

# PANACHE

Quarterly Newsletter, Les Dames D'Escoffier Chicago

Spring 2017



In This Issue: [Members' cookbook faves](#) [President's letter](#) [Photo gallery](#)

## Inspiration from the Winter Fancy Food Show

By Sharon Olson 🌿

The first glimpse of the newest foods, flavors and ingredient trends of the year were on display at the Specialty Food Association's Winter Fancy Food Show in San Francisco. With more than 80,000 products from 1,400 companies, this show attracts a wide range of food business segments including specialty and gourmet retail, supermarkets, mass merchandisers and foodservice. The U.S. specialty food industry continues to post double digit growth with sales estimated at \$120.5 billion.

### Trend Spotting Highlights

#### Free-from claims and healthful benefits.

Vendors were happy to point out what was not in their products, and among the most notable claims were: non-GMO, gluten-free, no added sugar and no artificial ingredients.

**Medicinal Notes.** Tonics, elixirs and foods with ingredients offering health benefits were available in almost every category.

**Single Origin.** Especially in coffee and chocolate categories, the allure of an exotic origin with limited supply was irresistible.

**Small-Batch Production.** The new term for artisan-made is becoming small-batch production; company founders were delighted to share their passion for quality and explain the exquisite attention to detail in production techniques.

**Hot Ingredients.** Chickpeas, coconut, matcha and an expansive variety of grains were the focal point of many new products. Pantry staples re-imagined also abounded, such as mayo made with coconut or avocado oil.

**Comfort in a Jar.** Classic comfort with a twist is perennially on trend, and this year the container du jour seems to be the mason jar, and its creative presentations range from breakfast to cocktails.

**Serious and Playful.** Recognizing the diversity of consumers, there were products positioned as wicked and rebellious, as well as virtuous and vegan — each appealing to a unique audience.

### Appealing to Modern Consumers

**Avoidance Behavior.** Consumers are dieting less, but are avoiding particular ingredients such as sugar and gluten. According to a recent Culinary Visions Panel study, 56 percent of consumers surveyed said they were limiting certain ingredients in their diets.

**Tradition with A Twist Appeals.** Even new-age sack foods often appear with traditional flavors updated just a bit, such as pink salt, honey spiced-barbecue and peppercorn ranch.

**Convenience without Compromise.** Foods and beverages that are convenient and hassle-free without any compromise in flavor or authenticity charm consumers.

**Wellness is Multi-faceted.** Whether it is energy, detoxing or relaxation, the power of foods and beverages to enhance life continues to gain momentum.

| The Fancy Food Show in San Francisco featured 80,000 products from 1,400 companies.



| Matcha, the green tea powder, flavored many products at the show, including cookies.





# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Chicago Dames,

As I look forward to spring, I have visions of rebirth and new possibilities, tender vegetables, and one of my favorite parlor tricks, standing eggs upright on the vernal equinox!

By now, I hope you have familiarized yourself with our new website. Thank you, communications chair Amelia Levin, for sharing your talent. One of the newest exciting features includes a members-only login where we will be able to sign up and pay for events right on our site, rather than Brown Paper Tickets. This portal also will include a secure member directory, newsletter archives, email communications directly to board and committee members, and more. There still are additions and enhancements to be made. Regular announcements will appear in Amuse Bouche.

Thank you, also, to Anne Kauffman for stepping in and helping out with Amuse while Amelia is on a much-needed break, taking care of her new baby girl, Lily!

The policy committee, chaired by Nancy Brassat with input from Toria Emas, Nancy Harris, Veronica Hastings, and Polly Peters, met twice over the winter and will be making recommendations for changes to the handbook and bylaws.

Our membership committee, under the guidance of Veronica Hastings, is ramping up. I would like to extend my gratitude to the stellar committee working with Veronica through this process: Sharon Olson, Deborah Lesley-Rivera, Phaedra Ruffalo, and Carol Smoler.

This year, Brenda McDowell will head the nominating committee. Serving on the committee is Sharon Olson, Susan Lamb Parenti, Jean True and Marilyn Wilkinson. I would like express my gratitude in advance.

A number of board positions will be open this spring. Just a reminder: All board terms, with the exception of President, President-elect and Treasurer, are one-year commitments. Please feel free to contact Brenda or me if you care to throw your hat into the ring!

Lastly, it is hard to believe, but we are already discussing our next fundraiser, to be held in April 2018. Updates regarding the formation of committees and other activities will begin appearing shortly in Amuse Bouche.

Happy spring,



Les Dames d'Escoffier International

## Executive Board 2016-2017:

President: Mary Reidy McMahon  
President Elect: Veronica Hastings  
Past President: Julie Chernoff  
Treasurer: Jill Haas  
Secretary: Elizabeth Donovan

## Board of Directors:

Kathy Ruff  
Amelia Levin  
Roisin Hennerty  
Norma Maloney  
Margaret Laport  
Flora Caputo  
Carol Mighton Haddix

## A Fat Tuesday tour

By Julie S. Ratowitz 🌿

Twelve eager Dames found their way to Delightful Pastries in Jefferson Park on February 5 to get started on Fat Tuesday preparations. Hosted by pastry chef/owner Dobra Bielinski, we first learned the history of Tiusty Czwartek (Fat Thursday), as celebrated in Poland, and then we made our very own paczki (doughnuts) and chrusciki (angel wings).

As she filled the beautiful paczki with apricot jam, plum butter, or rosewater jelly, Bielinski explained that it's all about the dough; the filling is not the central point of the flavor. For the chrusciki, the simple twist of dough is fried, then covered in confectioners' sugar; it's a delicious pastry with coffee or tea, she said.

| Owner Dobra Bielinski demonstrates angel wings.



| Mary Kay Gill, left, and Toria Emas at Delightful Pastries



# Top Shelf: Members share their favorite cookbooks

By Carol Mighton Haddix 🌿

Spring is here! Well, technically. I'm so looking forward to the first local crops, the tender stalks of asparagus, rhubarb and baby spinach! It's the time I look to my shelves of cookbooks for simple but creative ways to use the first-of-the-season produce. Lately, I've been turning to one book for inspiration, "The A.O.C. Cookbook," by chef Suzanne Goin. It reflects the dishes she serves at her L.A. wine bar, A.O.C.: wonderful, seasonal dishes that often surprise, but are always flavorful, such as her grilled fish with couscous, apricots, yogurt and pistachio aioli. I use that herbed pistachio sauce on all types of seafood, as well as chicken.

What cookbooks do you turn to for seasonal inspiration or other great ideas? I decided to ask some Les Dames members that question, and received the following responses.

Nancy Brussat, a Dame of Distinction and owner of Convito Italiano, naturally turns to a classic: "Before I went on my Italian journeys and before I opened my café and market, my favorite cookbook was Marcella Hazan's 'The Classic Italian Cookbook.' It still is! If ever I want to explore in depth one of the recipes I learned from my Italian mentor, Wanda Bottino, I look it up in one of Marcella's cookbooks. Her recipes are straightforward, uncomplicated and guarantee a delicious outcome. To me, she represents all that is the joy of Italian eating."

But recently, Brussat also is excited about the Yotam Ottolenghi cookbooks: "Plenty," "Jerusalem," and "Ottolenghi." "I always find some recipe that is amazingly flavorful and colorful and looks intriguing to both cook and eat. My latest favorite is in the 'Ottolenghi' cookbook, roast potatoes and Jerusalem artichokes with lemon and sage. And it can be served at room temperature. How very convenient for a buffet!"

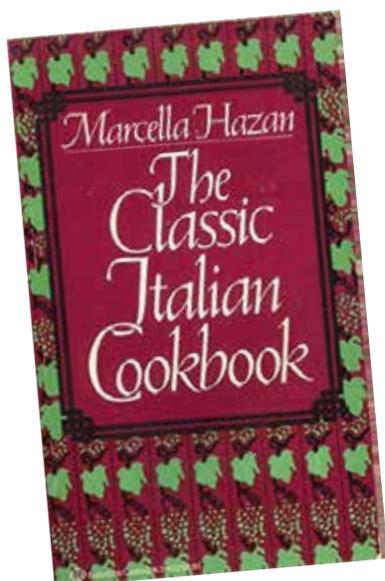
Freelance writer/editor Judy Hevrdejs mentioned several types of favorite books: "I was raised on Antoinette Pope's cookbooks (including a 1948 edition), coached in American classics by Marion Cunningham's 'The Fannie Farmer Cookbook,' and rely on Quintana, Kennedy and Bayless to refresh my memories of Mexico's cuisines. But Michael Roberts' 'Parisian

Home Cooking: Conversations, Recipes and Tips from the Cooks and Food Merchants of Paris,' a gift from my in-laws, is a favorite. It mixes a peek into Parisian home kitchens with storytelling and classic, easygoing recipes. Michaels' lentilles tiedes (warm lentils) — 'the potato salad of France' — is my go-to sidedish during grilling season.

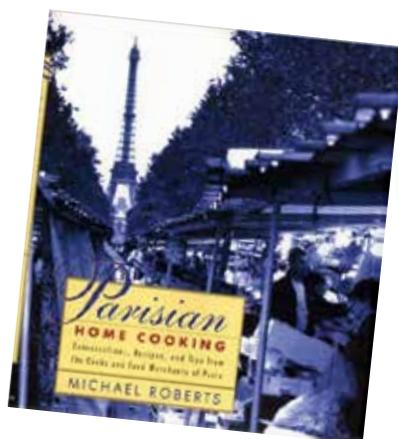
A book on soup calls to Nina Barrett, owner Bookends & Beginnings, Evanston, and a freelance food writer: "My current favorite workhorse cookbook is the recently updated 'Williams-Sonoma Soup of the Day: 365 Recipes for Every Day of the Year.' It seems to address a lot of my urgent culinary needs, such as eating a bowl full of something warming, and fixing something quick and simple, or fixing something slow and complicated that can be mostly made ahead and left in a crockpot, delivering leftovers that are usually even better. I also love that it's in calendar format so the recipes shift seasonally. We're finishing up all the different forms of squash and root vegetable concoctions now with an eye on recipes for asparagus-herb puree with lemon mascarpone, or artichoke, spring pea and mint soup!"

Indian recipes appeal to Rebecca Wheeler, cooking instructor and food tour guide: "I have a well-worn copy of an Indian cookbook, '5 Spices, 50 Dishes,' by Ruta Kahate, that I turn to again and again. The flavors are complex and authentic, yet most of the recipes are manageable enough for weeknight cooking. Some of my all-time favorites come from this book. Eggplant stuffed with a sesame-peanut masala and roasted lamb with burnt onions always receive rave reviews. It's amazing what a few spices can do to transform ingredients into something heavenly."

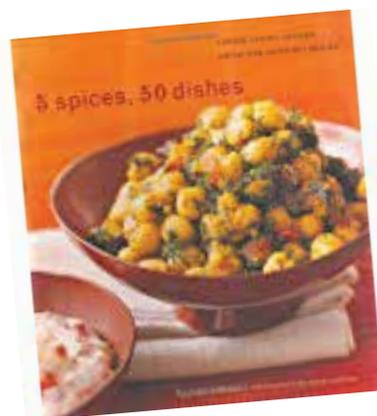
What is your go-to cookbook? Send the name and why you like it; we'll print it in a future article in Panache: [carolmighthaddix@gmail.com](mailto:carolmighthaddix@gmail.com)



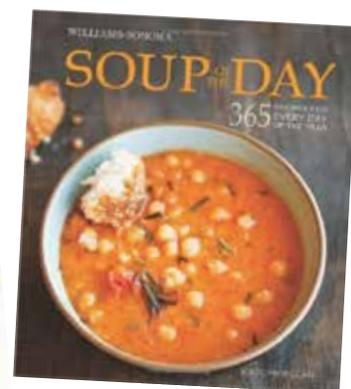
| A Nancy Brussat favorite



| A Judy Hevrdejs favorite



| A Rebecca Wheeler favorite



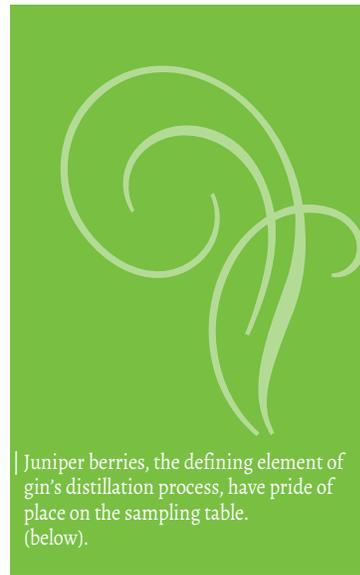
| A Nina Barrett favorite

# Photo Gallery: Winter Events Highlights



Spicy turkey meatballs lent a Spanish flavor to the Holiday Potluck (above).

Wild boar ragu over pasta was just one of the many memorable travel dishes from members at the Holiday Potluck in January. (below).



Juniper berries, the defining element of gin's distillation process, have pride of place on the sampling table. (below).



North Shore Distillery owners Sonja and Derek Kassebaum pose with "Ethel the Still," a German import that is the heart and soul of the operation.

Salads and roast chicken with tomatoes starred in the Dames Who Read meal in February. (below).



## What's coming up?

For future event listings and more, go to our newly redesigned website, [lesdameschicago.org](http://lesdameschicago.org).

## Panache Contributors

Editor: Carol Mighton Haddix

Contributing Editors: Sharon Olson, Julie S. Ratowitz

Design: Flora Caputo

Printing: Quartet Digital Printing

Distribution: Eleanor Hanson

© 2017 Les Dames d'Escoffier Chicago

