



Les Dames d'Escoffier
INTERNATIONAL



Founded in 2013

Ideibirmingham.org

Fall 2018

President's Note

Dear Dames,

As summer ends and fall begins, let's consider our goals for the future and our chapter accomplishments. Our chapter's goals are clear and simple:

1. Continue working on our processes for being a strong and vibrant chapter of philanthropic professionals, mentoring the women of the food, beverage, and hospitality community.
2. We will encourage EACH of our members to participate in ways that best work for her at this moment in her career and based on her commitment to LDEI Birmingham.
3. We will host an international conference in Birmingham. It will be a huge undertaking and will require all of you to make it happen.

We still have much to accomplish! But our foundation is strengthening, thanks to the hard work of our committees, board members, and YOU.

This year all of our scholarships were delivered and graciously accepted. We look forward to increasing our dollar commitment and base even more in 2019. Special thanks to Rosemary Dallam,

continued on page 2, see Letter

Planning for Southern Soirée fundraiser is in full swing



This year's event will be held at Jones Valley Teaching Farm again. Photo by Henny Liu Mitchell.

By Jan Walsh

Dames, it's time to contribute, get sponsors, share on social media, and sell tickets for our annual fundraiser, Southern Soirée. The sunset dinner will be held on Sunday, October 7, at Jones Valley Teaching Farm. The proceeds go directly to our grant and scholarship fund.

The menu, developed by Dames Pardis Stitt, Kay Reed, and Kathy Mezrano, is based on recipes from our organization's namesake,

August Escoffier. Each dish is being reinterpreted and prepared by one of our members (see page 3). Steva Casey, a bartender at The Atomic Lounge, developed a signature cocktail called Yesterday's Joy exclusively for our fundraiser. She will be there to serve it.

This year's fundraising goal is \$40,000, and some of our dames have already gotten sponsors and committed their own businesses

continued on page 3, see Fundraiser

LDEI to sponsor film at Sidewalk Film Fest

By Leigh Sloss-Corra

At the upcoming 20th Annual Sidewalk Film Festival, August 20-26, LDEI's Birmingham chapter will be sponsoring a beautiful and thrilling documentary, *Michelin Stars: Tales From The Kitchen*. As described on imdb, this film "goes under the surface and offers an in-depth, honest and relevant view into the world and every day of Michelin chefs and restaurants...telling tales from...culinary temples as well as digging into the greatness and flaws of Guide Michelin."

LDEI Birmingham Dames are thrilled to be introducing this fascinating documentary, and sharing complimentary small bites



Dames at last year's LDEI Birmingham-sponsored film handed out treats and shared the mission of our chapter with attendees.

to attendees. The film will screened at the historic Lyric Theater, Saturday, 8/25 at 10am. Join us there! To purchase festival tickets, visit www.sidewalkfest.com. To view a trailer of the movie, go to this web

address: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCAT4GLyV8I>

This is the second year that LDEI Birmingham has sponsored a food-related screening at the Sidewalk Film Festival.

Letter, continued from page 1

Anne Cain, and Martha Johnston for all their help. It was a great year for our outreach and scholarship committees and our chapter.

Special thanks to Rachel West and Ashley Tarver for working on updating our chapter's website. Hopefully, all of you were able to get your updated bio and photo to Rachel or Ashley so that we have the most current information possible. If you do have any upcoming changes with your contact information, please let Rachel West [rachelqwest@aol.com] and Brooke Bell [bbell@hoffmanmedia.com] know. Also contact the LDEI office at info@ldei.org, with any new changes you may have.

Our annual meeting will be held on August 19, at 3 p.m., at the Emmet O'Neal Library in Mountain Brook. This is a mandatory meeting. We will vote on all of our awesome new recruits for membership, our new officers for 2019 [President, VP Membership, and Secretary], and bylaws changes. Following this, our new members will be contacted and assigned to specific committees based on their strengths, talents, and interests.

Southern Soirée, our fundraising event, will be Sunday, October 7, from 4:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. at Jones Valley Teaching Farm. Our committee, led by Kathy Mezrano, has been diligently working on organizing one of the best fundraisers yet. There is still time left to get out

there to bring in more donations that will fund our 2019 scholarships and initiatives. Please contact Martha Johnston [marthajohnston@bellsouth.net] if you have questions or a donation.

Please make plans to attend our International Conference in Seattle, October 11-14! Just go to this link: <http://www.ldei.org> to reserve your hotel room and register for the conference. It gets pretty lonely going alone as I have done for the past couple of years. Please do it today!

Be sure to check our newsletter's calendar to make sure you don't miss out on any upcoming events. I look forward to seeing each of you soon.

Best always,
Becky

Fundraiser, continued from page 1

to contribute. Sysco Central Alabama will sponsor at the Jeroboam Level: \$5,000. We've got several sponsors at the Bottle Level of \$1,000: El ZunZún, Urban Cookhouse, and Montgomery Environmental. Birmingham-Restaurants.com will sponsor at the Split Level: \$500. The Alabama Cattlemen's Association and B-Metro will do a trade sponsorship.

The fundraiser publicity committee has been working to secure coverage in a variety of local publications and websites and will share those links with our members via email as they become available. They will also be taking over our social media accounts until the event, highlighting our scholarship and grant recipients, our sponsors, and offering up behind-the-scenes highlights as we plan this year's fundraiser. If you have any images that would be appropriate, please send them to Ashley Tarver, who is heading up the fundraiser's social media campaign.

Please share Les Dames Birmingham's Facebook and Instagram posts regarding the event. And invite your family, friends, and followers on social media to join us. The link to buy tickets is [AccelEvents.com/events/southernsoiree](https://www.accelevents.com/events/southernsoiree). Please include the link in your shared posts. And if you have a Twitter account, LinkedIn account, or other social media, please share there as well. Instagram is the only social media where we cannot hot link to ticket cart, but it is in our bio there.

Southern Soirée Menu

Signature Cocktail

Yesterday's Joy
Cathead Vodka, manzanilla sherry, fig syrup, and lemon juice with fresh basil for garnish
created exclusively for this event by Steva Casey, a bartender at The Atomic Lounge

Hors d'oeuvres

anchovy butter on artisan rye bread, cheese (beurre d'anchois sur pain de seigle artisanal, fromage)
butter prepared by Kay Reed of Iz Weddings & Events

cornichons, pickled okra and other vegetables with whole-grain moutarde
prepared by Deborah Stone of Stone Hollow Farm

cold soup with leeks and potatoes (soupe aux poireaux et pommes de terre)
prepared by Mary Grace Viado of Village Tavern

Dinner

beef bourguignon with mushrooms (boeuf bourguignon avec champignons)
prepared by Kathy Mezrano of Kathy G & Co.

rice pilaf
prepared by Carey Thomasson of DINNER.

Provençale-style beans (fèves à la provençale)
prepared by Kay Reed of Iz Weddings & Events

cucumber and pimiento salad (concombres et pimentos en salade)
prepared by Ashley McMakin of Ashley Mac's

banana pudding with homemade vanilla wafers (pouding diplomate aux fruits)
prepared by Kay Reed of Iz Weddings & Events

In addition to helping us secure sponsors, getting donations, and encouraging people to buy tickets for the event, we will also need dames to volunteer to work the

at the event at various points throughout the day, including at the event itself. Please help us in making Southern Soirée 2018 a smashing success!

Dames take over Pepper Place again in Sept.

By Leigh Sloss-Corra

This fall, the Market at Pepper Place will team up with Les Dames d'Escoffier Birmingham Chapter for the second annual Les Dames Market Takeover. This month-long spotlight on the top women in food in Birmingham will take place throughout September. Each week a different dame will show how to make a simple and fresh seasonal recipe, share free samples with the audience, and offer information about the chapter's mission, community outreach, and upcoming fundraiser. The chef demos are held rain or shine on 29th Street, and begin promptly every Saturday at 9 a.m.

Kicking off the LDEI Market Takeover on September 1, will be Chef Brittany Garrigus of Satterfield's Restaurant in Cahaba Heights. September 9, the chefs will be culinary educator Sheron Goldstein and Rebel Negley, formerly of Color Code Cookies. September 15, Samford University culinary instructors and dietitians Pat Terry and Jessica Ivey will host. September 22, the masterful Kathy G. Mezrano of Kathy G. & Co. will be featured. And the final Saturday, September 29, for the first time at Pepper Place, Executive Chef Mary Grace Viado of Village Tavern will demo something fresh and delicious. Assisting the Dames each week will be the proud recipients of this year's culinary scholarship awards.

The Market at Pepper Place, in the heart of Lakeview, was founded in 2000, and at that time struggled to find any local female chefs to host the weekly cooking demonstration. The Pepper Place team is thrilled to



Dames will be taking over the demos at the Market at Pepper Place for the entire month of September. Please come out to support our members! The demos start at 9 a.m.



see the growing number of women dominating the food scene in Birmingham, and excited to share their accomplishments with the help of Les Dames d'Escoffier for the month of September.

The Market at Pepper Place is a certified Alabama farmers market and the largest producers' market in the state, with over 350,000 visitors annually. It hosts over 100 tents

year-round, every Saturday, rain or shine, with Alabama farmers, food vendors, crafters and artisans, live music, cooking demonstrations and activities for the whole family. A Zyp bike station is nearby, MAX bus service is available and on street parking is free. An updated list of market vendors and more information is available at pepperplacemarket.com.

Chapter to vote on officers and new members at annual business meeting

By Martha Johnston

The Nominating Committee is pleased to put forward the following slate of officers for LDEI Birmingham Chapter. The slate, approved by the Board of Directors at the July 23, board meeting, will be voted on by members at our annual business meeting on Sunday, August 19.

- President: Susan Swagler
- Vice President/Membership: Leigh Sloss-Corra
- Secretary: Rachel Q. West

Susan Swagler has been involved with Birmingham's chapter of LDEI since before it was even founded—when it was just a hopeful idea. As

the first secretary of this organization, she worked alongside Angela, Becky, and Pardis to get it properly established. Susan believes in the possibilities of our organization and feels strongly we are on the right path to achieve our goals. "I want to keep us on that path, and will work hard to do so," she said. Her experience leading several organizations—from her child's school PTO to her city's Planning Commission—will serve her well. Susan says, if elected, she will lead with compassion, integrity, and fairness.

Leigh Sloss-Corra has been actively involved in the newsletter committee, produced two promotional videos for the Birmingham chapter, helped build relationships and promotion opportunities with other organizations (Sidewalk Film Fes-

tival, Momentum Women Leaders, the Market at Pepper Place) in order to increase LDEI awareness in the community, increase special event ticket sales, and attract new members. In addition she is working with the publicity committee for the annual fundraiser and assisted with fundraising opportunities and contacts. Leigh says that since she became a member, she has been continually impressed with and inspired by the caliber of the members and programming. Leigh added it compelled her to do more to help advance its efforts and potential impact in Birmingham. As a female professional in a city becoming known for food, she is excited by the opportunity to raise awareness of this important organization and enlist more outstanding women to join the cause.

Rachel Q. West has been a member of the LDEI Birmingham chapter since its inception. In the early days, she says she couldn't be as active as she would have liked (she gave birth to her first child a month after the chapter was founded and had another child in 2015), but she has always believed in the mission of this organization: to help deserving women with a passion for food realize their dreams and meet their goals through mentorship and financial assistance. Since joining



the newsletter committee, she has played a big part in revamping the look of our chapter newsletter. The experience, she says, helped her to see how she could make an impact in our chapter and help us move forward. That has now extended into working on our fundraiser for the past two years. Rachel says she has ideas and initiative, both of which she's willing to apply to the role of secretary in particular and the board in general. "If elected, I have no doubt that I can make a positive contribution and help our chapter get better and better with each passing year," she adds.

New member nominees:

- Barbara Gaines: owner, Happy Event
- Andrea Griffith: executive chef, Pursell Farms
- Rebel Negley: former general manager, Color Code Cookies, LLC
- Kate Nicholson: recipe editor, Meredith Corporation
- Rosie Pihakis: director of marketing, Jim 'N Nick's BBQ
- Geri-Martha O'Hara: owner, Big Spoon Creamery
- Cheryl Slocum: food content creator
- Kathryn Strickland: executive director, Food Bank of Central Alabama
- Rebecca Williamson: owner and creator, Homestead Fines



Getting to Know Dame Mary Grace Viado

By Leigh Sloss-Corra

Upon first meeting Dame Mary Grace Viado, with her gracious and modest demeanor, one might not suspect that she is an international culinary powerhouse. Digging a little deeper, however, reveals she may actually be one of the most accomplished female chefs in Alabama. The recipient of countless culinary scholarships, including ones from the James Beard Foundation, and the CIA, Mary Grace staged in many of the top restaurants in New York City and hotels across the United States before becoming corporate executive chef of Village Tavern in 2002. Since then, she has established and maintained, for their 11 locations around the country and abroad, outstanding menus and beverage programs with exemplary service and staff training. As a female leader in a male-dominated industry, her success has been remarkable. In a recent interview, this veteran chef shared a bit of her life story, how she became interested in cooking, how she developed her skills, and what she's doing now.

Tell us about your background and how you got started.

I was born in Manila, in the Philippines. My family is still there. My mother inspired my love of food and entertaining. The Philippines has very traditional culture. Women go to school for home economics and men are the breadwinners. My mom was a traditional stay-at-home mom. I saw her cooking every day. Our house was the gathering place for all our family and friends, because she was a great



Dame Mary Grace Viado has been the corporate executive chef for Village Tavern since 2002, overseeing all 11 locations.

cook and a great hostess. So I decided when I grew up, I wanted to be a chef and cook like her. When I reached college age, I confessed this dream to my dad. He was not happy. He said, 'There's no money in it! You need to become an accountant, like me!' My dad loved numbers, but I loved cooking more. As a compromise, I majored in Hotel and Restaurant Administration, which had a little of both.

When I was nearing graduation, I started sending resumes out everywhere. As it turned out, the TGIFridays Group was growing in the Philippines. If they hired you there, they'd send you to the U.S. to train. I saw a generic want ad in the newspaper and responded to it. To my surprise, even though I had no management experience, they hired me right away, before I even graduated! I told my dad I had a contract and they were sending me to Miami

to train. He was skeptical, but it ended up being a great decision for me. I was 20 when I graduated from the University of the Philippines and immediately was made assistant kitchen manager, even though I had limited training and experience. I did my best, worked hard, and was corporate chef by the time I was 23. It was scary, of course, but I knew that opportunity only knocks once. You must grab it! That's what I did.

Were you successful right away? How did you get more experience and training?

Of course I had failures, but I refused to get discouraged. My employer, Bistro Holdings Group, which owns TGIFridays, sent me to the Culinary Institute of America, in Hyde Park, NY, the "Harvard of restaurant training," to help me advance. While I was a student there,

I set goals for myself. I figured, as long as I'm here, I need to stage at as many top restaurants as will take me. I had dreamt of these places, and read about them in magazines. So I started writing letters to them, asking for a chance to stage. People said I was crazy to try to get into such fine and fancy places, but I ignored them. I studied hard during the week and worked all night doing stages in New York on weekends. I hardly slept. It was an amazing experience. I trained in many of the best-known New York establishments: Restaurant Daniel, Aquavit, Le Cirque 2000, Aureole, Payard Patisserie and Bistro, Café des Artistes and Le Bernadin. I worked in kitchens where everyone was serious and focused all the time, but the chefs were always very nice to me. Their involvement was impressive. They'd just weave me in, and I'd observe and assist wherever I was needed. It was incredible to see. Nothing really terrible ever happened to me, except in Restaurant Daniel, I broke a 3-tired silver platter, which fell to the floor. That was terrible. I got yelled at, but it was in French, so thankfully I didn't understand what they said! Eventually I asked Bistro Holdings for a 2-year sabbatical so I could pursue my culinary degree at the CIA. After graduation I got hired by the Four Seasons in New York and Atlanta. Then Village Tavern hired me, sponsored me, and helped me get through the immigration process and realize my American Dream. I started working for Village Tavern in 2002 and have been with them ever since.



Viado says training is a big part of her job at Village Tavern. "I try to elevate their skill level, teach them high standards, and to respect the brand," she said. "In my experience, everything starts with good training. There's a limited talent pool in this area, so it's up to me to turn new hires into real food professionals." Photo by Beau Gustafson.

Tell us about what you do at Village Tavern. Any secrets to your management style?

I love my job at Village Tavern. It's always challenging. A big part of it is training employees. I try to elevate their skill level, teach them high standards, and to respect the brand. A lot of young people getting into food would like to go straight to work for Chef Frank Stitt, but those opportunities are limited and not everyone realizes how hard it is to get them. In my experience, everything starts with good training. There's a limited talent pool in this area, so it's up to me to turn new hires into real food professionals. Here's what I do: I let them stage first. It's not fair to hire people and not train them properly. Then we do orientation, and explain our culture and the training process. People need to understand a day in the life of a Village Tavern

kitchen. It's about achieving consistency in all locations. I tell our employees, "If it's not right, throw it out!"

Of course even with solid training, it's hard to keep staff. It's not usually work that causes the fall off, but personal issues. This is a people business, and I understand that. In a lot of restaurants there are yelling and negative reinforcement and insults. I challenge myself every day to do my best for the people I work for and with. I try to keep the work environment fun and challenging. I encourage every employee to always make a positive difference for the team. People want to be treated well, with respect and kindness. So at the end of the day, I ask my staff, "Are you okay today?" And I encourage them to do the same for each other. After all,

continued on page 12, see Viado

Dames gather at Brät Brot for German brews

By Christiana Roussel

Who knew a last-minute summer mid-week meet-up at a new biergarten would be one of our biggest membership draws to date for the programs committee? More than a dozen Birmingham dames enjoyed hefeweizen, German rosés, bratwurst, and Bavarian pretzels on Tuesday, July 24, a Brät Brot in Lakeview.

Located in the former Plant Odyssey space, it has retained crushed concrete floors and lush greenery but is now complemented by a sophisticated concrete bar and open grill area. Rustic blonde wood and iron picnic tables line the inside of the restaurant while additional casual-but-cozy seating and ping-pong tables are the order of the day outside.



A last-minute meet-up proved to be the order of the day as it was one of the most well attended socials to date.

Attendees included founding chapter members like Rachel West, Martha Johnston, and Susan Swagler to more recent dames like Ashley Tarver, Jennifer Yarbrough, Brittany Garrigus, Ashley McMakin, Andrea Snyder, Leigh Sloss-Corra, Kerry

Kelly, and Leslie Register and proposed new members Rebel Negley, Kate Nicholson, and Rebecca Williamson. It was great fun to just visit with friends old and new and share in the experience of checking out a cool new venue in town.

Back for more: Andrew Zimmern visits Bham again

By Jan Walsh

Celebrity chef Andrew Zimmern returned to Birmingham in June to film an episode of his new Travel Channel series, *The Zimmern List*.

Among the eateries he visited were our Dames' Highlands Bar and Grill and OvenBird. And he shopped The Market at Pepper Place with Frank Stitt.

"People stop their cars, pause on the street or use social and actually say, 'nice to have you back'. It's amazing. Love the B'ham people! Thank you for the love," Zimmern exclaims.

Zimmern first visited several Birmingham restaurants in 2013



Television chef Andrew Zimmern returned to Birmingham in June, filming at The Market at Pepper Place with Frank Stitt.

for a memorable episode of his show *Bizarre Foods America*, and in 2016 he was back for more

of Birmingham's restaurants for *Bizarre Foods: Delicious Destinations*.

Grants awarded to local business and non-profit

By Jan Walsh

The Scholarships and Awards Committee recently announced award recipients for its 2018 Entrepreneur Award and Community Non-Profit Grant. The Entrepreneurial Award winner for 2018 is Nancey Legg of Better Kombucha, LLC in Birmingham. And the Community Non-Profit Grant 2018 is awarded to Jones Valley Teaching Farm. Committee Members include Martha Johnston, Anne Cain, Laura Zapalowski, Becky Satterfield, and Chairperson Rosemary Dallam.

The Entrepreneurial Award winner selection process was completed with the use of a rubric and committee member input. Legg was one of eight applicants considered for the award. She was awarded her check for \$3,000 and certificate on July 13, and she will be recognized at Southern Soirée on October 7. Legg plans to use the funds from the award to purchase a new fermenter to enhance her business.

Better Kombucha was first introduced to our local community at a farmer's market in 2015. In 2016 the business moved into its current location at Innovation Depot. It is available in grocery stores, restaurants, coffee shops, breweries, chiropractor's offices, and juice bars throughout Alabama. It is also available on-tap and in bottles.



Above: Nancey Legg of Better Kombucha was awarded the Entrepreneur Award.

Right: Amanda Storey of Jones Valley Teaching accepted the Non-Profit Organization Award



For the Community Non-Profit Grant, Jones Valley Teaching Farm was selected from the unanimous nominations from several Dames. This \$2,000 award was given to Amanda Storey of Jones Valley Teaching Farm. This organization

is community based with a mission of supporting local food, beverages and hospitality. It focuses on education, advocacy, mentoring, and philanthropy. And it is managed and directed by women supportive of LDEI.

..... Dames Recommend

Boston

Christiana Roussel

With a daughter attending Boston College, Dame Christiana Roussel has many opportunities to explore Boston and the surrounding areas. On her most recent trip, she and her family enjoyed (another) AMAZING meal at Ostra. It is a MUST STOP for anyone craving exquisite seafood. The salt-crust-ed branzino is as delicious as it is show-stopping in its presentation. For breakfast or brunch, Tatte (several locations) is a must. Their shakshuka is pretty remarkable.

Everyone knows The North End is THE place to go for Italian food. On their most recent visit, the Roussels took in Ristorante Euno before bingeing on cannolis at Bova's just up the street.

Looking to do something beside eat? Check out the Isabella Gardner Museum (okay, even their café is lovely!) or rent speedboats in the harbor for a completely different view of the city.

Southern Italy

Leigh Sloss-Corra

We had no idea what we were getting into last winter when we decided we would attend the wedding of a good friend's daughter on the 4th of July in southern Italy. We figured the airfare would be expensive. It was. We were advised to rent a car. We did. It was in fact the best way to get around and less expensive than we anticipated. We booked a combination of hotels and airbnbs and each had their merits. I would do it the same next time. The rest of the trip was one wonderful surprise after another. The weather was hot, but we discovered Italians do have air conditioning, and any-



"Smart" transportation in the tiny town of Matino. Photo by Leigh Sloss-Corra.

way, the beaches are so spectacular and plentiful that there is always a fabulous spot to take a dip within a short drive.

Here are a few of the amazing places and experiences we had in "the heel of the boot" (Puglia and Basilicata) that should put this area firmly on the "must-visit" list of and any all savvy travelers.

Where we went: Pompei (in Campania), then Alberobello, Gallipoli, Matino, Parabita, Maglie, Otranto, and Lecce (in Puglia) and Matera (in Basilicata).

Three of the towns we visited were UNESCO World Heritage sites: Pompei, Alberobello & Matera—mind-blowingly beautiful. Italy apparently has more of these sites than any country in the world and many of them are in the south—another reason to visit.

The beaches are some of the very best: clean, clear, with calm water in spectacular settings, not overly

crowded. Everyone wears tiny bathing suits, regardless of body type, so well-fed Americans will not feel intimidated.

Puglia has plenty of visitors and tourists, but is clearly not well-known to Americans. Many people do not speak any English, or French or Spanish for that matter. Restaurant ordering can be challenging at times, but the food and drinks you end up with are worth the struggle (P.S. The Google Translator app is a huge help that we wish we'd known about at the beginning of the trip, instead of at the end).

Hotels provide a "complimentary breakfast," which, even in simple, inexpensive places, is a feast of flavors, beautifully laid out every morning. In smaller hotels the spread offers insight into what locals eat. Highlights for us were locally made prosciutto and ricotta, light, flaky, buttery croissants, and breakfast cakes scented with



Above: View from the battery in Gallipoli.

almond and apricots prepared by the owner's mother.

The breads, pizzas, pastas, and anything made with wheat flour in Puglia, are amazing. While we found the bread in Tuscany on a previous trip to be flat and unappetizing, the breads everywhere in this region were always fantastic and welcome in every form.

While American restaurateurs grapple with disappearing fisheries, Italians in this Mediterranean region seem to enjoy an endless supply of the freshest, healthiest-looking and most flavorful fruits of the sea. My favorite was a branzino (European bass) we selected from a platter of just-caught options at a seaside cafe, grilled, deboned and on our plates in less than 15 minutes. The only seasoning was a squeeze of lemon and the hot, salty breeze blowing off the bay below.

Gelaterias are on every street in the larger towns and the locals line up for it. The flavors are inventive

At right: Resting at the end of a long day in Matera. Photos by Leigh Sloss-Corra.



and the lusciousness always satisfying. Again we were shocked at how inexpensive they were: two scoops of hand-crafted creaminess for 2 euros would be unheard of in any town in the States.

The best way to transition from late afternoon into evening is seated at a café on the piazza, with a view of the passers-by and an Aperol spritz. This refreshing drink is as de rigueur in Italy as it is in Paris and New York. At sunset, the pops

of orange in stemmed glasses are visible on almost every café table.

This area is known for olive trees and they are everywhere, but clearly so are vineyards producing some of the most enjoyable and distinctive wines you never tasted. Inexpensive, refreshing and robust, we fell for the local blended Negroamaros and another wine, Malandrina which complemented one of our most fabulous dinners in the 9,000 year-old town of Matera.

Corks & Confections: culinarians changing the game

By Martha Johnston

The women of Lightfoot, Franklin & White hosted their 2nd annual women's event on July 17th celebrating some extraordinary women in Birmingham's culinary scene. The Corks & Confections panel highlighted their experiences as women in a male-dominated business.

Those on the panel were Becky Satterfield, Satterfield's and Les Dames d'Escoffier; Padget Pizitz and Harriet Despinakis of Melt, Fancy's, and The Marble Ring; Amanda Storey, Jones Valley Urban Farm; Kristen Hall, The Essential.

Tenley E. Armstrong of Lightfoot, coordinator of the event, asked each panelist to share what they find challenging and exciting about the food industry in Birmingham. Panelists also gave examples of how



President Becky Satterfield was one of the panelists for Lightfoot, Franklin & White's 2nd Annual Corks & Confections event.

they have been supported by others in the food business. Satterfield used Les Dames as an example of how women in the industry can work to support and pave the way for other women.

Becky also shared with the group how her extensive travels have been an inspiration for her as she has developed the concept for her soon-to-be opened restaurant El ZunZún in Cahaba Heights.

Viado, continued from page 7

we are here to make each other's lives better.

Tell us a few things about yourself, favorite dishes, etc.

My favorite cuisine is classical French. My favorite dish? Escargots at Chez FonFon. I also love a good spaghetti Bolognese, but mine has a secret ingredient that gives it umami. I put soy sauce in it, instead of salt! This imparts a rich color and flavor that I love. My favorite southern dish of all

time is shrimp and grits, which I first tasted at the Four Seasons. It's on the menu at Village Tavern too. My secret is to use better cheese. In fact that's my secret to making any standard recipe better—elevate the quality of the ingredients and you'll increase and improve the flavor.

Some people don't realize it, but at Village Tavern, we are always watching, always trying to learn. I keep my eye on trends and what star chefs are doing. Sometimes we are ahead of the ball game. In 2010, because they were really popular in

New York, we put soba noodles on the menu. But it was too early for our customers, and nobody ordered them. Right now we are adding bowls to our menus. That's a trend that's growing and so far, our diners seem to like them.

Anything else?

I love Paris and travel there whenever I can for inspiration. I'm so impressed by the professionalism of people in the restaurant industry in France. I'm always trying to learn what I can from others. I guess I'll be a forever student.

Upcoming program notes

By Christiana Roussel

Book Club: Pick up a copy of Deborah Madison's *What We Eat When We're Alone* and plan to meet at Dame Jan Gautro's home on August 13, for a lively discussion and great nibbles.

Please mark your calendars for our annual chapter meeting which is scheduled for Sunday, August 19, at 3:00 pm at the Emmet O'Neal library in Crestline. Attendance is MANDATORY. If you have an unavoidable conflict that cannot be rescheduled, please contact Christiana Roussel. You will need to make arrangements to complete all voting and pay dues in advance.

In September, we'll have the opportunity to volunteer with nominee Kathryn Strickland at the Community Food Bank of Central Alabama. Details to come, via email.

As always, if you have an idea for a program, we'd love to hear from you! Email christiana.roussel@gmail.com with your suggestions.

Events Calendar

Monday, Aug. 13	6 p.m. Jan Gautro's home	Book Club: <i>What We Eat When We're Alone</i> By Deborah Madison
Saturday, Aug. 18	1 to 5 p.m. Ghost Train Brewery	Kickin' Chicken Wings Judging by Dames Literacy Council Junior Board
Sunday, Aug. 19	3 p.m. Emmet O'Neal Library, Crestline	Mandatory Chapter Meeting
Saturday, Aug. 25	10 a.m. Lyric Theater	LDEI sponsors <i>Michelin Stars: Tales From the Kitchen</i> Sidewalk Film Festival
Saturday, Sept. 1	9 a.m. Pepper Place	LDEI Pepper Place Takeover Chef Brittany Garrigus
Saturday, Sept. 8	9 a.m. Pepper Place	LDEI Pepper Place Takeover Sherron Goldstein and Rebel Negley
Saturday, Sept. 15	9 a.m. Pepper Place	LDEI Pepper Place Takeover Pat Terry and Jessica Ivey
Saturday, Sept. 22	9 a.m. Pepper Place	LDEI Pepper Place Takeover Kathy G. Mezrano
Saturday, Sept. 29	9 a.m. Pepper Place	LDEI Pepper Place Takeover Chef Mary Grace Viado
Sunday, Oct. 7	4:30 to 7:30 p.m.	Southern Soirée fundraiser Jones Valley Teaching Farm
October 11-14	Seattle, WA	LDEI International Conference

Let's Toast

Congratulations to Chef **Maureen Holt** and the Carlisle's Barbeque team of Sherry Bender and Ina Russell for winning the Birmingham's Best Burger Award at the 2nd annual Birmingham Burger Fest on June 2. The event raises money for the ALS Association Alabama Chapter. This win makes the team eligible for the World Food Championships in Orange Beach.

Photo at right, left to right: Ina Russell, ALS staff, Sherry Bender, Maureen Holt, ALS staff



Dames check out what's new at Pursell Farms

By Christiana Roussel

LDEI nominee Andrea Griffith recently hosted our chapter for a fun May Sunday afternoon at Pursell Farms where she is the executive chef. Located just 40 minutes southeast of Birmingham, Pursell Farms feels a world away. Dames and their guests passed through the front gates, wend their way through the world-famous golf course that were once fertilizer testing grounds, and found their way up to the newest on-site property, the Inn.

Our party started on the terrace, overlooking the 18th hole but quickly moved indoors as a late afternoon shower pushed through. Passed hors d'oeuvres and seasonal cheese plates were complemented by a selection of refreshing wines and beer. Nominees Rebel Negley and Kathryn Strickland brought their husbands who also enjoyed learning more about the Pursell



A group of dames toured Pursell Farms in May.

Farms property and touring Andrea's commercial kitchen. She also showed us a couple of the Inn's 40+ new rooms which doubles the number of accommodations on-site.

With the torrential rains passed, dames loaded into vans to tour the property's wedding venue, Hamil-

ton Place, which was stunning. A new addition means Andrea and her team can cater hundreds of guests or just several dozen—each tailored to the bride's wishes. Even empty, we could all imagine where the ice sculptures might look best, where the bride and groom would cut the cake, where the bridesmaids might line up to catch the bouquet. We all can't wait to get back to Pursell Farms to see what else is new!

*©2018 Les Dames d'Escoffier,
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