapter program, go to this link: <http://link.ldei.org/ldei-chapter-programs> Up to 200 words about chapter events [that have already occurred](#). For any questions or issues, email the editor at [ChapterPrograms@ldei.org](mailto:ChapterPrograms@ldei.org).

Include:

- CHAPTER
- SUBMITTER'S NAME
- Maximum 200 words for each chapter.
- Captions for all photos submitted. Photos without captions will not be used.

Submissions that exceed 200 words will be edited to comply. [Press releases](#) are not accepted. We regret we don't have space to print full menus but menu items can be included in the copy. *Note: "Chapter Programs" and "Member Milestones" may be dispersed through LDEI social-media channels, as well as in print and online.*

### PHOTOGRAPHY/IMAGES

- Electronic images must be properly focused and in color with a minimum resolution of 300 dpi (TIFF or JPEG).
- Cell phone photos are acceptable if they meet requirements.
- Do not send photos taken off the Internet or embedded with text in Word files or PDF files.
- Include photo credits, if required.
- A maximum of three photos can be submitted per chapter.
- ALL PHOTOGRAPHS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY CAPTIONS OR THEY WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED.

LDEI regrets that we cannot include lengthy profiles of individual Dames due to space limitations. Submit Dames' accomplishments to "Member Milestones" or to LDEI's Closed Group on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/218435184886471/>

*Appearing in person or online at an LDEI-sponsored event grants LDEI full rights to use any resulting photography images or video, and any reproductions or adaptations for the Quarterly, social media, PR, or other purposes to help achieve the organization's aims.*

### UPCOMING in the fall issue

- Meet LDEI's 2023 Legacy Award Winners.
- Dame Nina Mukerjee Furstenuau receives the 2023 Woman of Purpose Award.
- Celebrate Jewish cuisine and culture: take a "str-eats" tour with local Dames.





# All "Butter Roads" Lead to Cork

BY SUSAN FULLER SLACK  
(CHARLESTON)

Several attendees of LDE London's Edible Cork visited the Cork Butter Museum in the Shandon district, once a center of international trade. We saw displays of traditional butter-making equipment and memorabilia, exhibits on dairy cattle farming and Cork's Butter Exchange, and a video overview of butter and its impact on the economy of the Emerald Isle.

The museum's butter trail led us from ancient peat bogs to the commercial success of Kerrygold (Ornua Co-operative Limited), Ireland's most famous butter brand.

One of the most fascinating artifacts was a mound of hardened, waxy butter in a carved, tree-trunk container that had been buried in a peat bog for 1,000 years. Archeologists say the practice has occurred since the Early Bronze Age; a ritual of ancient farming communities. Bog butter might smell faintly like dairy butter, or overly ripe cheese, or just plain offensive, depending on its age. Those who venture a nibble use descriptors like rancid, acidic, and worse. Definitely, it's an acquired taste! Bogs are created by decayed plants in waterlogged areas with high rainfall. The cool, anaerobic, highly acidic environment has remarkable preservation properties.

Since prehistoric times, dairy cows grazed the fertile, rolling pasturelands of the Golden Vale, an area of natural beauty that includes North Cork. Early medieval legal records mention butter's value as currency. Cattle raids were a "social institution" for the early Irish. "If the *milch* cow was the measure of everything, then the cattle raid was the measure of a warrior," archaeologist Dr. Colin Rynne explained. Ireland's greatest epic tales are often based on cattle raids.

An outdoor butter market started in 1730 but moved inside when the Cork Butter Exchange opened in 1769, which eventually became the largest butter export market in the world. A strict system of quality control was enforced by a "Committee of Butter Merchants." Cork

harbor—second largest, natural harbor in the world—linked the Golden Vale with the Atlantic trade. Within one generation, Irish butter went from a cottage industry to a global business.

Early 18th century farmers carried salted butter to market by horseback or cart along a network of roads and tracts called the "Butter Roads," which mainly ran from County Kerry and West Cork to Cork City. The long, arduous journey could take up to one week. These roads helped establish the Cork Butter Exchange, but the need for long-distance transport diminished when local creameries organized a system of cooperatives. That, plus competitive prices and industrialization in Europe, brought the Butter Exchange to a close in 1924.

The Cork Butter Exchange, where the museum is located, had a facelift 75 years earlier when Doric columns and a neo-classical portico were added to the front entrance. The Exchange complex of buildings included the adjacent circular Firkin Crane where the butter was weighed and firkins (hardwood casks for carrying butter) were cleaned. Firkin Crane became a margarine factory; now it's home to the Cork City Ballet. The building marks the ancient sites of the ringfort of Sean Dun and 12th century Shandon Castle.

It's easy to understand Ireland's passion for its high-quality dairy products. The breakfast menu at Ballymaloe House Hotel includes organic dairy products from Dame **Darina Allen** Jersey cows, a favorite breed of butter and cheese makers. We were offered cheese omelets; buttermilk crepes; oatmeal porridge with cream; homemade yoghurt with seasonal, poached fruits; and creamy, fresh butter for spreading on soda breads, scones, and flapjacks. We asked Darina about a particular soda bread with raisins. She said it was called Spotted Dog—a slightly sweeter, richer variation with dried fruit and an optional egg.

The good news about Ireland's remarkable butter is that it's being produced by Kerrygold—one of LDEI's valued Partners! It comes from the cream-rich milk of grass-fed Irish cows; the natural, golden color is from beta carotene in the fresh grass. Dames love Kerrygold Irish cheese and butter—now the second-highest selling butter in the U.S.



Global Culinary Initiative



Above: The Cork Butter Exchange. Belinda Smith-Sullivan and Patty Erd visit The Butter Museum. Examples of traditional dash churns. L-R: Rosemarie Barber, Patricia and David Gelles, and Dottie Koteski view the museum exhibits. Below: A market in Middleton, County Cork, stocks salted Kerrygold butter. A tempting slice of soda bread with butter at Ballymaloe. In some areas this bread is called Railway Cake. Irish butter for brown bread. Photos: Susan Slack



ANN ARBOR  
ATLANTA  
AUSTIN  
BIRMINGHAM  
BOSTON  
BRITISH COLUMBIA  
CHARLESTON  
CHICAGO  
CLEVELAND/  
NORTHEAST OHIO  
COLORADO  
DALLAS  
FRANCE  
GREATER  
DES MOINES  
GREATER MADISON  
HAWAII  
HOUSTON  
KANSAS CITY  
KENTUCKY  
LONDON  
LOS ANGELES/  
ORANGE COUNTY  
MEXICO

MINNESOTA  
MONTEREY BAY  
NASHVILLE  
NEW ENGLAND  
NEW ORLEANS  
NEW YORK  
NORTH CAROLINA  
ONTARIO  
PALM SPRINGS  
PHILADELPHIA  
PHOENIX  
PORTLAND  
SACRAMENTO  
SAN ANTONIO  
SAN DIEGO  
SAN FRANCISCO  
SAVANNAH/  
COASTAL GEORGIA  
SEATTLE  
SONOMA  
SOUTH FLORIDA  
ST. LOUIS  
TUSCANY  
WASHINGTON, D.C.



Les Dames d'Escoffier

INTERNATIONAL

P.O. Box 4961  
Louisville, KY 40204

PRESORTED  
FIRST CLASS  
U S POSTAGE  
PAID  
LOUISVILLE KY  
PERMIT #1051



## Spirit of Adventure: Traveling Dames

