



Spring 2014 Issue

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LDEI-SF Newsletter

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE



Tanya Holland



Amy Hoopes

Dear San Francisco Dames,

Spring has sprung and we have even more daylight hours to do all that we want to do! Yes, we know you're busy, but we want to encourage you to maximize your membership by attending some of the wonderful events we have planned. The first up is [The Art of Eating](#) at the pastoral Audubon Canyon Ranch at the Bouvierie Preserve in Sonoma. It is where M.F.K. Fisher last resided and it's inspiring. This one of my favorite charity events...it makes you really appreciate being a Bay Area Dame as we have access to so much goodness. I'm a little biased this year as fried chicken will be served at the picnic style feast. I truly hope to see you there!

Speaking of big events, our chapter turns twenty-five this year and we're planning a big celebration at the invitation of Grand Dame Dolores Cakebread. Details to come!

but plan on a fun filled event at picturesque Cakebread Cellars.

Amy and I are also big fans of the LDEI annual conferences. This year's conference is held at the Royal Sonesta hotel in Cambridge, MA October 30th thru November 2nd. I encourage all to attend. The conference is very inspiring and gives you a greater sense of the mission of this organization as well as access to a welcoming network of like-minded professionals.

Our events are all over the Bay Area and different days and times of the week so there's something for everyone. Some are very educational, some are very social and some are both! A detailed list of upcoming events is at the end of this newsletter.

If at any time you have an idea for an event, please don't hesitate to suggest it.

Tanya and Amy

Letter from the Editor

Dear Sister Dames,

I want to thank everyone who not only sent their news to me but also those who willingly wrote accounts of our chapter's events. We were a busy bunch this year thanks to Kathleen Hill's organizing efforts, and there are more activities to come. Try to fit as many as possible into your busy schedules; it's a good way to get to know your sister Dames.

Fran Gage
fran@gages.com



ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT

Jeannette Ferry

Jeannette's photo featuring a ripe strawberry won the LDEI Food Day + Green Tables Eating Real photography contest last fall.



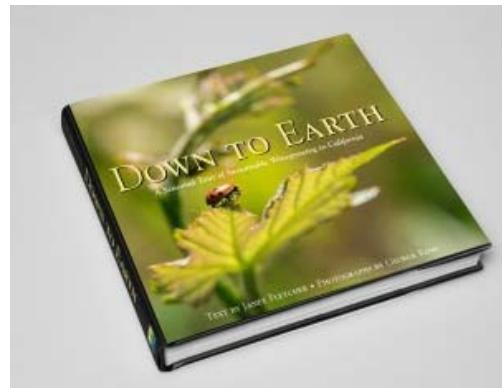
And she recently received word that her photographs have been selected by the San Mateo Art Exhibit Advisory Committee for an exhibition October 24 - December 5, 2014, at the Main Library. Called "*Flowers in Our Hair: Images from the Neighborhoods of San Francisco*," it will open with a public reception to be announced.

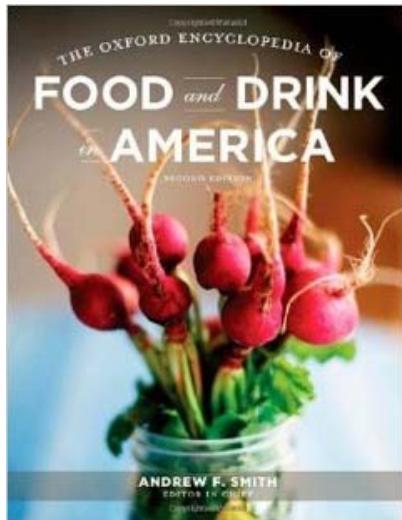


Starting July 29, she will teach a series of Tuesday evening classes called "*Food Writing: from Inspiration to Publication*" at Stanford University. The catalog describes it as a course that balances the creative and the practical through discussions covering the food world universe--blogosphere, literary agents, publishers, and food-related associations and organizations-as well as assignments to help students hone skills in research, writing, and marketing their work. Check the Stanford catalog after May 1 for more information. <http://continuingstudies.stanford.edu/>

Janet Fletcher

I am pleased to announce the publication of my newest book, *Down to Earth: A Seasonal Tour of Sustainable Winegrowing in California*, with photos by George Rose. The book features profiles of fifteen California wineries (actually, 14 fourteen wineries and one grower) that are leaders in sustainability. What a pleasure it was to meet those progressive people and get to tell their stories.





Fran Gage

Since I contributed a section on eggs, I was pleased to learn that *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America*, second edition, (Oxford University Press) won the 2014 IACP award in the Beverage, Reference, and Technical category.

Two Dames are Better Than One!

Mary Gassen and Janet Griggs

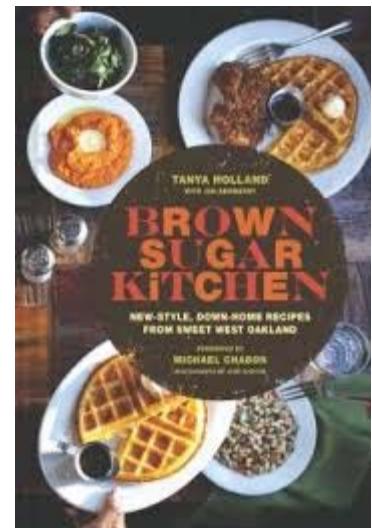
In February 2014, Dames Janet Griggs (Taste Catering and Tout Sweet Patisserie) and Mary Gassen (Noe Valley Bakery) began a sweet partnership. For the first time in its twenty-year history, Noe Valley Bakery is selling something not made in house—macarons and individual desserts made by Tout Sweet. Soon, Tout Sweet will be using Noe Valley Bakery breads to make their sandwiches and marketing Noe Valley Bakery cakes in their Macy's retail store.

"Janet approached us to make bread for Tout Sweet and the light bulb just went off over my head," says Mary Gassen. "I realized that we could join forces and improve both of our businesses. I felt that the Noe Valley Bakery customers would love the Tout Sweet desserts as an addition to what we already offer. So far, the customer response has been wonderful!" "We are excited to be offering our desserts to the Noe Valley customers," Janet adds, "Noe Valley Bakery has a delicious product line and we think that our products compliment theirs perfectly. Our style is more European whereas the Noe Valley style is American—it's a perfect fit. Our customers love the addition of a second location."

Tanya Holland

Tanya's second book, *Brown Sugar Kitchen: Recipes and Stories From Everyone's Favorite Soul Food Restaurant* (Chronicle Books) will be available in September. And that's just part of her good news. Ebony magazine recently presented its first-ever chef awards and she headed the list. Meredith May details her rise to fame in a March 9, 2014 article in the SF Chronicle entitled "*Seasoned with Soul.*"

Read the full article here: <http://www.sfgate.com/default/article/Oakland-chef-Tanya-Holland-ready-for-the-big-stage-5298577.php>



Suzanne Reifers Judd

Yes, indeed, I do have news! In mid-January, I retired as sales manager for Marin French Cheese and Laura Chenel's Chevre. We sold our home in Carmichael and made the harrowing journey across the country, through polar vortexes, snowstorms and, did I mention, three cats along for the ride.

We are currently renting a house in Ellsworth, Maine while we build our dream home outside Bar Harbor, just a mile from the ocean. We can walk to what has always been our very favorite picnic spot, over the last thirty years, while vacationing here.

We have been enjoying exploring the various wares of artisan food producers and farmers who offer fabulous local lamb, pork, and beef. We are now dedicated to the search for the very best local chicken. Love to all the SF Dames!

My contact information is below:

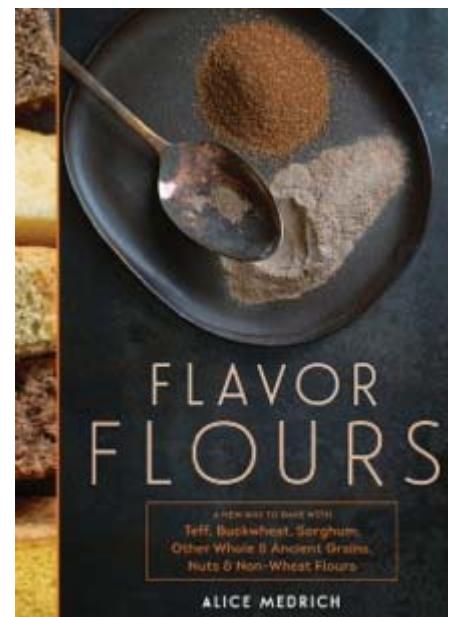
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Alice Medrich

Alice announces the forthcoming publication of her latest book, *Flavor Flours*, with Maya Klein (Artisan, 2014). It will be available November, 2014.

Using whole and ancient grains, nuts, coconut, and rice flour as hero ingredients and sources of flavor—not just as mere substitutes for wheat flour—*Flavor Flours* breaks tradition with classic baking and contemporary gluten free baking as we know it. Here is a new world of flavor for every curious baker and passionate eater, not just for those living gluten free. The book is organized by flour, with useful information on its taste, flavor affinities, and more. Recipes include dozens of familiar favorites, but with results that will surprise and delight. Buckwheat flour adds a delicate and beguiling floral flavor to a sponge cake and rich complexity to a date nut loaf.



Corn flour adds a sweet earthy flavor to an airy chiffon cake and pleasing crunch to a buttery lemon tart crust. *Génoise* made with chestnut flour transforms a traditional chestnut *Bûche de Noël*. Brownies and chocolate soufflés made with rice flour taste more chocolatey, and oat flour contributes its mojo to a divine American style chocolate layer cake. *Flavor Flours* takes these desserts, and more, to the next level.



Amy Myrdal Miller

I am pleased to announce that I was recently honored with the Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy 2014 Nutrition Impact award. This award is given to alumni of the school who have demonstrated innovation and creativity in their nutrition research, policy, and education efforts.

I also launched my new company, Farmer's Daughter Consulting in mid-March - www.farmersdaughterconsulting.com. LOTS going on right now!

Gig Owen

Gig reports that she and her husband celebrated opening day on the San Francisco bay, April 27, with numerous relatives and friends.



They are also looking forward to a Viking barge tour that departs from Budapest at the end of May and ends in Amsterdam, with fifteen stops enroute, in June.

Deborah Rogers



Nion McEvoy, president of McEvoy Ranch, has announced the appointment of award-winning olive oil producer Deborah Rogers to the position olive oil production manager at McEvoy Ranch. "Like us, Deborah has been a pioneer in the California olive oil industry. Her talent for producing award-winning olive oil is well established and her reputation within our community is unparalleled," said McEvoy.

Deborah's personal brand of extra-virgin olive oil, Marquesa, won a Best Class at the 2014 Napa Valley Olive Oil Competition.

Sara Wilson

Sara Wilson was presented the 2013 Pioneer Award by the California Olive Oil Council at its general meeting on April 5, 2014. As managing partner of The Pasta Shop, she was an early champion of California extra-virgin olive oils and a supporter of the mission of the California Olive Oil Council's Seal Certification program. In addition to selling certified California oils in the store, The Pasta Shop also uses these oils in its catering, bakery, and pasta businesses.



Dame Events

LDEI Honors Dolores Cakebread at Annual Conference
October 27, 2013
Austin, Texas
By Elaine Corn

Dolores Cakebread received Les Dames d'Escoffier's Grande Dame Award on October 27, 2013 at the annual conference in Austin, Texas. Seated with her at the banquet was Jack Cakebread, her husband of 63 years and son Dennis, CEO and Cakebread director of sales and marketing.

She wore a new Tiffany necklace of the Les Dames logo in silver.



Nearly 200 people attended the Grande Dame Award lavish event, with food prepared by Dames from across the country in Dolores's honor. Appropriate for a master gardener and flower lover, the tables were decorated with 4-foot tall vases of white hydrangeas and orchids of yellow, purple and orange.

Immediate past president Mary Ellen Griffin remarked that Dolores was successful in all parts of her life, namely family and as a loyal and nurturing employer.

After a film about her life and loves, Dolores was called upon to speak. As she got up, Jack tapped her on the nose as if she were the same teenage girl who chased him down the hall in high school.

"What the film left out," Dolores began, "was one of my best loves, and that's to love yourself, to know who you are and what you want out of life."

With trademark humility, she credited Jack for the honor she was receiving. "One reason Jack and I get along so well is we're both boss."

She said she had spent the day doing what Dames do - educating and networking. As a founding member of the San Francisco chapter, Dolores couldn't help but describe our unique group as one that likes to mentor and have fun.

As Dolores joined a rare list of women in the world of gastronomy, SF Dame Amy Hoopes presented her with a 3-liter bottle of Wente Vineyards Charles Wetmore Cabernet Sauvignon, engraved with the Grande Dame logo, 2013, to Dolores Cakebread.

Kitchen Memories: The Kathleen Thompson Hill Culinary Collection

November 2, 2013
Sonoma Valley Museum of Art
By Penni Wisner

A whole bunch of us (Sixteen? Maybe more. We were having too much fun to stand still and be counted.) met at the Sonoma Valley Museum of Art for a tour of the Kathleen Thompson Hill Culinary Collection, *Kitchen Memories*, led by the woman-and Dame-herself. A



natural-born raconteur, Kathleen wears many hats (another collection?) from political strategist to food writer and radio host.

Dame Paula Wolfert set the tone for us before we entered. In September, she had been at the opening of the show (which includes *Delicious Images: Art About Food*, works on paper by Wayne Thiebaud and Joseph Goldyne) when guests turned to whoever was nearby, friend, foe, or unknown, and began talking: "My mother had one of those!" "My grandmother used that every day." The nostalgic hubbub continued all night. "That is art!" exclaimed Paula. "People who did not know each other were talking together like old friends. That's art!" These conversations provided the only justification needed or wanted to answer some doubters who questioned why kitchen tools and culinary paraphernalia were displayed in an art museum.

And we continued the same conversation: "There's the toaster in the Downton Abbey scene!" There were confessions when we viewed the avocado green Presto pressure cooker: "I'm still afraid of them."

Kathleen chose Harvest Gold and Avocado Green for the handsome installation's color scheme. And the looks of it made me wonder why those colors became jokes. Colorful banners of photographs by Kathleen's son, G. Mack Hill, delineate various sections of the exhibition. His photos also illustrate the exhibit's accompanying book.



Our tour-and Kathleen's story telling-started by the display of biscuit tins. There she told us that the collection began as she and her husband began traveling shortly after their marriage. She would hunt for gifts for her decorator mother and found herself buying old kitchen gadgets with a price limit of \$3. When her mother died, Kathleen got them all back again and has continued to collect. Her price limit has increased over the years and now stands at \$8 per item (with exceptional exceptions allowed).

We were all impressed by the shiny chrome, Willy Wonka-esque Toast-o-later with its modernistic curves. Toas is fed in one end, passes by a round spy hole in the middle and exits at the other side. And there on a table next to a 21st -century microplane was an old, old one that looked jury-rigged. Someone else had had the same idea but lacked the luck and marketing prowess that has made microplane Microplane.

A menu collection hangs in a wild sort of mobile; a "century food pamphlets", including one called Kate Smith's Favorite Recipes, lines a wall while some of the molds in Kathleen's collection occupy a case on the opposite wall. In a separate





room, sit instantly recognizable (to a certain age group) yellow Formica table and matching vinyl-upholstered chair. the table sits a recipe box and blank index cards and the invitation to sit and write a kitchen memory of your own to pin to the corkboard mounted above the table. The most quotable (so far) of the offerings: "I am so glad Kathleen has collected all this so I don't have to." The final table in the show holds a collection of Mystery gadgets. You know you are with a food crowd when they can tell you that that one is a popcorn drier and that one is a radish cutter.

After all that conversation, we wandered across the Sonoma town square to the Swiss Hotel for lunch. Dame Elaine Corn told us how to tell the difference between a collection and a bunch of junk: a collection is catalogued. And Kathleen's is. What we had seen is only a small fraction of her collection that is still growing. Kathleen said that people leave offerings for her collection at the museum nearly every day! After our tour, we can testify that culinary objects are happily at home in the museum, transforming it into a magic kitchen space inhabited by memory.

New Dames Brunch

November 10, 2013

Jerry Di Vecchio's Home

By Mary Gassen

Back where it all began...

Dame Jerry Di Vecchio hosted a brunch to welcome the new inductees into the San Francisco Les Dames Chapter. Her house came alive with almost thirty Dames who each brought a delicious contribution to the table. We feasted on baked goods, homemade preserves, fruit, egg dishes and plenty of desserts. The wine flowed freely and the conversation was lively as we all became acquainted.





Chronicle/Liz Hafalia

Jerry gathered us all around her table and something wonderful happened - each Dame in turn told her story. Fran Gage recounted the beginning of her bakery at the top of Eighteenth Street in the 1980's, Suzette Gresham told of Acquarello and her new baby, 1760 (the restaurant, that is). Antonia Allegra talked of starting the cooking school at Beringer followed by the CIA in Greystone. Barbara Haber of the Schlesinger Library at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Women's Studies told the story of how her passion for food led her to acquire the papers of MFK Fisher, Erma Rombauer, Julia Child, and most recently Elizabeth David. She illuminated how women and food go together and how gender enters into the world of food. Karen Mackenzie told how she grew her PR agency so large that she was spending most of her time dealing with HR and administration so decided to move off on her own and get back to what she loved. Eileen Spitalny of Fairytale Brownies has been a Dame in the Phoenix Chapter and is new to San Francisco. She told how she grew her business to one that makes and ships four million brownies per year. And the stories went on...

Co-Presidents Amy Hoopes and Tanya Holland had just returned from the national conference and encouraged us all to attend next year in Boston. They found the convention very inspiring and they promised to bring that excitement and energy back with them to our chapter by scheduling a great calendar of events well into 2014. They want to make sure we all book the events on our calendar so we don't miss anything.

At the end Jerry recounted the initial meeting of the San Francisco Chapter around the same table with approximately the same number of women. Two other women there today were among those charter members, Gig Owen and Antonia Allegra. We all had a sense that we were carrying on the tradition and spirit of Les Dames d'Escoffier by gathering at the place where it all began. Hearing the stories made us realize that the knowledge, experience, curiosity, and accomplishments of this group of women are extraordinary.

Ancestral Pot Luck Dinner

January 27, 2014

Ketchum

By Janet Fletcher

Confirming our country's reputation as a nation of immigrants, our chapter's annual Ancestral Potluck in January produced a multinational feast. The dishes arrayed on the spacious kitchen counters at the Ketchum Food Center had roots in Germany, Japan, China, Lithuania, Scotland, Ireland, Puerto Rico, Belarus and beyond.

And each tasty dish had a story to tell—some evoking tears as Dames recalled recipes they learned at the side of mothers and grandmothers or salvaged from scraps of paper.



Helen Roberts perfected her flawless fried chicken as a youngster helping her parents sell chicken dinners to their Harlem neighbors when they gathered for Friday-night card games. Janet Griggs brought ambrosia as made by her physician father-in-law, who would trim the oranges with surgical precision. "He should have used a scalpel," joked Janet. "He would have been more at home." Laur Brainin-Rodriguez offered *coquito* ("Puerto Rican eggnog"), a silky coconut milk and rum tipple associated with holiday hospitality. German goulash, a Hakka stir-fry, Scotch-Irish shortbread and English bread pudding contributed to this edible portrait of our diverse membership. Many thanks to organizers Helen Roberts, Sandy Hu, and Kathleen Hill for their labors, to the volunteer clean-up crew and to Ketchum Food Center for the comfortable venue.

A list of recipes enjoyed that evening was previously sent to everyone. If you didn't receive it, [click here to view.](#)



Cheese Meets Beer

March 24, 2014

Taste Catering

By Janet Griggs

Janet Fletcher was at her most instructive at the Cheese Meets Beer event March 24. She guided a group of twenty beer enthusiasts and novices through the ins and outs of beer and the cheeses that most enhance and are enhanced by the beers chosen. Here is a sampling of what we tasted:

Janet selected both craft and imported beers starting with a Pilsner-Laguitas Pils—not the normal off-the-supermarket-shelf football afternoon beer but a palate-pleasing alternative. Paired with Avalanche *Cabra Blanca*, a Colorado goat cheese, we first tasted the cheese, letting it melt in our mouths to savor the cheese's nuances. Then swirled the beer sipping it by itself and then the two together to see how the two complemented each other.

The AleSmith Nut Brown Ale brewed in San Diego-paired with a French sheep's cheese, *Abbaye de*

Bellloc-was an excellent example of the American brewers' penchant for experimentation. The dark roasted chocolatey malts balanced by a blend of different hops produces a low alcohol beer that was particularly popular with the group. Janet introduced the concept of "session beers"; beers that are low in alcohol so they can be enjoyed over a longer time period, or a drinking session. This ale clearly qualified.

The Anderson Valley Brewing Oatmeal Stout illustrated the beer style with yeasts left in the beer to produce an opaque liquid. Tasted with *Challerhocker*, a cow cheese from Switzerland, this pairing was pure European. Janet explained that this cheese was not as well known to the American market because, until recently, the Swiss government subsidized the production of a limited number of cheeses (e.g., *Gruyère*, *Emmenthal*, *Raclette*) which influenced their production and export. The *Challerhocker*, now available in the US, was silky, dense and very creamy-a great combo with the creamy Oatmeal Stout.

Janet discussed the high regard that Belgians maintain as master brewers. We tasted a Belgian-style ale-North Coast Brewing Prankster-produced in Fort Bragg. Beverley Barbour-Soules commented on this beer's "Belgian lace," the expression that describes the pattern left on the glass after swirling the ale. It had a beautiful floral nose and paired nicely with Canal Junction's Charloie, a buttery cow cheese from northwest Ohio.

The group was divided when it came to Russian River Consecration, a sour red/brown style beer brewed in Santa Rosa. The vinegar overtones were met with some skepticism but this beer style has definite devotees. Paired with Cow Girl Creamery's Mt. Tam, the combination was most interesting and definitely palate broadening.

Other pairings included Stillwater Stateside Saison with Redwood Hill Cameo, Firestone Brewing Wookie Jack Black IPA with Cabot Clothbound Cheddar, and Ommegang Three Philosophers with Point Reyes Bay Blue.

The tasting was followed by a simple soup and salad supper from the chefs at Taste Catering, which completed this very interesting and tasty experience. The entire proceeds of the evening were donated to the Karola Saekel Craib Excellence in Food Journalism Fellowship. Our chapter wishes to thank Janet Fletcher and Janet Griggs for making this evening possible.

Breakfast and Book Signing with Dames Carla Hall and Celia Sack

April 10, 2014
Purcell Murray Culinary Showroom
By Celia Sack

Dame Roberta Klugman and Purcell Murray hosted *The Chew's* Carla Hall in conversation with Dame Celia Sack last month. Thirty-five people, including seven Dames attended. Hall's new book, *Carla's Comfort Foods: Favorite Dishes from Around the World* is a collection of international comfort food recipes. Carla pointed out that so many recipes around the world are similar, but differentiate themselves through their spices.



She also talked about the challenges women face in professional kitchens, as well as her background as a professional model and caterer. Her outsize personality charmed the crowd, who dined on a breakfast created by the Purcell Murray culinary team from recipes in the book, including Baked Corn Pudding, Roasted Tomato Jam, Curried Potatoes and Peas, and Cooked-to-Death-Delicious Green Beans with Potatoes.

Lunch to Celebrate Deborah Madison's New Book

May 6, 2014
Home of Dame
Celia Sack
San Francisco
By Gig Owen



Celia Sack (one of our newest Les Dames members and owner of Omnivore Books) generously hosted, with partner, Paula, a cookbook-signing luncheon for Deborah Madison's latest book, *Vegetable Literacy* (Ten Speed), which won IACP and James Beard awards this year.

I attended, and was in and out of approximately fourteen or sixteen folks (maybe more) attending. It was terrific fun, most generous of them to have taken on this luncheon gathering which turned out to be a potluck, yummy and beautifully arranged, with most of us bringing some divine bottles of wine to add to the merriment.

The luncheon was gorgeous and sensational. I believe Deborah Madison sold a bunch. Think the entire event was most successful.

Kudos to Celia and Paula!



UPCOMING EVENTS

May 17, 2014: *The Art of Eating: a Tribute to MFK Fisher*: Bouverie Preserve of Audubon Canyo Ranch, 13935 Sonoma Highway 12, Glen Ellen, CA, 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. For tickets: www.egret.org. volunteer, contact Trisha Fontan (trisha.fontan@egret.org)



**July 24, 2014, 11 a.m.
*Tour of Dame Mary Gassen's Noe Valley Bakery***
with lunch to follow at neighborhood restaurant

August 16, 2014: *Green Table Fig Varietal Tasting*: Wolfskill USDA Germplasm Repository, Winters, CA, followed by a fig-centric lunch.
More details to follow.



September 22, 2014: *Induction Dinner*: Wente Vineyards. Details to follow.

October 11, 2014
McEvoy Ranch Tour and Lunch

Dame Deborah Rogers will guide us through the milling process.

Details to follow.



October 25, 2014: *Cakebread Cellars Event:* Details to follow.

November, 2014: *New Members Lunch:* Jerry DiVecchio's home. Details to follow.

In Memory

Remembering Judy Rodgers, 1956-2013

By Jeannette Ferry

With the death last December 2 of Judy Rodgers, chef-owner of San Francisco's Zuni Cafe, there has been much talk about her beloved dishes, particularly her roast chicken. But whenever I think of Judy Rodgers, I think of anchovies. She was very upset about anchovies in the sense that there were people in the world who did not appreciate them. In her view, the place of anchovies in Caesar Salad was so endemic that to omit them was almost akin to a crime against nature. And yet there were people in her very own restaurant who shamelessly requested that she hold the anchovies.



I discovered her solution to this dilemma while we were working together on a book about the "new California cooking in the early 1980's. At the time, she was the chef at the Union Hotel in Benicia transforming the very concept of American cookery. I was trying to put together a book proposal

based on the dishes she was creating for the restaurant. This was no easy task especially since, whatever her carefully-crafted menu plans for the day, she would scrap them willingly in response to the arrival of a wicker basketful of just-picked chanterelles. Judy was in love with food and its possibilities, amazingly inventive and yet respectful of tradition. If something was right, it was just plain right. So if a customer ordered anchovy-free Caesar Salad she would simply...put them in anyway. I think she had a way of disguising their presence until her always-appreciative customer would confess that this was the best damn Caesar Salad they'd ever tasted. In fact, she employed a similar tactic with orders for well-done beef, which she viewed with palpable cringing. Her response was to serve it appropriately medium-rare and see what happened. Not only were there few complaints, there were many eureka! moments from grateful converts who thanked her for showing them the way. I'm not sure she always revealed her little well-intentioned subterfuges but I do know that her motives had nothing to do with deception. What she wanted was to provide pleasure in full measure, to enthrall you in spite of yourself, to make you happy in your soul. And, as several decades of diners can testify today, she did that, no matter what.

As for our book proposal, I was finally able to present a completed one to our delighted literary agent who ceded interest among a number of New York publishers. However at the last minute, Ju decided the book might typecast her with the innovative American style she was forging at the Uni Hotel and threaten her identity as the classical French chef she envisioned as her destiny. There is irony in this, of course, in light of her brilliant term at the helm of the Zuni Cafe where she attracted a steady and loyal following with her iconic roast chicken, her luscious Zuni burger, and her magnificent house-cured anchovies.



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