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Les Dames d'Escoffier International Names Seven Distinguished Leaders as 2026 Ambassadors

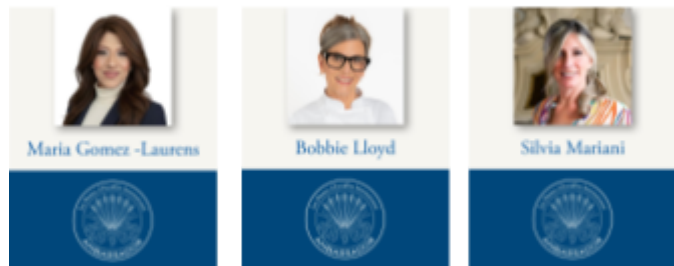
New Ambassador Program Launches as LDEI Marks 50 Years of Advancing Women in Food, Beverage, and Hospitality

NEW YORK, NY — [May 26, 2026] — Les Dames d'Escoffier International (LDEI), the global organization dedicated to advancing and supporting women leaders in food, beverage, and hospitality, today **announces the inaugural class of LDEI Ambassadors**, seven distinguished members who will serve as visible advocates for the organization over the next six months.

Named at LDEI's Annual Conference in Las Vegas, the 2026 Ambassadors represent the breadth and depth of the organization's global network, spanning winemaking, culinary arts, cookbook authorship, hotel and venue expertise, culinary education, food entrepreneurship, and international business. Together, they bring decades of individual achievement and a shared commitment to lifting the next generation of women in the industry.

The Ambassador Program is a new LDEI initiative that activates the organization's most distinguished members as storytellers, connectors, and champions who will use their platforms and networks to grow LDEI's reach, attract new members and partners, and spotlight the organization's impact through scholarships, grants, and mentorship.

"Les Dames has always been powered by the generosity of women who show up for each other," said Marilyn Freundlich, President, Les Dames d'Escoffier International. "These women have already built extraordinary careers, and they are choosing to invest their



time, visibility, and networks in the mission of this organization. That means everything."

The 2026 LDEI Ambassadors

- **Carolyn Wente**, 4th Generation Winegrower and Chairman Emeritus of the Board, recipient of the LDEI Grande Dame Award, and co-founder and member of the San Francisco Chapter
- **Bobbie Lloyd**, CEO of Magnolia Bakery and member of the New York Chapter
- **Maria Gomez-Laurens**, Hotels and Venue Sourcing Expert at HelmsBriscoe, former President of the San Diego Chapter, and LDEI International President 2015–2016
- **Hayley Matson-Mathes**, Executive Director of the Hawaii Culinary Education Foundation, recipient of the 2026 LDEI Woman of Purpose Award, and member of the Hawaii Chapter
- **Tiffany Derry**, Founder of Tiffany Derry Concepts and co-founder of T2D Concepts, and member of the Dallas Chapter
- **Silvia Mariani**, Founder and CEO of Making Business Happen Italy and Making Business Happen USA, and current President of the Tuscan Italian Chapter
- **Virginia Willis**, James Beard Award-winning cookbook author and member of the Atlanta Chapter

Ambassadors will share their personal LDEI stories through social media and media engagements, represent the organization at events and industry gatherings, and help build bridges to future members, partners, and sponsors.

"I am deeply honored to serve as an Ambassador for LDEI. As Owner, Chief Brand Officer, and Chief Baking Officer of Magnolia Bakery, I believe that LDEI exemplifies all that I strive to do at Magnolia—to provide opportunities to women in the culinary space by fostering community, supporting future leaders, and celebrating the craft that connects us all. I am proud to amplify our shared mission."

Bobbie Lloyd, CEO, Magnolia Bakery

"Les Dames d'Escoffier has been one of the most meaningful journeys of my life, taking me from member, to leader, to founder, to International President, and now Ambassador. I accepted this role because I believe deeply in our mission, the power of mentorship, and the extraordinary impact we make when women support one another. Carol Brock built a remarkable bridge connecting women across generations, disciplines, and cultures. As Ambassadors, it is our responsibility to reinforce and expand that bridge."

Maria Gomez-Laurens, Hotels and Venue Sourcing Expert, HelmsBriscoe

For more information about the LDEI Ambassadors Program or to request an interview with an Ambassador, visit www.ldei.org or contact madeleine@proof-pr.com.

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About Les Dames d'Escoffier International

Les Dames d'Escoffier International (LDEI) is a global organization of women leaders in the food, beverage and hospitality industries, advancing women through education, mentorship and philanthropy. Founded in 1985, LDEI includes more than 2,600 members across 40+ chapters in North America and Europe.

Each year, LDEI chapters collectively invest more than \$750,000 in scholarships, grants and community initiatives supporting women at all stages of their careers. To date, the organization has contributed more than \$10 million to educational and philanthropic efforts.

For more information, visit www.ldei.org and follow LDEI on Instagram (@lesdamesintl) and Facebook (@LDEIdamesdescoffier).

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