



Les Dames d'Escoffier  
INTERNATIONAL



Founded in 2013

[Ideibirmingham.org](http://Ideibirmingham.org)

Fall 2019

## President's Note: Work Hard, Play Hard

This is our busy time. So what's new, right?

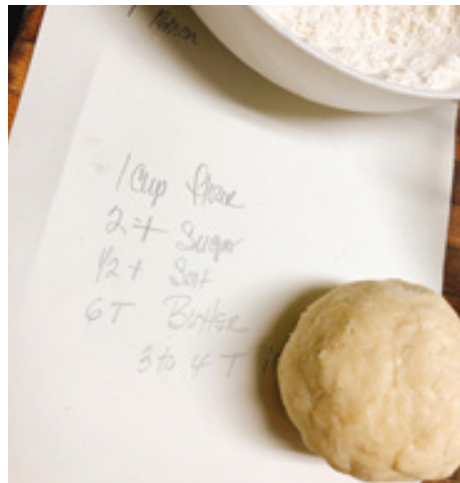
The Membership Committee has been meeting for weeks now, interviewing 18 potential Dames. It's awesome that so many members worked to nominate a record number of prospects. It's great that they are that invested in growing our group with people who can contribute to its success. Vetting these prospects, studying the paperwork, and sitting for all those interviews has been a big job. I am grateful that the women on this committee care enough about the makeup and future of our chapter to take the time for this lengthy nomination process.

The Newsletter Committee works hard all year long to produce what I know is the best chapter newsletter out there. No one else is doing what we're doing with well-written stories about not just our members and chapter but about our local food culture, too. We see and present a bigger picture.

Our Social Media Committee is another one that works all year long. These smart women have

*continued on page 4, see Letter*

## Sweet Treat: Behind the Scenes with Dolester Miles



Last year's Southern Soirée included a silent auction, featuring a variety of Dame-led experiences that our fundraiser attendees could bid on. One of those experiences was a day behind the scenes in the kitchen with James Beard Award-winning pastry chef Dolester Miles and Dame Jan Walsh. Miles's and Walsh's special guests were Kate Hartman and Rima Hartman, who helped create strawberry crostatas. See the full story on page 2.



# Plan to Attend Our Annual Business Meeting

By Susan Swagler

Our annual business meeting is Sunday, August 18 at 4 p.m. at The Red Cat Coffeehouse at Pepper Place (2901 2nd Ave. S. #120, Birmingham, AL 35233).

Thank you, Erin Isbell, for your hospitality!

Attendance is mandatory! It bothers me to put it that way, but we need everyone to be present for this one. There's a lot to do:

- We need to vote on new members.
- We need to elect a new VP of Programs and a new Treasurer. (Christiana Roussel and Laura Zapalowski have served our chapter well. We are grateful for that service and know they will help the next officers step into their new roles.)

- We need to update everyone's addresses and phone numbers.
- We need to get our committees straight—this is your time to sign up for exactly what you want to do, where you can make the most difference.
- We need to get an update on our Southern Soirée and talk about ticket sales and sponsorships.
- We need to talk about the international conference and figure out who's rooming with whom and what we want to do while there.
- We need to pay our dues. Please plan to bring your check for \$200 (made out to LDEI Birmingham) to the meeting. This amount covers international and Birmingham chapter dues.

Otherwise, you can go ahead and send your check to this address:

Birmingham LDEI  
PO Box 43542  
Birmingham, AL 35243

Or you can Venmo the money to our chapter's account:  
Laura Les Dames Bham  
@laurazapalowski  
Dues will increase to \$225 after August 26.

Again, you are highly encouraged to attend. If, for some really great reason you cannot be there, please email Rachel West at rachelqwest@aol.com so we can arrange for you to cast your vote in absentia.

# Silent Auction Winners Redeem their Prize

By Jan Walsh

Pastry Chef Dolester Miles has been one busy lady since she was named Outstanding Pastry Chef, 2018 by the James Beard Foundation Awards. But she took time to share her pastry kitchen with us at Les Dames d'Escoffier, Birmingham for a behind-the-scenes experience. With us as my special guests were Kate Hartman and Rima Hartman, who were the winners of this Damed experience auction lot from last year's Southern Soirée fundraiser.

The winning bid was actually made by their mother-in-law, Carolyn

Hartman—who would not give up until she won. And she bought it for and gave it to Kate and Rima for their Christmas gifts.

To get ahead of the savory team's shift, Miles and her team arrive at Bottega at 5:30 a.m. daily and begin rolling dough. We arrived at 7:00 a.m., and the kitchen already smelled like sweet heaven. Kate and Rima were like kids in a candy store, with eyes wide open and appetites whet from the aromatics, as they watched Dol and her pastry team, roll, bake, and decorate desserts in Bottega Restaurant's kitchen. Yet Dol quickly made them feel at home by

showing them where to wash hands, before handing each lady an apron and a knife. And they learned by doing as they began to cut strawberries for the crostata.

Dol has no recipe for the strawberry crostata being made that day, so she made one up for me, as she went along, writing it in pencil by hand on paper alongside the bowl of flour. (You can find the recipe at BirminghamRestaurants.com.) This is a common behind-the-scenes reality of chefs who agree to do a demo. They work in the kitchen—not at a computer on a Word document.

# An Important New Member Update

By Leigh Sloss-Corra

The membership committee has had a full summer, collecting application materials and then interviewing 18 proposed new members for the Birmingham chapter.

Composed of a seasoned group of Dames, the committee spent three long Sunday afternoons in June and July, conducting interviews with each of the prospective members. The Dames gathered one last time on July 21, to celebrate and finalize the list of nominees to ultimately submit to the Board and then put to a vote at the August 18 annual meeting.

Here's the important thing: As an active member of LDEI's Birmingham chapter, each of us is required to attend the annual meeting on August 18, 4-5:30pm, at The Red Cat Coffeehouse. The meeting is only an hour and a half, but it's very important that each Dame makes the effort to be there. Among other items of business and updates, all Dames will vote on the proposed slate of new members.

Voting will be on a paper ballots and tallied by the membership committee. At least one week prior to the annual meeting, members will receive an email with the list of the nominees, along with a brief summary of each person's credentials. Members are expected to review the nominees and their information in advance of the annual meeting.



The membership committee celebrated with Aperol spritzes during their last meeting to finalize the list of new member nominees.

If Dames have questions about a particular candidate, or wish to review a candidate's resume or personal statement, they should email Membership Committee Chair Leigh Sloss-Corra (leigh@pepperplacemarket.com) BEFORE the afternoon of the annual meeting. Remember there are over 15 women being considered for membership this year. No one is going to know and/or have an opinion about all the nominees, so the committee recommends that Dames do their

homework and read up on the nominees they don't know before the big meeting. The good news is the candidates this year are strong and accomplished, and in the committee's estimation, would all make outstanding additions to the organization. Birmingham has truly become a better place for women to work, grow, and be successful, and with these new members, our chapter is about to reflect that even more. See you August 18!



an excellent process in place to divide the work. They are on the front lines of keeping us relevant and connected with our community, and they do it with clarity and cleverness.

The Nominating Committee is a short-term assignment, but that small group has stepped up to identify and recruit the next leaders of our chapter. There's a short window of work for this group, but what they do has lasting effects and important consequences.

The Scholarship Committee worked with intensity and integrity to vet all of the scholarship and grant applications we received. A record number! We heard from students at schools we've worked with before and from new universities, too. Our reputation is growing right alongside our philanthropy. There is no telling, really, the difference our money makes in the lives of these women.

The Fundraising Committee is in the middle of crunch time, doing an incredible job securing the sponsorships that will make our Southern Soirée successful and allow us to award even more scholarships and grants to deserving women of

all ages all across our state. It's not easy to ask for money; at least that's what I think. So I truly appreciate the efforts of this fundraising committee. Their hard work allows us to fund the future of food in Alabama.

The Soirée Committee has set a fabulous menu, secured a fantastic venue, called in favors from vendors, and is planning a night to remember. Dames have stepped up to cook. Others have stepped up to volunteer at the event. There's room for everyone here! The committee has been working for several months and will be calling on many of you as we get closer to the event. Please do whatever you can to help make this (our single, biggest fundraiser) a success.

Speaking of Southern Soirée, it's fast approaching; October 13, will be here before we know it. The LDEI Conference (October 24-27) is right behind that. Our annual business meeting, set for Sunday, August 18, is even closer.

You'll note that all three of these events have a serious side, but there's lots of opportunity for fun, too. And I think that's important. We work hard. We should find time to play with the same sort of focus.

So we'll meet for some more happy hours. We'll share soul food on a

Saturday at Arlington House (after supporting each other and catching up at Pepper Place Market). We'll make dishes for Soiree and then enjoy them all the more, knowing they came from the kitchens of our fellow Dames. We will revel in that magical Soiree night seeing the pleasure on the faces of our guests and knowing that we did that!

We'll go to conference where we'll meet and mingle with fellow Dames from all over the country, all over the world. And that's great. But I'm scouting a few places where we (just our Birmingham chapter) can go and enjoy by ourselves for a little bit.

We'll gather for our annual meeting (which is strictly business), but I know we'll find a few moments for fellowship and we'll certainly feel a sense of belonging and purpose as we make the important decisions that will keep our chapter successful and move it forward.

To all of you, I say, thank you. Thank you for stepping up, for working hard, for volunteering when asked, for being available for each other, and for bringing your own gifts and talents to our table.

All the best!  
Susan Swagler

## Welcome Dame Ana C. Plana

Dame Ana Plana, a member of the Miami LDEI Chapter since 2007, has transferred her membership to Birmingham. She has recently accepted a position at Auburn University where she will share her passion for education by inspiring and enriching students and others with a focus on sustainability, creation of safer food systems, and the evolution of the culinary world.

Plana, an active Miami LDEI Board and committee member, comes from a family of caterers. She was chosen as one of 20 in the U.S. to attend the Stone Barns Teacher Institute in 2017. And in 2018, she was one of 12 from Florida who participated in the James Beard Foundation residency at Rauschenberg's home on Captiva Island. Welcome, Chef Ana!



# Where Are They Now? Checking in with Some of Our Scholarship and Grant Winners

By Susan Green

It's been a full year since we announced our 2018 scholarship, grant and award recipients.

All of them are making great contributions in their chosen fields in the food and culinary industry. A few of them have delighted us with sharing a bit about how this recognition has impacted not only their daily lives, but also their professional development. Here's what some of them have been up to!

• **Ally Cound**, then a junior nutrition major at Auburn University, received an Education Scholarship. Ally writes: "Receiving a scholarship from this wonderful organization was an honor. I had such a fun time at the Southern Soirée last October! I loved being able to bring my family and tell



them all about the organization and what it stands for. It has definitely impacted my life and I have made so many new connections!

"Meeting all of the Dames and other scholarship recipients at the Southern Soirée was a great way to make new friends, especially in the Birmingham area where I will be living for a year starting in August! Rosemary Dallam is a consistent role model and someone I can always go to for advice in the dietetic and culinary field. I feel very special and relieved to know that I have so many people I look to within this amazing group!

"I just recently graduated from Auburn University in May, and I am going on to complete a master's degree in nutrition science with a combined dietetic internship program at UAB in the fall. This is my next step in becoming a registered dietitian. I am so excited! This scholarship has helped me save for internship expenses, so I greatly appreciated being awarded one."

• **Diann Pilgrim**, a family and consumer science teacher at Wenonah High School in southwest Birmingham, received one of our 2018 teacher grants. She is a certified ProStart high school teacher. Her teams have competed at the state level in both 2016 and 2017. Diann writes:

"I am so appreciative to the Les Dames d' Escoffier's Birmingham chapter for the grant I received to use with my students. We have been busy this summer and just returned from the FCCLA National Leadership Conference in Anaheim, CA, with six students from our program at Wenonah High School. While attending the conference, my students attended the Leadership Academy preparing them to be college and career ready.



"The grant I received allowed me to pay for the Leadership Academy. Also, it allowed me to buy what was needed for my students that competed in the STAR Events. We competed in Job Interview and National Programs in Action for Community Service. We learned

so much at nationals and picked up a lot of great ideas that we will use throughout the school year for projects to incorporate into the classroom."

• **Nancey Legg** received our Entrepreneur Award. This award honors a local outstanding female entrepreneur and owner of a business in the food and culinary industry.

"Winning the award has been a catalyst for many great things at Better Kombucha. It helped us to expand production with the purchase of an additional 55-gallon fermenter as well as an additional commercial cooler. These purchases led to



substantial growth allowing us to produce 3,100 gallons of kombucha for 2018 alone, and to acquire a local distributor that has placed our product in 80+ locations statewide. As a result of this continued growth, Better Kombucha now has one full-time and 2 to 4 regular, part-time employees. We are currently making ready a substantially larger space at Innovation Depot that will allow further expansion and put us on trajectory to double our production for 2019. Finally, winning the award has led to great relationships with prestigious, professional women in the food and beverage industry that I now consider my friends."

*This will be an ongoing column in the newsletter as we can get in touch with other scholarship, grant, and award winners.*



# SOUTHERN SOIRÉE

## French Twist, Southern Style

By Susan Swagler  
& Kathy G. Mezrano

Southern Soiree 2019 will feature a French-inspired menu with a definite Southern twist! Or two or three twists. As only we can do it—with delicious dishes straight from the kitchens of several Dames.

The Soirée committee is excited about our new venue—The Barn at Shady Lane. It is beautiful with every amenity and lots of parking. If anyone asks, it is only 10 minutes past the intersection of I-65 and Lakeshore. So it's not far at all.

Kathy Mezrano, working closely with Kay Reed and Barbara Gaines Kenyon on this year's event, recently shared the collaborative menu.

It starts with a welcome harvest table featuring a big bowl of Stone Hollow goat cheese and some Southern pickled vegetables (beets, okra, green beans) from Deborah Stone (Stone Hollow Farmstead); fresh radishes with country butter and tapenade

from Kathy G. Mezrano (Kathy G. & Company); roasted fennel and sweet peppers a la Grecque from Mary Grace Viado (Village Tavern); beurre pimento spread with carrots and celery from Betsy McAtee (Dreamland, Inc.); homemade sweet potato chips from Kay Reed (Iz Weddings & Events); and baguettes, water crackers, and crostini.

On the buffet, guests will find coq au vin with lardons, Grandview Farm mushrooms and onions from Kay Reed and Maureen Holt; a root vegetable gratin with sweet potatoes, turnips and rutabagas from Andrea Griffith (Pursell Farms); local field peas marinated with shallots, teardrop tomatoes and fresh herbs from Ashley McMakin (Ashley Mac's); as well as a fresh, colorful green salad of organic lettuces and baby kale, grilled pears and dried cranberries with apple cider vinaigrette from Kathy Mezrano. There also will be baguettes and boules from Corey Hinkel.

Desserts will be French apple cake with maple Calvados sauce, crème fraîche Chantilly, and almond brittle from Brittany Garigus Cheatham of Satterfield's Restaurant. And Geri-Martha O'Hara (Big Spoon Creamery) will provide cool fall flavors in the form of mini ice cream sandwiches—Black Forest brownie with Amarena cherries and Valrhona dark chocolate ice cream as well as Bulleit bourbon ice cream with pecan brittle, sandwiched between thin chocolate cake.

Drinks will include a welcome cocktail made with Cathead Vodka (courtesy of Pat Floyd) crafted by Steva Casey of The Atomic Lounge; a selection of Martine's Wines (Eileen Hallmark, distributor) chosen by Dame Alexis Douglas; beers from Back Forty Beer Company and water and other non-alcoholic beverages.

Copy and paste this part, y'all! Share it with everyone you know who loves food!

Martha Johnston has sent letters to our membership to guide each of us in our sponsorship asks (and we all should be asking).

Martha and her fundraising team (Idie Hastings, Gia McCollister, and Rachel West) have made this very easy for us, and they are willing to help. Rachel has created a lovely, enticing sponsor package as well as save-the-date notices. If you have any questions about this process, just send Martha a message at [marthajohnston@bellsouth.net](mailto:marthajohnston@bellsouth.net). Sponsorship levels for 2019 are:

- Jeroboam Level: \$5,000 (8 tickets)
- Magnum Level: \$2,500 (6 tickets)
- Bottle Level: \$1,000 (4 tickets)
- Split Level: \$500 (2 tickets)

Martha says, "We're always happy to do a special proposal for a higher level!"

We will be offering a silent auction again this year with Dame-led experiences. Figure out how you can contribute. Maybe it's a tour of your facility or business. Maybe you treat someone to a meal, or teach someone how to make something. Maybe it's a class on knife skills or biscuit baking or hospitality

### Ways to Get Involved

- Help secure sponsorships, either using your personal connections or providing contact information to the sponsorship committee
- Donate your time and expertise for a Dame-led experience for the silent auction
- Work at the silent auction the day of the fundraiser
- Sell tickets
- Promote the event on your social media
- Volunteer the day of the event for set up or take down, or as a greeter collecting tickets

or table settings. If you'd like to contribute a Dame experience, send an email to Susan Swagler at [susan@swagler.net](mailto:susan@swagler.net)

Tickets this year are \$125 plus fees (the same as last year).

The ticketing site has been up for a while now. It's <https://www.accelevents.com/e/southernsoiree2019> Share it with everyone you know! And go buy your own tickets. Everyone will need one, even volunteers. This is, after all, our big fundraiser.

We are an organization of women who always strive to be

better and do more. Our goals for this year's Soirée are bigger than ever before: We are aiming for \$65,000 in net profit so we can double our scholarships and grants to \$50,000.

Know this: It's going to take each and every one of us to meet those goals, to find necessary sponsorships, to sell tickets, and to share own time and talents. We can do this. We can absolutely make it happen.

### Our 2019 fundraiser hashtags



#LDEIBHMSoiree2019  
#howwefundthefuture



# Brand Building Q&A with Dame Melany Robinson of Sprouthouse Agency

*Birmingham Dames submitted questions related to building their businesses. Melany has generously shared her expert advice.*

Susan Swagler:  
**Which social media outlets should I concentrate on these days?**  
It is important to concentrate on Instagram, especially stories.

**How often should I post?**  
Post stories once or twice a day, and static posts no more than four or five per week.

**If I'm using multiple platforms, can I post the same content across all of them?**  
NEVER! You want users to follow you on multiple accounts. If you post the same content on each platform, your followers will get bored.

Pat Terry, PhD, RD, LD, FAND:  
**I am retiring next May from Samford University. After I retire, I want to continue to promote teaching kitchens in our area. I have purchased two domains but I don't know if they are appropriate.**  
Moving from academia to the next phase in your career, you need to position yourself digitally with basic info about your new brand.

Andrea Snyder:  
**Is it necessary to have a tagline or slogan attached to your brand name or logo?**  
It is good to have a tagline in your communication arsenal, but it should not be used in everything that you do.



*Dame Melany Robinson is the founder of Sprouthouse Agency (formerly Polished Pig Media), a national public relations firm. Sprouthouse offers a range of services—social media management, media relations, brand design and marketing, events, crisis communications, and strategic partnerships and community relations—to provide an integrated communications approach for each of their clients.*

Christiana Roussel:  
**How do you exclude the extraneous parts from your brand? In other words, how do you winnow down and distill who you are and what you do to the absolute essential? Is there value in this?**  
Less is more. You need to be able to distill your brand to one or two sentences. If you can't communicate it that simply, you need to reevaluate your brand.

**I would love to better understand the best way to leverage SEO to raise the profile of a brand (whether for my own or for clients for whom I produce content). In recent research, I have come to understand that companies like**

**Google, etc. are constantly changing up their algorithms and that any attempt to master the SEO content is like building on shifting sands. What do you think? Is there still power in hashtags or are they seen as old now?**  
In short, you must hire an expert. The reality is that everything about digital content and SEO changes daily. The only way to ensure you're doing it correctly is to hire people whose sole job it is to learn the constantly changing algorithms and ways that content is being unfolded.

**Please rank the importance of a person's/owner's/brand's social media presence, in order of importance: LinkedIn, Instagram (straight up posts, stories, and IG TV), Twitter, Facebook, etc.**  
1) Instagram, if we're talking about a brand  
2) Facebook  
3) LinkedIn is great for building a business' presence  
4) Twitter is more of an outlet to spread news

Rebecca Williamson:  
**When a brand has to take a break, what is the best way to pull back and stop so that the brand can restart with success in the future?**  
You don't need to proclaim that you're taking a break. Instead, phase out quietly, and when you're ready to come back, plan a strategy using social media, especially Instagram, to tease new products and build up your return.

Rachel West:  
**When do you know if your business/brand is ready to go to the next level?**  
When demand exceeds supply. When you have more people asking for your products or services than you can handle, you need to hire more people or make more products in order to scale up and meet the demand.

**Do you have general guidelines for using social media to build your brand?**  
Don't do it unless you can do it well. Don't put up junk photography. Don't be inconsistent. Don't do social unless you can post thoughtful, well-executed, creative content that is reflective of your brand.

**What are some common mistakes you see people make as they are attempting to grow their brand?**  
You can't sell something that's not authentic to begin with. You need to have a genuine and true brand because people see right through it nowadays. Another big mistake I see is trying to grow too quickly.

Sonthe B. Burge, MS, RDN, LDN:  
**When I had my counseling practice, I always struggled with marketing. I did not know how to promote my nutrition counseling services or define my main mission/goals as a provider. As a result, I found myself taking on too many different jobs (teaching at Samford, Time Inc. online expert, public speaking, research, etc.), which ultimately led to my break from working and counseling. I call this my white board philosophy: step one is getting a big dry erase board and mapping out who**

you are and who you're not, who your customer is and who your customer isn't. You can then use these details to help guide your playbook and direct a vision about what your brand is going to become. It's critical, though, that you have a personal narrative in a service-based business.

Telia Johnson:  
**Knowing that more money usually means a better and faster start to building a brand, how much money is reasonable to begin building?**  
If you're setting a budget, you're looking at a minimum of \$15,000. That will get you a basic website, a logo, etc.

**Aside from social media, is there a way to get your name in front of other businesses or potential clients?**  
There is no better tool than good old grassroots networking. Nothing replaces developing relationships with people in person.

Leigh Sloss-Corra:  
**How often should you revisit your logo, brand message, styling of website, fonts, etc.?**  
It's something that needs to be looked at every five to eight years. Polished Pig Media (now Sprouthouse) has actually done just that, including the aforementioned renaming, after seven years.

**How much can you tweak/play with your logo: colors, environment (website, signage) without confusing people?**  
I don't believe in tweaking. Changing or updating, sure, but constantly tweaking leads to confusion.

**What about paid advertising and paid "editorial" content in magazines, on websites, social, etc. How effective is that in communicating who you are?**  
It totally depends on what you're promoting, but more often than not, unless you have huge budgets to spend, you are not going to get your money's worth. Advertising requires consistency, and that takes a lot of money—you have to run a campaign. You can't run one ad in one publication. The name of the game is consistency and repetition.

**How damaging/worrisome is it when staffers/coworkers are politically/religiously engaged and active on social media (maybe you agree with them, maybe you don't)?**  
You can't control the political or religious beliefs of your employees. As long as the content they're posting is not inappropriate, there's not much you can do.

**What is the most effective strategy for hashtagging? When I see people add 20 hashtags to a post it seems so ridiculous. Does that even do anything?**  
While every hashtag increases your chance of getting seen, I recommend being strategic and thoughtful with the hashtags you select. Every hashtag needs to have a purpose; you shouldn't simply include as many as possible just to hit the max (which is 30).

**What are the best ways to help promote a friend/colleague's business on social media?**  
Reshare their content, tag them when you do, and praise their work.

*This interview has been edited for clarity and length. Thank you, Melany!*



# Report: International Public Markets Conference

By Leigh Sloss-Corra

This past June, the acclaimed urban planning organization, Project for Public Spaces (PPS), hosted its 10th International Public Markets Conference in London.

As executive director of a successful, almost 20-year-old farmers' market in the midst of a strategic planning process, I had good reason and the opportunity to attend. The conference was three full days of presentations, working sessions, walking tours, eating and drinking, and it exceeded expectations, opening the eyes of all involved to the growth and larger significance of public markets in our future.

The conference was held in the neighborhood near London Bridge, in 1,000-year-old historic Southwark Cathedral and in the offices of London's current mayor, Sadiq Khan, the fantastically progressive leader with bold ideas for empowering markets in his city. Conference presenters and attendees came from all over the world and represented entities of every category, from public to private and non-profit. It was an impressive gathering of leaders focusing on how markets could save the world.

London and Mayor Khan were the perfect host-partners for this international conference. At the beginning of his administration in 2016, Mayor Khan announced the creation of the first-ever London Markets Board, tasked to support and grow the 300 street and covered markets currently operating in his city. #LondonisOpen has been the motto under his leadership—the city is “open to investment, business and people,” and the Mayor feels public markets illustrate this com-



*Sadiq Khan, London's current mayor, welcomed Public Markets Conference attendees in historic Southwark Cathedral. The conference was informative, inspirational, and delicious.*

mitment perfectly. Markets, as he stated in his welcome speech, have a “low barrier to entry,” meaning anyone can get a job, try an idea, earn income, join the community and find larger success by starting at a simple street market. This makes markets especially suited to the diverse and ever-changing makeup of people moving into and residing in London. At a time when some other world leaders are fighting hard to keep immigrant and “foreign” cultures out of their cities, Khan's words of welcome to the audience were thrilling and set the tone for the rest of the conference.

In another speech the first morning, the CEO of conference host PPS announced the launch of its new Market Cities Initiative, an umbrella project that will partner with the London Markets Board

and others to “help cities around the world scale up the impact of market systems through regional strategy, policy and governance.” Wow! PPS has been researching, planning and working with markets for over 40 years anyway, so creating this initiative was a logical next step and bodes well for the future.

From then on, there were non-stop sessions and presentations, mixed in with visits to food markets, market halls, traditional open-air markets and incredible time spent at the hybridized indoor-outdoor food-goods-biergarten markets that are currently taking the city by storm. Standout sessions focused on markets as incubators, markets for immigrant communities, culinary entrepreneurs and design creatives, and markets that facilitate farmer-food producer col-



laborations to strengthen the power of “local.” There were several presentations by individuals or teams who have successfully transformed aging market halls and spaces into vibrant 21st century marketplaces with real value for their cities and communities. From Barcelona to Hong Kong, business and city leaders recognize that markets play a critical role in our food systems, economy, and development as civilized human beings.

Conference sessions addressed the challenges of motivating low-income individuals to buy fresh food and cook for their families, and using food stamp programs with incentives to better the health of at-risk communities. Several markets have become leaders in environmental policy,

banning the use of plastics, creating uses for food waste, requiring vendors to create, grow and sell local products exclusively, and popularizing “low-impact” lifestyles with vegan-only markets and markets where all products sold must come from less than one mile away.

The most exciting part of the conference was visiting the market halls, where these days all of London seem to shop, eat and drink endless beer from lunch until around 8 or 9 p.m. New York and Los Angeles have some versions of these remarkable places, but none that rivaled the ones we visited—Vinegar Yard, Old Spitalfields Market, Greenwich Market and Mercato Metropolitano. It was worth the trip just to see them, and each offered a

path into neighborhoods, foods and cultures the average tourist might never discover on a typical visit to London. Now with a charismatic mayor and a progressive vision, the city's 300 markets might become as popular as stops at Buckingham Palace and Trafalgar Square. For the next generation, would they rather visit an obscure military landmark or spend the afternoon in an old warehouse on the Thames filled with every type of street food, people, live music and human electricity?? Both options will please Mayor Khan and his team, as long as the people and investment keep coming. Whoever you are and whatever you want to do, see, eat or drink at whatever time of day or night, he and his supporters promise: #LondonisOpen.



# Dames Pepper Place Takeover is Coming

By Leigh Sloss-Corra

Don't miss the month-long tribute to women in food at the Market at Pepper Place this September, when LDEI Birmingham takes over the chef demos!

For the third year in a row, every Saturday in September at 9 a.m., rain or shine, a different Dame will show how to make a delicious in-season dish and share samples with the Market's dedicated audience of local food enthusiasts. Mark your calendars, and make plans to attend them all!

The Les Dames Market Takeover will kick off on September 7, with a demo by Chef Geri-Martha O'Hara of Big Spoon Creamery—you'll love tasting the sweet flavors stirred up. On September 14, Chef Ashley McMakin of Ashley Mac's will be sharing a special preview recipe from our Southern Soirée menu. Get fresh and healthy on September 21, with Chef Andrea Snyder of Farm Bowl + Juice Co. and Urban Cookhouse. And as the grand finale, on September 28, prepare to be wowed by Chef Mary Grace Viado of Village Tavern.

The chefs will be assisted by some of the LDEI scholarship and grant winners who will share their stories of success with the audience. Also every week, Dames will be on hand to share a little about the chapter and remind folks to attend the Southern Soirée fundraiser on October 13.

September is the perfect time to enjoy peak-of-season produce and celebrate women. Bring your friends and Dames supporters, and we'll see you at the Market in September!



Some of our members have already taken the stage at the Pepper Place cooking demos, including Dame Brittany Garrigus Cheatham and Chef Rita Bernhardt of Satterfield's (top), Dame Andrea Snyder of Farm Bowl + Juice Co. and Urban Cookhouse (right), and Dame Susan Green of Birmingham Knife Sharpening (bottom).



# Sidewalk Film Festival: "Alabama Foodies" at the Movies

By Leigh Sloss-Corra

End of summer means it's time for the Sidewalk Film Festival here in Birmingham. Now in its 21st year, Sidewalk will spotlight over 250 outstanding independent features, documentaries, and shorts over one weekend in late August with more than 15,000 people expected to attend. This is the third year the Birmingham chapter of LDEI will sponsor a food-focused film program at the festival.

This year we'll be sponsoring "Alabama Foodies," a program of seven short films about food, being screened at the Alabama School of Fine Arts, Saturday, August 24, 3:40-4:40 p.m. Members of Les Dames will serve up sweet treats in the lobby as people arrive and introduce the program of films inside the theater before it begins.

The "Alabama Foodies" shorts are all produced by women filmmakers from Alabama. So they are pro-female and "local," just like our chapter. The films cover a variety of topics from farming to truckstops to fine dining. Our sponsorship will provide Les Dames an opportunity to share our message of commitment to the female food community in Birmingham, as well as promote our fundraiser in October. In previous years, LDEI Birmingham sponsored a documentary about Ella Brennan, the iconic New Orleans restaurateur, and another documentary about Michelin star winning restaurants.

All Dames are invited to help with the pre-program reception and

to attend the program screening. A few complimentary tickets to the entire festival will also be available;

interested Dames should contact Dame Leigh Sloss-Corra for more information.

## "Alabama Foodies" Film Lineup

The "Alabama Foodies," all-female filmmakers program, will screen seven short films about food.

Pie in the Puss: A Brief History of Pieing in Film  
Directed by Stacey Davis • 9 minutes • USA - AL • documentary short  
From a pie in the face, to the pie toss, to the ultimate pie fight—the evolution of pieing in film.

Vishwesh Bhatt: The South I Love  
Directed by Nicole Du Bois • 7 minutes • USA - AL • documentary short  
Follow along with Vishwesh Bhatt as he recounts his journey from cooking for beer money to celebrated chef.

A Woman's Place  
Directed by Callie Walls and Jennifer Wells • 9 minutes • USA - AL • documentary short  
The high-end culinary world has traditionally been a boys' club, and pioneering women chefs and restaurant owners in Birmingham are trying to change that. Our own Dame Becky Satterfield is featured in this one!

Beautiful Rainbow  
Directed by Heather Rickles • 5 minutes • USA - AL • documentary short  
Matthew and Tay work their way up from a farm-to-table educational program to the real workforce using determination, and a little bit of swag.

Plated Prose  
Directed by Ava Lowrey • 7 minutes • USA - AL • documentary short  
Ravi Howard digs through the Lupton Collection at the University of Alabama, discovering self-crafted narratives and the voices of those who wrote before him.

Who's Your Farmer?  
Directed by Jess Lingle • 14 minutes • USA - AL • documentary short  
Do you know where your food comes from? And you can't say "the grocery store."

One Stop  
Directed by Ava Lowrey • 7 minutes • USA - AL • documentary short  
Owner Heather Ehl and cook Patrick McMillan have been working together for 20+ years at Mac's 1 Stop, a gas station and lunch counter that feeds Birmingham's downtown laborers.



# Birmingham Party Pics: Book Club x 2



On June 3, a group of Dames—including Susan Gilpin and Kate Nicholson (above left)—gathered at Freddy’s Wine Bar to talk about “Where the Crawdads Sing” by Delia Owens. Dames enjoyed a summer beverage while sharing insights and agreeing that this novel, set in the desolate marshlands of the North Carolina coast, is not only painful but also beautiful.



Sonthe Burge not only selected our late summer read, “From Scratch” by Tembi Locke, but also invited the book club to her home for a dinner reminiscent of the author’s summer meals in Sicily. Sonthe (above with Mary Esther Carpenter) prepared Pasta con Zucchini [Sicilian Summer Pasta] and Insulate di Finocchio [Shaved Fennel and Citrus Salad] (shown below). Others brought appetizers and desserts. The meal was beautiful and the story moving. At left: Kate Nicholson and Laura Zapalowski



Above (left to right): Pat Terry, Susan Swagler, Rosemary Dallam, Anne Cain, and Kate Nicholson  
Left: Susan Swagler, Jan Gautro, and Rebecca Williamson  
Below: Sonthe Burge, Martha Johnston, and Mary Esther Carpenter





# A Taste of Fall: Rich Rosé and Chill-able Red

By Alexis Douglas,  
certified sommelier

Fall in the South: football, boun-  
tiful farmers’ markets, back-to-  
school—a busy time of year with  
lots of hours still spent outside! We  
are cooking with richer flavors in-  
cluding savory herbs, sweet spices,  
and squash.

But it’s still HOT until November,  
and we need cold wine to match  
the evolving season and flavors.  
Our wine needs to match the richer  
flavors we are enjoying but remain  
refreshing; richer rosés and chilled  
red wines are perfect. Although  
rosé is typically released in the  
spring, they are meant to be  
enjoyed year-round depending on  
the style, and there are still plenty  
of rosés available this time of year.

I checked out the new wine bar/  
retail shop in Mountain Brook  
Village named Golden Age (HIGH-  
LY recommend!) and discovered a  
few exciting, unique wines for fall:



Koehler-Ruprecht Pinot Noir  
Rosé, Pfalz, Germany, \$22- 100%  
Pinot Noir grown organically in  
limestone made in a “trocken”

style meaning “dry” (not sweet),  
which is indicated on the label.  
This estate is known for old-school,  
unique wines ...this rosé offers  
delicious, refreshing strawberry  
and melon fruit and a hint of spice.  
Crowd-pleasing, light, yet rich  
enough for grilled poultry.



Weszeli “Eden” Rosé, Kamptal,  
Austria, \$19- Made from Zweigelt  
(widely grown in Austria) and  
Cabernet Franc, which give cher-  
ry, watermelon, spice and herbal  
(almost grassy) notes. Pale in color,  
but big on flavor and juicy acidity.  
Versatile with food, and can handle  
more fat...try with fried chicken  
and charcuterie.

Joguet Rosé, Chinon (Loire), France,  
\$19- (top right) Referred to by the  
importer (the always-fab-and-  
reliable Kermit Lynch) as an  
“O.G. (original) in the vastly  
expanding world of rosé,” this  
dark-hued organically-grown  
Cabernet Franc rosé offers a more  
complex range with herbal notes  
and the classic strawberry and  
watermelon fruit notes.



Sebastien Brunet “100%” Petillant  
Naturel Rosé, Loire, France \$23-  
Very dark in color, and BUBBLY!  
Made from the “workhorse” grape  
of the region, Grolleau, blended  
with Gamay, organically grown,  
and made in a natural style (sponta-  
neous fermentation from indigenous  
yeast). This gives the wine some  
subtle funky notes (in a good way...  
trust me) but it’s mostly refreshing  
and fruity. The funk is in the form of  
a subtle vinegar note and yeastiness,  
like a shrub balancing out fruit in a  
craft cocktail. With such a fun and  
bright label, this is a great wine to  
share with foodie football friends.



Pax “Quail Run Vineyard”  
Valdiguié, Suisun Valley, CA, \$28-  
Valdiguié is a grape similar to  
Gamay in body and flavor, with  
dense berry and mineral but a bit  
more tannin, herbal notes and  
spice. This is basically a cru-Beau-  
jolais styled-red made in Califor-  
nia by a Syrah expert with a cult  
following and a super-cool label.  
Great for grilled meats and a big ol’  
cheese board, and a perfect host/  
hostess gift for a wine lover! Serve  
chilled but not too cold, so the  
flavors aren’t masked and the  
tannin doesn’t seem out of balance.

## Events Calendar

Sunday, August 18	4 p.m. The Red Cat Coffeehouse at Pepper Place	LDEI Annual Business Meeting Mandatory
Saturday, August 24	3:40-4:40 Alabama School of Fine Arts	Sidewalk Film Festival Alabama Foodies
Saturday, September 7	9 a.m. Pepper Place	LDEI Pepper Place Takeover Geri-Martha O’Hara
Saturday, September 14	9 a.m. Pepper Place	LDEI Pepper Place Takeover Ashley McMakin
Saturday, September 21	9 a.m. Pepper Place	LDEI Pepper Place Takeover Andrea Snyder
Saturday, September 28	9 a.m. Pepper Place	LDEI Pepper Place Takeover Mary Grace Viado
Sunday, October 13	5 p.m. The Barn at Shady Lane	Southern Soirée Fundraiser
Thursday-Sunday October 24-27	Nashville, TN	LDEI Annual Conference “Rhythm & Roots”

## Dames Judge Gumbo Gala

Birmingham Dames served as  
judges for the 14th Annual Gumbo  
Gala, where more than 40 teams  
competed for the title of “Birming-  
ham’s Best Gumbo.” (Left to right):  
Rosalyn Bloomston, Martha Johnston,  
Carey Thommason, Susan Swagler,  
and Rosemary Dallam.





# ..... Dames Recommend .....

## Great Britain & Ireland

Rosemary Dallam

London: Just across the famous London Bridge is Borough Market. Our food tour guide described the long history of this very successful outdoor market that houses delicacies from far and wide. We had Scotch Eggs (so unique and delicious), fresh fried samosas, shucked fresh raw oysters served with red wine vinegar and chopped onion, samples of incredible cheeses from the cheese monger, and the local award-winning fish and chips from the fishmonger himself.

High Tea on the Thames was fun and offered the opportunity to meet lovely locals who shared travel stories from their journeys in the “states.” The best hot tea I had, however, was on the train from London to Edinburgh, Scotland. Earl Grey at its finest.

Edinburgh: We started with a smoked fish and potato cream soup at a local seafood spot, served with fresh bread slices and then had delicious haggis (served similarly to shepherd’s pie) at another spot along with plenty of Guinness and hot tea. After we stopped for an educational session on how Scotch whiskey is like no other, with samples and a special creamy fudge to add to the smooth drinks, we were on to a place for cheeses and wine. Lastly we sampled freshly baked scones and hot tea. All of this was within walking a one- to two-mile section in the heart of the city just down from the castle.

Dublin: Our first food tour stops included potato cakes; bangers and mash; steamed mussels; and, last but not least, Irish coffee and cheesecake. Our second tour, our favorite, began at the local food



London’s Tower Bridge is a must-see landmark.

market in the heart of Dublin, near the famous Temple Bar. We sampled fresh breads, scones, raw oysters served with red wine vinegar and chopped onion, soda bread topped with cream cheese and smoked salmon. Then it was on to taste fresh cheeses and a short educational session from the cheese monger at Sheridan’s. Irish whiskey was sampled at the Swan Bar, and we enjoyed creamy nitrogen-infused vanilla ice cream with brownies at a popular ice cream spot.

At Howth, a seaport city north of Dublin, we hiked to the castle and then roamed the fishing pier where all the boats were unloading the catch of the day. The pier hosts a dozen fish markets, so we of course sampled the fare. My favorite was a wonderful Fisherman’s Pie.

Other food highlights: Delicious Indian food in London, fresh seafood, and excellent cuts of beef in all three cities. Best tea was in Scotland, my father’s birthplace and my favorite place in Britain.

## London

Leigh Sloss-Corra

On a recent trip to London for a three-day conference, my sweetie and I experienced this much-visited city and food in a new way that should inspire others to book a plane ticket right now.

We did check off some of the standard sights: Piccadilly, Trafalgar Square, Hyde Park, and Buckingham Palace, but starting with our Airbnb just off Bermondsey Street, near London Bridge and the Thames River, the young vibe of the neighbor-

hood changed our approach to the whole trip. With the Shard towering above as a landmark so we never got lost, we fell in love with Bermondsey Street, an über-hip destination for foodies and beer lovers, with an abundance of cool pubs and outdoor places to eat and drink. After a drink and snacks at Vinegar Yard, a super-cool, crowded outdoor food and vintage flea market nearby, we nabbed a spot at a stylish pub called The Woolpack and had one of the best burgers we’ve ever eaten.

The next day, a 10-minute walk took us to Borough Market, where we grazed and tasted an amazing variety of outstanding dishes served up within a beautiful, sprawling collection of farmers and food producers who have been feeding Londoners since the year 1014. Dinner that night included Indian and Malaysian specialties at Old Spitalfields Market, in a renovated hall that was also packed and conveniently surrounded by stylish boutiques had anyone cared about shopping. We focused on the food and drink then enjoyed a leisurely evening walk back to our flat.

The following night, we jumped on a ferry near London Bridge and sailed 20 minutes down to Greenwich, where the Greenwich Market Hall dazzled us with a themed evening market called Vegan Vibes. Farmers, purveyors, and food producers sold vegan items only. You’d be surprised how much we liked the Tofish and Chips—of course crispy batter makes anything taste delicious, even tofu. Strolling outside as the sun set, we enjoyed the historic plazas and buildings of this UNESCO Maritime World Heritage site, which, with tourists gone home, was at its spectacular best.

As the conference wrapped up on the third day, we celebrated at



Above: Bermondsey Street was a hip destination for foodies and beer lovers, with lots of cool pubs and outdoor places to eat and drink. Right: Borough Market has a sprawling collection of farmers and food producers, who have been feeding Londoners here since 1014.



Mercato Metropolitano, another indoor-outdoor food market/food hall/bar/insane crowd scene that is taking the world by storm (the creators are currently considering opening another one in Atlanta!). We drank pink gin & tonics—so good!—with gin, pink Fever Tree tonic, a raspberry, and a fresh basil leaf. One was not enough! We had oysters, banh mi, crab fritters, and so many other small bites, it’s impossible to remember them all. Such a trip and it was too quick. But also it ended up being quite

affordable, which was surprising, since London has the reputation of being one of the world’s most expensive cities. The variety of outstanding cuisine, yummy gin and tonics and thirst-quenching beers, beautiful long walks along the Thames and the incredible energy in the markets and food halls, with thousands of people of all ages and ethnicities, eating and drinking and talking and laughing, it was more fun than New York, and felt more alive than Los Angeles or Paris. We can’t wait to go back!



## Let's Toast

**Melany Robinson** announced in late June the launch of Sprouthouse Agency, formerly Polished Pig Media, to reflect the depth of expanded company offerings including branding, design, and social media, in addition to core expertise in media relations. Sprouthouse has 28 employees and six locations.

**Kay Reed**, executive chef and owner of Iz Café and Iz Weddings & Events, was named one of the 2019



“Top 50 Over 50” by Positive Maturity in Birmingham. The award recognizes her success and lifelong achievement in business.

**Andrea Griffith**, executive chef at Pursell Farms, a leisure resort in Alabama, has won the 2019 Birmingham Iron Chef Competition.

Proceeds from the event are used to support local and international Rotary programs.



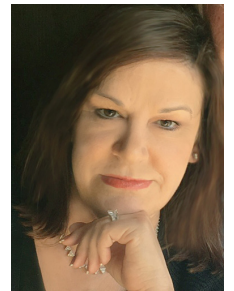
**Cathy Sloss Jones**, president and CEO of Sloss Real Estate Company, Inc. has received an Executive of Influence Award

2019 from the *Birmingham Business Journal*. The company was also



recognized in the BBJ Building Birmingham Awards for influential local projects including three food-related sites: Back Forty Birmingham, The Lumbar, and Blueprint Building.

**Jan Walsh** was named one of 50 Tech Leaders 2019 by InterCon: The Internet Conference for the internet model she developed in Birmingham-Restaurants.com and afterwards replicated in medical and legal verticals across Alabama. Judging criteria included overall reach, industry impact, innovative spirit, future readiness, and market demand.



## Website Update: Special Features

By Rachel West

Our archive of newsletters, starting in 2017, can be downloaded from our website at [ldeibirmingham.org/newsletter](http://ldeibirmingham.org/newsletter). But you'll soon notice a new section on that page housing the special features that some of our members have written in recent years.

These special features are part of an on-going effort by our chapter's newsletter committee to document Birmingham's evolving food scene while also sharing the stories of those who had a hand in shaping our city's story,

setting us up for where we are today.

So far, those special features include Susan Swagler's interview with Jo Ellen O'Hara and Christiana Roussel's interview with Dolester Miles, which appeared in previous issues of this newsletter, as well as the latest addition: the story of *Cooking Light*, a brand that a number of our members worked on over the years and that undoubtedly influenced the food culture of Birmingham. There are more of these kinds of stories planned. Look for this new section of the website in the coming weeks.

©2019 Les Dames d'Escoffier,  
Birmingham chapter  
P.O. Box 43542  
Birmingham, Alabama 35243

No part of this newsletter may be reproduced in any form without the prior written permission of the chapter president.

Newsletter committee members:  
Martha Johnston (co-chair),  
Rachel West (co-chair), Brooke Bell,  
Leigh Sloss-Corra, Susan Green,  
Susan Swagler, and Jan Walsh