



Les Dames d'Escoffier
INTERNATIONAL



Founded in 2013

Ideibirmingham.org

Summer 2018

President's Note

Dearest Dames,
Greetings to all of you! Our chapter has been very active this year with some fun program activities provided us by program chair, Christiana Roussel. All of these occasions provide the opportunity for all of us to get to know each other better so we can work together on our committees with our newly found friends. Special thanks to membership chair, Gia McCollister, for doing such a great job gathering all the data for our applicants. Our new membership recruitment went extremely well this year as our Membership Committee finished interviewing nine outstanding candidates earlier this April. All of you will receive the resumes and photos of these professional women via email this summer so that you will have a chance to familiarize yourself with them and cast your vote at our Annual Business Meeting in August.

Plans and meetings are underway for our annual fundraiser, Champagne & Fried Chicken. Our chair, Kathy G. Mezrano, recommended we change our name to something more elegant and so we are working on it as I type

continued on page 3, see Letter

A chat with James Beard-nominated pastry chef Dolester Miles



After garnering her third consecutive James Beard Award nomination for outstanding pastry chef, Dolester Miles of Highlands Bar & Grill and Bottega, sat down with Dame Christiana Roussel to talk about her career in food. Read that interview on page 4. Photo by Cary Norton.

Scholarship and Grant Recipients Named

By Martha Johnston

The Scholarship and Outreach Committee, co-chaired by Rosemary Dallam and Anne Cain, is pleased to announce the winners of our 2018-19 awards.

Teacher Grants, 5 available at \$200 each:

- Lauren Bolding, Albertville High School

- Melissa Allphin, Moody High School
- Diann Pilgrim, Wenonah High School, Birmingham City Schools

An additional \$200 each was awarded to Bolding and McAllphin

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Potential new member social and nominees list



2018 New Member Nominees

Take the opportunity to get to know these outstanding women who have been nominated for membership.

- Barbara Gaines: owner, Happy Event
- Andrea Griffith: executive chef, Pursell Farms
- Rebel Negley: general manager, Color Code Cookies, LLC
- Kate Nicholson: recipe editor, Meredith Corporation
- Rosie Pihakis: director of marketing, Jim 'N Nick's Bar B Q
- 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, Homested Fines



On March 28, Kathy Mezrano hosted Dames and our current nominees for membership at The Gardens Café. All enjoyed the wonderful food and beverages Chef Jason Mezrano and the staff had prepared.

Top left: Erin Isabell, Sidney Fry, Becky Satterfield, and Mary Esther Carpenter
Very top: Susan Nash Gilpin, Kathryn Strickland, and Kate Nicholson
Above: Idie Hastings, Rebecca Williamson, Sherron Goldstein, and Ashley Tarver

Fall Fundraiser Update: Event will be held Oct. 7

By Martha Johnston

Kathy Mezrano, chair of our 2018 fall fundraiser, is hard at work getting committees and plans in place for the event on Sunday, October 7, at Jones Valley Teaching Farm. She is positive that we can make this year's event even more successful than our first.

Do you have any great ideas for enhancing the reach of the event by

changing the existing name [Champagne & Fried Chicken] to be more inclusive? Send your thoughts to Kathy as this is one of the first items on our checklist. The sponsorship team wants to be able to attract other "beverages", and the ticket sales team wants to reach a larger audience.

If you want to stay on the same committee you worked on last year, just let Kathy know. If not, please

email her and let her know which team you want to volunteer for.

Know a potential sponsor? Contact Idie Hastings or Martha Johnston and they'll work with you on reaching out to each.

This event is a wonderful way to make a difference in the amount of scholarship/grant money we can award, and also a good way to know your fellow Dames better. Get involved!

Letter, continued from page 1

these notes. In changing the name of our event, we will have a strong emphasis tag on LDEI Birmingham so Birmingham will know it is the same amazing group from our event last year. More information will be forthcoming as we develop and plan. All of our membership is encouraged to be involved in every phase of planning and execution. Please email me: beckysatterfield@gmail.com so I can keep you on our planning calendar for our meetings. October 8, 2018 at JVTFT tentatively has been slated for this year. Auburn and Alabama will be out of town the day before. And we

Scholarship, continued from page 1

to support their High School ProStart Competition State Winning Teams that traveled to Rhode Island in April to compete in the National event.

Community College Student Scholarship: \$1000

- Rebecca N. Klang from Jefferson State Community College
- ## 4-Year College Scholarships: \$1,000 each

- Hope Etheridge, Samford University Dietetics major
- Sydney Smith, Samford University Dietetics major
- Ally Cound, Auburn University Nutrition major

The Committee had originally planned to award two 4-year college scholarships. However, since there were no applications for the graduating high school student category, the group opted to award a third scholarship to a 4-year college applicant.

These winners will each be presented an Award Certificate during Award Events at the institutions

anticipate doubling our fundraising goal this year.

The Gumbo Gala and the Southern Cooking Showdown were a great success April 21, and a lot of fun. We look forward to judging for them next year.

This week, I've met with the Fundraising Committee/Outreach Committee, including chair, Rosemary Dallam, and co-chair Anne Cain. Make time to read the article announcing our winners and the two remaining awards we will be making at a later date. We have established a new Entrepreneur Grant in addition to the Nonprofit Award we have already. We want to hear from

all of you with nominees for each of these.

Ashley Tarver is doing a great job gathering all the bio information from our membership so we can complete our website. There are only a handful who haven't responded. Please send your bio to Ashley as soon as possible so we can finish this project.

Keep your eyes on your email inbox so you don't miss out on what we are doing next—together as a unified group of one of the most outstanding organizations in the world for women.

Best always,
Becky

where they study. All award and scholarship winners will be honored at our October fundraising event, and each will be participating in at least one of our LDEI events during the coming year.

Still to come, the Scholarship and Outreach Committee will be sharing criteria and the nominating process for two other awards in early May. All active dames are urged to submit candidates for each of the following awards that will be announced in late June:

- **Nonprofit Award: \$2,000**
The organization should have established goals similar to those of the Dames and demonstrate support of the industry. It should also have women in management roles.



Becky Satterfield and Rosemary Dallam presented Rebecca N. Klang a \$1,000 LDEI Community College Scholarship on April 27, at the awards ceremony at Jeff State Community College.

- **New Entrepreneur Award: \$3,000**
Women who apply or are nominated for this award should have an established business plan demonstrating the goals, strategies, and financial needs of their Alabama business. Each applicant must have been in operation for 2 to 3 years, and the business must fit in the scope of practice of LDEI.

Watch your inbox for further information on these awards.

In the Sweet Spot: Dolester Miles

Dol is the gold standard for elevating the art of dessert one recipe at a time

By Christiana Roussel

Sitting down to chat with Pastry Chef Dolester Miles at 2:00 in the afternoon, you quickly realize that this is her usual quitting time. You can tell she is tired and perhaps more than a little ready to get home and relax but then again, she did get to work at 5:30 this morning. However, the mere mention of what it means to be nominated for a James Beard Award in a field that is clearly her passion brings a light to her eyes. She clasps her hands together, drawing them to her face, almost hiding behind them in an effort to contain her excitement. Lucky for us she landed here and not in Silicon Valley.

Bypassing a degree in computer science, Miles instead opted to try her hand in the restaurant world, starting with Chef Frank Stitt as garde manger when he opened the doors to Highlands Bar & Grill in 1982. When he settled on opening Bottega, it was decided that there was more room to work in that space and all desserts would be made there. Dol and her cousin Verba Ford who was also working at Highlands at that time, asked for the chance to take over the program. Having been in that role ever since, Dol daily creates that famous coconut cake, that rich chocolate tart, that heady lemon meringue tart, and all the other seasonal delights that make diners at Bottega, Highlands Bar & Grill, and Chez Fon Fon swoon. One thing is for sure: Dolester Miles has found her sweet spot.



All photos by Cary Norton.

So, you're a James Beard Foundation Award finalist in the Outstanding Pastry Chef category for the third year in a row (winners to be announced May 7th). Of course, all of Birmingham is cheering you on since regular Highlands Bar & Grill and Bottega diners have always known your confections are the best. Given that you have been making many of the same desserts for decades, why do you think the foundation is just now seeing fit to nominate you?

I have been asking myself that same question! I really don't know!

Maybe they saw the Southern Foodways Alliance film about you! (<https://www.southernfoodways.org/film/dol/>)

That was really so nice...

Competitions are notoriously fickle. But tell us what would it

mean to finally win the award?

It would be an awesome unbelievable achievement, but then again, I already feel like that just being nominated! Last year, the person who won had a name similar to mine. When I first heard it, I almost had a heart attack.

Is there ever a dessert you always wanted to put on the menu but did not get to?

Not really. But there have been things we've made that just didn't sell well.

We can't imagine a Dolester creation not selling out!

You just never know how something will sell. Sometimes a dessert has a name that people don't like so we rename it and it sells. Other times, we try and sell something here at Bottega and will only sell one or two it but if we offer the same dessert down at Highlands,



we'll sell 30. Strawberry cobbler is one example. We only sold a few here so we changed it to a strawberry crostada, which sold better. We sent the cobblers to Highlands and sold almost 40.

That makes us curious. So you make everything here at Bottega and then transfer the Highlands desserts every day? That must require an armored truck!

It is a short drive, just down the hill, not a big deal. (Note: she did not tell me what time the desserts leave Bottega for Highlands—that must be a trade secret.)

Over the years, you've had a few co-workers leave the Bottega kitchen and go on to do other things—Geri-Martha O'Hara (a new member nominee) and Dame Brittany Garrigus are just a couple names that come to mind. How have you mentored them?

Well, it helps when you know they already have a passion for what they are doing. Geri-Martha would come in every day, talking about wanting to make ice cream. When the (Big Spoon Creamery)



opportunity finally presented itself, I told her to go for it!

The other advice I give is to tell people to read through the whole recipe before they start something. There is nothing worse than getting a couple steps in and reading that something has to chill for eight hours.

Another thing I do is have all my ingredients measured out before I begin. That way, I am less likely to get to the end and forget about adding something. Everything is out and ready to go.

We hear you like to watch Food Network shows in your downtime. Do you think you'd ever like to have your own show? What if there is ever an Iron Chef: Pastry Chef edition?

Oh, no. I could never do that. I would be way too nervous to be on TV. I would like to watch it

though. Then again, you know, you can't just throw together desserts like you can the savory things. That might not work.

When you're looking for inspiration, whose recipes do you go back to again and again?

Martha Stewart and Ina Garten. Their recipes always work.

Chef Stitt has so many folks who've worked with him for decades. Why do you think that is?

He is very calm and easy to work with and knowledgeable. I really feel like he is a brother to me. When he comes back from being out of town, he is so excited to share with us where he's been and what he ate and drank. There is just something about him and Pardis; I just love them.

Birmingham Dames take part in the Southern Foodways Alliance Winter Symposium

By Susan Swagler

On February 24, some 150 people traveled to Birmingham from all over the country to explore what it means to produce, grow, cook, eat, and love food in the South. They gathered for the Southern Foodways Alliance 2018 Winter Symposium, and Dames Pardis Stitt, Becky Satterfield, Angela Schmidt, Melany Robinson, Leigh Sloss-Corra, Sheron Goldstein, and Susan Swagler were there.

Most of the people who attended are experts in their food-related fields. They are James Beard Foundation Award-winning restaurateurs and chefs as well as some of the latest crop of nominees. They are coffee growers, food writers, oral historians, educators, activists, photographers, farmers, and filmmakers. Some folks were there simply because they love Southern food, and that was fine, too.

“Narratives that Transform” was the theme of the symposium, and it promised a day of many different kinds of stories. Food-related stories matter, says SFA director John T. Edge. “The stories we tell each other change our place and change us.”

The symposium started with a concert of corridos (storytelling folk songs) by the celebrated female mariachi band La Victoria. The trio had traveled to Birmingham a few days early to meet with people in the local Hispanic community for a corrido workshop. El Corazón de Alabama (The Heart of Alabama) was the result, and these collaborators joined La Victoria on stage for that song.



Angela Schmidt and Becky Satterfield were two of the Birmingham dames who attending the Southern Foodways Alliance Winter Symposium in February.

Other highlights included CNN’s Moni Basu talking about growing up in an Indian household in the American South and how food narratives can effect change.

Fawn Weaver and Clay Risen talked about Nathan “Nearest” Green, the former slave whom many believe taught Jack Daniel how to distill whiskey. And filmmaker Ava Lowrey debuted *Dol*, a short documentary about Dolester Miles, the three-time James Beard-nominated pastry chef at Highlands Bar & Grill. *Atlanta-Journal Constitution* reporter Rosalind Bentley talked

about the women who fed the Civil Rights Movement and sustained protestors with home-cooked meals respectfully served on their good china.

Of course there was lots of delicious food involved.

This started Friday night with clam chowder from Bettola’s James Lewis and Muscle Shoals native Adam Evans (formerly of The Optimist restaurant in Atlanta) who is opening a new restaurant in Birmingham. Saturday morning was fueled by fresh Royal Cup coffee and big pieces of Dolester Miles’s golden corncake with strawberry

preserves. Lunch was the work of Duane Nutter of the newly opened Southern National in Mobile. Chef Nutter’s salad of Sea Island Red Peas and Shrimp with Meyer Lemon Vinaigrette was a hit. Everything wrapped up with a deeply savory and delicious Conecuh County Gumbo from Dame Becky Satterfield, of Satterfield’s Restaurant in Cahaba Heights, and a happy hour featuring a variety of Alabama craft beers.

The SFA Winter Symposium has found a home in Birmingham and will return next year and the year after that because this place we call home remains an epicenter of important food stories.

Edge says: “We tell stories that we think will change people’s perceptions about the South, might change understandings about the South. And we’ve begun to tell those stories out of Birmingham. We think Birmingham is a citadel city of the South. If you want to tell stories about the food culture of the South, the drink culture of the South, this is the place to start.”

Birmingham Dames Judge 13th Annual Gumbo Gala



Pictured left to right: Dames Jan Walsh, Becky Satterfield, Kerry Kelley, Katherine Cobbs, Idie Hastings, Anne Cain, and Martha Johnston.

By Jan Walsh

Gumbo Gala is an annual gumbo cooking competition featuring backyard chefs, professional chefs, and students. The event benefits The Episcopal Place, which is home to low-income seniors and disabled adults. It provides them with affordable housing and access to related services in a home-like environment.

Gumbo Gala began 13 years ago when four couples from Louisiana moved into Episcopal Place after losing their homes to Hurricane Katrina. They missed their food, music, and culture, so Gumbo Gala was started in their honor.

I have been judging Gumbo Gala for more than a decade. A few years ago, I invited my “sisters” in the Birmingham Chapter of Les Dames d’Escoffier to join me in judging this annual event, and they have ever since.

This year’s event—held at Sloss Furnaces, National Historical Land-

mark on Saturday, April 21—was perhaps the most glorious gala yet. The weather was perfect, sisterhood was special, and gumbo was plentiful. Two tables of Dames judged this year’s entries, including Anne Cain, Katherine Cobbs, Idie Hastings, Martha Johnson, Kerry Kelley, and Becky Satterfield. Other judges included local media, foodies, and a local chef.

We judged 20 different gumbos per table for a synthesis of aroma, consistency, color, and taste. We did not always agree on the best bowl, which only added to the fun as we each defended our own choices and critiqued each other’s picks. But give and take won the day, and the winning categories included Chef’s Choices, Gumbo Divine, Students, People’s Choice, and Birmingham’s Best Backyard and Pro categories. Non-gumbo awards were also given for teams for spirit, fundraising, and art.

..... Dames Recommend

San Diego

Leigh Sloss-Corra

These days one of the best (and quickest) ways to get an overview of the local food scene is by visiting the farmers' market. Any city that cares about food will have a decent, well-organized market with a variety of farmers selling locally grown produce; food artisans selling specialty products like hand-crafted sauces, breads, and chocolates; and sometimes food producers on the leading edge of food trends, a step away from starting a food truck business or new restaurant. When the markets are beautiful, the produce and products varied and innovative *and* customers seem to be happily tasting, testing, and purchasing, you can guarantee there are lots of restaurants and eateries to explore in the area, and it may be a good idea to extend your trip or plan to come back.

A recent afternoon trip to San Diego included a quick stop at the North Park Farmers' Market, a Thursday afternoon/evening outdoor market in a trendy transitional neighborhood. Strolling past the tents, piles of heirloom tomatoes, citrus fruits and flowers gave way to a plethora of culinary delights including small batch hot sauces, coconut yogurt and kombucha, samosas and pakora, po'boys and gumbo, vegan tacos, kefir soda, honey mead and hand-dipped cabetos (ice cream) pops. Next time we will have to stay for the weekend.



A vendor selling mead at the North Park Farmers' Market in San Diego during Leigh Sloss-Corra's recent trip.

Mexico

Betsy McAtee

In mid-March, Kathy Mezrano and I journeyed to the beautiful city of Merida, Yucatan, Mexico to join other Dames on an exploration of the "Flavors of Mexico" hosted by the Mexico LDEI Chapter.

The area has a rich heritage of Mayan and European influences including Spanish, French, British, Lebanese and Dutch. We saw the latter in the region's architecture, clothing, and especially cooking. We quickly discovered that the culinary delights of a typical Yucatecan kitchen come from the mouth-watering mixture of European and Mexican flavors. By combining flavors like pumpkin seeds, oregano, sour orange, achiote, sweet pepper, cilantro, habanero, purple onion, and xcatic peppers, locals produce their famous Yucatecan cuisine.

Upon arrival we received the Mayan Blessing by a Chaman. This

customary ceremony is used for the initiation of a celebration in every town in Merida. Later we followed musicians and dancers performing "La Danza del Cochino" to our dinner at La Tradicion. La Tradicion is an award winning restaurant by Chef David Certina and featured local Yucatecan dishes from his family. We especially loved those from his grandmother!

One of the highlights of this trip was having Chef Jeremiah Tower as our special guest at this dinner. Tower, now a resident of Merida, gave us a background of the regional flavors and market specialties following the dinner.

Our first full day in Merida saw the group traveling to the Hacienda Sotuta de Peon for a private tour of a Henequen Plantation. The highlight of the day was a refreshing swim in a Cenote typically found only in the Yucatan area. Cenote is a sinkhole that contains ground-



water that is crystal clear and so refreshing. After our swim, we enjoyed a private lunch at the Hacienda before departing.

For dinner, the group traveled to Pueblo Pibil for a dinner with Chef Silvio Capos. Pibil is a Mayan word than means buried and this restaurant showcases the tradition of cooking underground. The custom dates back over a hundred years. Our dinner, which was cooked underground, featured a stuffed round zucchini filled with ground turkey, pine nuts, raisins, cinnamon, nutmeg and white sweet potato. After dinner we were treated to delicious peanut marzipan delights along with mamey ice cream.

We started the next day at the local Mercado (market). It was a traditional market containing fresh fruits, vegetables, and spices where we gathered the ingredients for our day of cooking with the Las Mujeres Mayas. These Mayan women prepared us a traditional breakfast

Above: Kathy Mezrano and Betsy McAtee toasting outside the cenote at the Hacienda Sotuta de Peon at the Henequen Plantation.

At right: Hayley Matson-Mathis, President LDEI International, Betsy McAtee, Dianne Blancato [Winston-Salem], Kathy Mezrano attending the final dinner at Kuuk Restaurant in Merida.



before we all started working in groups to prepare our lunch. We enjoyed learning about the different flavors as we cooked cochinita pibil, lime soup, black stuffing, Chaya quesadilla and Relleno Negro (black turkey stew). Our favorite recipe of the entire day was a dip prepared with ground pumpkin seeds, charred peppers, cilantro and salt and served with tortilla chips called Sikil p'ak! We definitely

enjoyed the decadent lunch at Hacienda Ochil.

That evening we were treated to a VIP video mapping performance at the town square as guests of the Merida's Tourism Board. Both the mayor of Merida and her staff greeted us. We tasted street food during the event and moved onto a special dinner prepared by Chef Luisteen Gonzale in collaboration with Chef Melena Kendra.

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On our last day in the area we toured the magnificent Chichen Itza, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. After our tour we enjoyed lunch in a traditional cantina, Eladios.

We felt very special as las calezas (horse-drawn carriage) drove us through the streets of Merida in our custom made el hipil dresses (Yucatan celebration dress) prior to dinner. Exploring the city of Merida by carriage allowed us to view the European architecture within the city center. The farewell dinner was hosted by Chef Pedro Evia at his renowned restaurant, Kuuk.

As we departed for home, we said goodbye to new friends we made along the way and agreed we'll eagerly await the next adventure!

Denver

Ashley Tarver

Following a recent trip to Denver, I have a couple of restaurants to recommend:

- Guard and Grace: It has a phenomenal wine list and sommelier as well as steaks and seafood with an Asian twist
- Mercantile Provisions at Union Station: Not only is the train station active and a wonderful example of architecture, but also the restaurant has a beautiful charcuterie board and works extensively with local farmers.

Atlanta

Ashley Tarver

One of my new favorites in Atlanta is: Rumi's Kitchen. This phenomenal Persian restaurant is located on Roswell Road in Sandy Springs. Rumi's has been open 5 years and serves beautiful and tasty Persian foods.



Denver's historic Union Station is home to Mercantile Provisions restaurant.

Events Calendar

Sunday, May 20	2:30 til 5:15 p.m.	Pursell Farms Tour and Cocktail Reception Sylacauga, AL \$37.50
Wednesday, June 27	TBD	Hypertufa Class at Thigpen's Garden Gallery Pepper Place Cost TBD
Friday, June 15		Birmingham LDEI Officer Nominations Close [Paperwork to be submitted to Martha Johnston]

Book Club: Cinnamon and Gunpowder

By Susan Swagler

The Book Group had been trying for several months to discuss *Cinnamon and Gunpowder* by Eli Brown, but the gathering kept being postponed. So Dame Jan Gautro called for a cocktail meeting at Seasons 52 on Tuesday, February 20, to once and for all have the discussion and move on to the next book. Gautro, Susan Green, Ann Cain, Laura Zapalowski and Susan Swagler attended.

This book was not nearly as serious a read as the previous choice, *The Belly of Paris* (written in 1873 by Emile Zola); nonetheless, it led

to a great discussion. With lots of adventure and a pirate ship romance, this book, set in 1819, is a well-written twist on the tale of Scheherazade, the storyteller in *One Thousand and One Nights*.

An accomplished chef named Owen Wedgwood is kidnapped by the ruthless pirate Mad Hannah Mabbot. She says she will spare his life as long as he puts exquisite food in front of her every Sunday without fail. Wedgwood's supplies are meager, but he's incredibly resourceful. He makes bread from a starter he leavens in a tin under his shirt; he smokes fresh eel with tea and brews pineapple-apple cider.

Life becomes especially delicious when he discovers miso.

The group talked about how Mabbot actually is based on a real woman pirate, Ching Shih, who, in the first part of the 19th century, terrorized the South China Sea. Ching Shih commanded some 1,800 ships and 80,000 men.

While the book group didn't cook items from the book for this meeting, they enjoyed some exotic flavors with duck wing "lollipops" with a gochujang glaze, hummus, shishito peppers and citrus-based cocktails. In the end, this was a discussion well worth the wait.

Book Club: White Truffles in Winter

By Susan Swagler

Anne Cain, Susan Gilpin, Jan Gautro, and Susan Swagler gathered with homemade dishes and rosé from Provence to discuss N.M. Kelby's *White Truffles in Winter*—historical fiction about Auguste Escoffier.

Fittingly, there were a couple of egg dishes (Escoffier is said to have known some 600 different ways to prepare eggs) in addition to a lovely, garlicky "city salad" and fried chicken with dipping sauce.

The women talked about how Escoffier became an astonishing, groundbreaking chef and he also simplified French cooking, co-created the Ritz Hotel chain, and wrote cookbooks like *Le Guide Culinaire* (still in print!) that changed the way we consider cooks and cooking and even food itself.

The historical fiction presented a personal side of Escoffier, based on fact, that didn't always paint him in the best light. Three differ-



ent women joined Escoffier at the heart of this novel: his wife, the poet Delphine Daffis, whose hand in marriage he won in a pool game; his reputed lover the infamous actress Sarah Bernhardt for whom he cooked scrambled eggs to go with her glasses of Moet; and the fictitious Sabine, a servant in his home when he was at the end of his life. Discussion included Escoffier and

his contributions to the food world, the women who founded our organization, and the various roles of women in Escoffier's day.

Escoffier created and named hundreds of dishes for famous and not-so-famous people (but not for his wife), and the book group members had a fun conversation about what dishes they might create and name for someone they love.

Dames Judge Southern Cookin' Showdown

By Martha Johnston

SafeHouse of Shelby County invited Birmingham Dames to judge the 2nd Annual Southern Cookin' Showdown on April 21st. The event was held at Summer Classics in Pelham. In addition to the cooking competition, there was live music, formal judging and awards, entertainment, and other activities.

The Southern Cookin' Showdown had nine competitors who entered a variety of categories: meats, desserts, vegetables, and snacks. Each team was also rated on booth décor, enthusiasm, and creativity. All the attendees could sample each of the items prepared. Dames Rosemary Dallam, Kay Reed, and Rosalyn Bloomston had a good time judging and felt it was a huge success for a worthy cause.



Dames Rosalyn Bloomston, Kay Reed, and Rosemary Dallam judge the 2nd Annual Southern Cookin' Showdown to raise money for SafeHouse. Photo credit: Don't Blink Photography.

SafeHouse helps women and children in immediate need of emergency shelter and also provides comprehensive services to victims of violence. The

organization has been in existence nearly 30 years and works to help clients sustain a life of independence that is free from abuse.

Dames Brunch at the new Crestline Bagel Location

By Christiana Roussel

Dames Susan Green and Jennifer Yarbrough planned the perfect Sunday social recently at the new Crestline Bagel Co. location in Cahaba Heights. As part of the retail/gustatory trifecta that also includes El ZunZún and Leaf & Petal, it was the ideal location to meet up with friends, old and new. Saturday had been warm and blustery with overnight rains which ushered in some much colder temps. Jennifer had arranged a private table for our group inside the greenhouse, with Leaf & Petal owner Jamie Pursell. Aside from being a welcome respite from the biting wind, we all enjoyed the sneak peek of this gorgeous

new space. We can already tell this will be the crown jewel of the neighborhood. Enjoying coffee with friends amongst the fiddle leaf ferns and kalanchoe flowers provided

a relaxed opportunity to visit with Dames Sherron Goldstein, Susan Gilpin, Angela Schmidt, Christiana Roussel, Jan Gautro, Susan Swagler, Ashley McMakin, and Becky Satterfield; nominees Rebecca Williamson and Kate Nicholson who were able to stop by and say hello as well.



We see this as the first of many good times that will take place on Crosshaven Drive, as El ZunZún gets up and running and summer comes bearing her invitation to stop and smell the roses. And lavender. And rosemary.

Better Together: Food and Wine Pairing

By Leigh Sloss-Corra

On the last day of February, talented women from around the Southeast gathered in downtown Birmingham for a full-day leadership conference organized by Momentum, the top leadership program for executive women in Alabama. Held biennially, this year's conference was attended by over 800 women (and a few men), with standing ovation keynote speakers, standing-room-only breakout sessions and enthusiastic networking throughout the day over food and drink. To wrap up this year's conference, whose theme was "Better Together," the Birmingham chapter of Les Dames d'Escoffier was invited to host the closing reception, pairing different wines with signature dishes and food specialties. Catering superstar Dame Kathy Mezrano (of Kathy G) coordinated the Dames and their menu.

At the reception, conference attendees were invited to sample the wide variety of beautifully prepared and presented small bites and meet with the Dames who created them. As top women in business, the attendees were excited to learn more about LDEI and were impressed by how many women dominate the uber-trendy food scene in Birmingham. Dame Andrea Snyder of the growing Urban Cookhouse empire served up healthy acai bowls from her new restaurant, Farm Bowl. Birmingham LDEI President Becky Satterfield (of Satterfield's) and former Birmingham LDEI President Angela Schmidt offered Latin-flavored pulled pork tacos and other bites from El ZunZún, the much-an-



Above: Andrea Snyder shares healthy acai bowls from her latest restaurant, Farm Bowl, to attendees of this year's Momentum conference.

At left: Pat Terry speaks with one of the conference attendees.

anticipated new restaurant opening in Cahaba Heights. Cookbook author Dame Sherron Goldstein set out a lavish spread of smoked salmon canapes, while Kathy G served pimento cheese "pick-up cups" with crudites. Sweet treats finished the menu, with chocolate layer cake squares by Dame Telia Johnson, and goat-cheesecake bites prepared by Dame Deborah Stone of The Pantry and Stone Hollow Creamery and cooking educator Dame Pat Terry.

The "Better Together Food and Wine Pairing" was attended by almost 400 people, the highest

number ever for this conference's closing reception. The shared missions and energy of Momentum and LDEI were in fact "Better Together" for all involved. Many pledged to seek out and visit the Dames' restaurants often, and to more deliberately support women in the food industry in the future. It was a satisfying end to a great day for top women in Alabama. The Momentum planning team expressed deep gratitude and is already planning more ways to team up with and support LDEI in the months and years to come.

Special Event: An Afternoon at Pursell Farms

By Christiana Roussel

Located just a short drive down Highway 280 in Sylacauga, AL, Pursell Farms is a sanctuary for anyone who loves wide open spaces, mountain vistas, challenging golf, relaxing spa treatments or just a seat by the pool. Join your fellow dames for an afternoon — Sunday, May 20th — at Pursell Farms as we enjoy the following:

- 2:30pm – 3:30pm: Cocktail Hour at Inn with passed hors d'oeuvres
 - 3:30pm – 4:15pm: Tour of Commercial Kitchen & Restaurants with LDEI BHM nominee, Chef Andrea Griffith
 - 4:15pm – 5:15pm: Tour of Pursell Grounds + Gardens
- Dames with more time are invited to stay for dinner and spend the night at the Inn (special rates are available for our group).

This special event is limited to 50 guests, with first priority going to Dames and new member nominees. Any additional spots may be filled by guests. The cost for this event is \$37.50, payable by Venmo to @Christiana-Roussel, Programs Chair.

Questions? Please contact Christiana at 205.222.1025 or email her at: Christiana.Roussel@gmail.com

LDEI Bham Program: Hospitality

Many Dames have mentioned the desire to share information and best practices on the subject of hospitality—from how to hire the best service-minded employees to training and on-going education. The programs committee is looking to conduct such an event in the very near future.

Please email Christiana Roussel with any contacts or resources you

may know of to assist with this event. Have you heard an insightful, knowledgeable speaker? Have you participated in a helpful training session? Are you a member of any other organization that provides effective training in this area? What specific topics would be of interest to you at a meeting like this? Also, let us know if you have a space for this event that you are willing to offer.

Board Nominations are Open

By Martha Johnston

If you [or a Dame you know] have leadership skills, time, and abilities to share with LDEI Birmingham, please consider becoming a candidate for a position on our board. Leadership plays a critical role in keeping our chapter moving toward a strong future. The Nominating Committee will be accepting nominations for President, Vice President of Membership, and Secretary.

On May 15, you will receive information on the nominating procedure, officer commitment requirements, and specific duties

for the offices we will be filling. Please consider who would be an effective leader and best meet the needs of the membership. Members can self-nominate or nominate another Dame. Both Gia McCollister [VP of Membership] and Brooke Bell [Secretary] are more than willing to share what the responsibilities and time commitment are.

Applications will be due to the Nominating Committee by Friday, June 15. If you have questions, contact Martha Johnston, chair of the Nominating Committee.

Update: Wine, Women & Shoes Event

Lesley DeCastro Vedel and Courtney Pate were the winning bidders on the LDEI Bham auction item included in the recent Baptist Health Foundation's Wine, Women & Shoes event. This one auction item helped garner more than \$3,500 for the organization and Lesley and Courtney are super eager to get started redeeming their items!

Two tickets to our annual Champagne & Fried Chicken Picnic were auctioned separately and brought in almost \$500.

Christiana Roussel will be in touch with each dame who generously contributed items for this event, to coordinate redemption. THANK YOU AGAIN DAMES!"

Let's Toast

Chef **Maureen Holt** has been named general manager/chef for Carlile's BBQ founded in 1945. Formerly in fine dining, Holt is excited to be on the pitmaster journey and bringing a more contemporary look to the menu while keeping favorites like Smoked Beef Brisket and the Baggett Burger.

A Media Party on April 19 in Cahaba Heights celebrated the opening of three new businesses in the area. Congratulations to **Jennifer Yarbrough** on the new Crestline Bagel Co. location where you can get freshly baked breads, breakfast sandwiches, 10 different flavored cream cheeses, 16 flavors of bagels, and custom-blended coffee.

In addition, **Becky Satterfield**, chef and restaurateur, has teamed up with chef **Angela Schmidt**, to create an authentic Latin American restaurant specializing in food heavy on fresh produce, intriguing flavors, and avant-garde cocktails. El ZunZún, will open mid-summer. The celebration was held at the new Leaf & Petal on Crosshaven Drive. Food and drink were provided by Crestline Bagel Co. and El ZunZún.



Above left: Kathy G. Mezrano and Jennifer Yarbrough.



Above right: Ashley McMakin, Alexis Douglas, and Erin Isbell.



At right: Chef Angela Schmidt sharing some of the menu items from the soon-to-open El ZunZún.

Favorite Things Party a Hit



The rain cleared just in time for the first annual LDEI Bham "Favorite Things" party on Feb. 26, at the John Hand Club. After enjoying a glass or two of wine and delicious appetizers, Dames took their seats for the real fun—sharing three of their favorite things, each priced under \$10, and choosing their own treasures to take home.

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Newsletter committee members: Martha Johnston (chair), Jan Walsh, Christiana Roussel, Leigh Sloss-Corra, and Rachel West